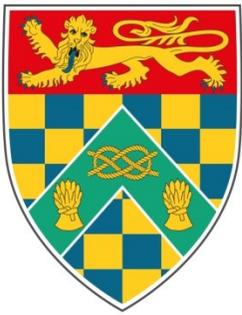


# Safeguarding

Annual Report 2019/20



SOUTH KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Contents

Introduction	3
Protection and Safeguarding Responsibilities	3
Prevent	5
Policy and Procedures	6
Training and Development - Officers	6
Elected Member Training	7
Taxi Drivers	7
Referrals	8
Domestic Abuse	9
Internal Safeguarding Group	9
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership	9
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board	10
Lincolnshire Assessment and Assurance Framework	10
Section 11 Assessment	11
Going Forward	12

## Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Authority's safeguarding responsibilities in relation to children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

The Council's policy sets out our commitment to protect: *"children, young people and adults who need safeguarding, including employees, volunteers, apprentices and students; those who use our services or are cared for by others who use our services; and those with whom our staff, elected members, volunteers and key contractors have contact"*.

This document further provides an insight into the tools available to officers and elected members in the safeguarding of individuals and discusses:

- Our responsibilities as a district council
- Our policy and procedures for safeguarding individuals
- Training and development
- Referrals
- Statutory partners, reviews and audit assessments

The Council's current Lead Safeguarding Officer is Ken Lyon, Assistant Chief Executive and the Deputy Safeguarding Officer is Carol Drury, Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer.

## Protection and Safeguarding Responsibilities

As a district authority our services are predominantly provided for adults and those who are vulnerable must be protected from harm. This does not mean however that we do not have a legal and moral obligation to safeguard children and young people too. The Council has statutory duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and Sections 42-45 of the Care Act 2014 to protect individuals from harm and neglect and to co-operate with other agencies.

Our responsibilities for the protection of both children and adults are, in basic terms, the same – to report incidents or concerns to the responsible authority (Lincolnshire County Council) and to work with other agencies to ensure the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is the broader term used for the measures available to protect the health and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

In terms of the safeguarding of children and young people<sup>1</sup>, Lincolnshire has processes for early help and intervention which allow agencies to work together to support families at the earliest possible time. Through early intervention, children can be the subject of a 'Team Around the Child' in which the additional needs of the child and its family are met, with their consent, through a multi-agency approach. Depending on the needs of the family, officers from this Authority will be invited to attend and participate in Team Around the Child meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> A 'child' is defined as a person who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (including unborn children). In Lincolnshire this definition extends to the age of 25 for people with disabilities.

The following diagram is the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Continuum of Needs which shows when and how the needs of young individuals should be met.



\*TAC – Team Around the Child    ESCO – Early Support Care Co-ordination    YOS – Youth Offending Service

The statutory guidance that accompanies the Care Act 2014 (the Act) defines adult safeguarding as “protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on an action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances”

It is clear from this definition that adult safeguarding has its challenges. The Act is however clear that:

“A local authority<sup>2</sup> must act when it has ‘reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there):

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it”

In basic terms adult safeguarding is for people who, because of issues such as dementia, learning disability, mental ill-health or substance abuse have care and support needs that may make them more vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding referrals relating to adults must always be made with the explicit consent of the individual unless gaining consent would put the individual in danger. Referral without consent, in “the best interests” of the individual can also be made if it is assessed that the person lacks the mental capacity (as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005) to make an informed decision.

<sup>2</sup> The Care Act 2014 and the Statutory Guidance refers throughout to the responsibilities of the Local Authority. In a two-tier county the Local Authority refers to the County Council.

During 2019 officers worked with Adult Services to develop an early help support process known as Team Around the Adult (TAA). Team Around the Adult can be defined as a “*group of people who are drawn from agencies involved with a vulnerable person, as well as people from the person’s family and social network, all of whom are concerned about the vulnerability of the person and the complexity of their needs, and who are willing to work together in an open and honest way, with the person, and within established operating processes, to help achieve better outcomes*” (quote: LCC TAA newsletter December 2019).

Adult Services determined that the Team Around the Adult approach would be involved with people who are referred or self-refer to their district council (housing services). People with additional vulnerabilities, for instance through their housing needs, drug or other substance misuse, mental ill-health etc would be triaged to determine a level of intervention. A pilot of the process was launched during the early part of 2020 but, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the roll-out of this process was temporarily put on hold.

## Prevent

The introduction of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act in 2015 placed a duty on local authorities (County and District in two tier areas) in all our functions to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

In complying with the duty, we are expected to ensure that our venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This includes considering whether IT equipment available to the general public should use filtering solutions that limit access to terrorist and extremist material.

We are further expected to ensure that organisations that work with us are not engaged in any extremist views and, where appropriate, to take the opportunity when new contracts for the delivery of our services are being made to ensure that the principles of the duty are written in to those contracts in a suitable form.

Prevent falls within the safeguarding arena. The grooming of vulnerable individuals into radicalisation and extreme ideologies is regarded as a safeguarding concern and must be addressed as such. The referral pathways are different, but the principles are the same.

It is essential to know that Prevent operates in the NON-CRIMINAL space. This means working with individuals who have not yet committed a crime but are vulnerable to radicalisation in whatever form that takes. The aim of Prevent is to support such individuals, to divert them away from violent extremism before they commit any criminal acts. Prevent does this through a process called Channel. The process is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into extremism. Individuals who exhibit concerning behaviour in relation to an extreme ideology can be referred to Channel if they give their explicit consent.

This Authority is represented at the Prevent Strategy Board by its Prevent Lead, Mark Jones or the Deputy Prevent Officer, Carol Drury. These officers work in partnership with other agencies represented on the Strategy Board to develop the Counter Terrorism Local Profile for Lincolnshire and its accompanying Action Plan. The Deputy Prevent Officer also participates in an Engagement sub-group that develops and delivers engagement activity to raise awareness of Prevent and the support available for those groomed into extremist ideology.

SKDC has not been involved in any multi-agency Channel meetings during 2019/20. Individuals have been identified by other agencies that, although not meeting the threshold for a Channel intervention, have been identified as vulnerable. Alternative support was made available to these individuals.

## Policy and Procedures

A new Safeguarding Policy has been introduced during 2019/20. The document was developed following a decision that all District Authorities in Lincolnshire should, as far as is practicable, operate under the same policy (with district-specific procedures for reporting based on the safeguarding structure within each authority). This policy was originally developed by colleagues from East Lindsey District Council and has been adapted to take account of the SKDC structure. The new policy, which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, is available to staff and Elected Members through the Council's intranet. Hard copies of the policy and supporting guidance and tools are also made available to those without access to the intranet. The policy, along with its procedures for referring incidents and concerns reflects the legal and moral duties of the Council in the safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults from significant harm.

The policy is made up of ten chapters providing guidance that highlights that **safeguarding is everyone's business** and gives detail relating to:

Roles and Responsibilities	Hate Crime and Mate Crime
Safeguarding Children and Young People	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
Safeguarding Adults at Risk	County Lines and Cuckooing
Domestic Abuse	Stalking
PREVENT and the Channel process	Mobile Families

The policy further contains information relating to training requirements necessary to meet the national competencies set out for child and adult safeguarding.

## Training and Development - Officers

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership requires that partners follow a 6 year training pathway whilst the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board follows a 5 year pathway for which contain training specific to levels of interaction with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The training is provided to partners free of charge and is a mix of e-learning and face-to-face modules. In addition to this training, officers and Elected Members are required to undergo Prevent training to fulfil the requirements of the Local Authority Prevent Duty.

274 e-learning or face-to-face training modules were completed by officers in 2019/20. All face-to-face training was suspended from March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown. Topics covered are listed in the table below:

Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect	Awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse	Basic Awareness of Child and Adult Exploitation
Dementia Awareness	Domestic Abuse – Short Course	Friends Against Scams
Hate Crime	Hidden Harm <sup>3</sup>	Information Sharing
Mental Capacity Act	Missing Children	Prevent
Safeguarding Adults	Safeguarding Everyone – Protection Children, Young People and Adults at Risk	Trafficking, Exploitation and Modern Slavery

<sup>3</sup> Hidden Harm training looks at the impact of parental drug and alcohol misuse on children and young people

Understanding pathways to extremism and the Prevent programme	Working with adults who self-neglect	
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The level of direct involvement staff have with children, young people or vulnerable adults also determines how often training needs to be undertaken. Community focused staff are required to undertake some form of safeguarding training on an annual basis whilst those without direct involvement need only complete training appropriate to the service area and level of responsibility within that area once within the required cycle unless changes to legislation, statutory guidance or procedures require that an update/refresher be completed. Officers redeployed into the SK Community Hub at the end of March 2020 were required to undertake training relating to Safeguarding Everyone, Scam Awareness and Domestic Abuse.

A record of the training completed by officers and elected Members is held centrally and reminder e mails are sent to individuals when new training is required or refreshers need to be completed.

### Elected Member Training

Historically a safeguarding briefing has formed part of Members induction training following an election with a follow-up session delivered mid-way through the term of office. Ten Members have participated in safeguarding training this year.

The development and approval of a new Safeguarding Policy provided an opportunity in 2019/20 to review the provision of safeguarding training to Members and the requirement placed upon them to participate. To that end, when the Safeguarding Policy 2020/23 was approved by Cabinet in March 2020 the decision was taken to introduce **mandatory** safeguarding e-learning for Elected Members to be completed across their term of office that would complement the in-house training provided during Member induction.

The new requirement from 2020/21 is for Members to complete an e-learning module relating to **Safeguarding Everyone in Lincolnshire** within their first year in office a further requirement for all Members to complete additional safeguarding-related e learning modules during their term of office. Those being:

- Hate Crime and Mate Crime
- Friends Against Scams
- Understanding Pathways to Extremism and the Prevent Agenda
- Trafficking, Exploitation and Modern Slavery

Confirmation of completed training modules will be captured in the Safeguarding central training database.

### Taxi Drivers

In June 2017 the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy was amended to include compulsory e-learning safeguarding training for all hackney carriage and private hire drivers and operators. Drivers and operators are required to complete and pass two modules of safeguarding awareness training:

- An Introduction to Safeguarding Everyone in Lincolnshire
- Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Training for Taxi Drivers

This training is free, and all new and renewing applicants must provide certificates of completion in order to obtain or renew a licence to operate/drive. This compulsory training requirement was

introduced at the request of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership in response to the high-profile child sexual exploitation cases in areas such as Rotherham and Rochdale. The training module was updated in September 2019 to include awareness of County Lines, Modern Slavery and adult exploitation.

It is reassuring to note that since the introduction of this requirement under our Licensing Policy, 526 training modules have been completed and passed during this period by drivers/operators in South Kesteven.

## Referrals

Whilst there are requirements on us as a district council to have identified strategic and deputy leads for safeguarding it should be acknowledged that there are no safeguarding-specific roles within the Authority. This does not undermine the importance of the safeguarding of individuals from harm and neglect but seeks to highlight the fact that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**. Officers from across the Authority have the knowledge, skill and training to identify the potential for harm and to refer individuals to the appropriate support service when a concern is identified. Support for officers and elected Members is available through our safeguarding leads.

Any officer in the course of their duties, or an elected member carrying out their representational role, may witness or be informed of an issue that they feel should be referred to Adult or Children's Services. Referrals are made on behalf of the Authority by the Deputy Safeguarding Officer with the exception of those made by colleagues in Housing and Neighbourhoods who refer directly to the responsible authority. All instances are also reported to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer and a central record is held to assist in identifying trends and 'hot spot' locations.

During 2019/20 this authority made 12 safeguarding referrals. These referrals related to 10 adults and 5 children/young people. Concerns were raised relating to the issues listed below by officers from community-facing services. Incidents relating to both children and adults were referred by officers from Housing and Neighbourhoods teams and include:

Neglect	Referral to Children's Services
Children at indirect risk of Domestic Abuse	Referral to Children's Services
Mental Health/Neglect	Referral to Adult Services
Self-neglect/hoarding	Referral to Adult Services
Allegation of Domestic Abuse	Referral to Adult Services
Self-neglect resulting from misuse of alcohol	Referral to Adult Services
Financial Abuse	Referral to Adult Services

The referral citing neglect (listed at the top of the table above) relates to two children in a family that was the subject of Team Around the Child (TAC) which is early help where families are found to be in need of additional support. This TAC was escalated to Child Protection following a home visit from a Neighbourhoods Officer due to the unsafe conditions the children were living in at home.

It is important to acknowledge that not all referrals to either Adult or Children's Services meet their required threshold. In such cases alternative means of support need to be put in place locally. This support can be way of a multi-agency approach (health, education, wellbeing, housing for example). The support provided would be based on need. If the case relates to a specific issue the most appropriate single agency would provide support.

## Domestic Abuse

In March 2020 a family, resident within this District, became the subject of a police investigation following a domestic homicide. This case is now the focus of a Domestic Homicide Review. Officers from relevant service areas are participating in the review. Any recommendations that result from this review will be acted upon and implemented.

## Internal Safeguarding Group

The independent report, which followed an Adult Safeguarding Review relating to the historical financial exploitation of a number of vulnerable individuals, made a series of recommendations including the need for agencies to identify trends. This would encompass locality trends, perpetrator and victim trends and trends in types of abuse suffered.

As a response to this recommendation, the Council introduced an internal safeguarding group comprised of officers from Housing, Homelessness, Neighbourhoods, Benefits and Rents to review cases and customer interactions. This group meets with the Deputy Safeguarding Officer on a monthly basis and discusses early help, referrals, alternative interventions when safeguarding thresholds are not met, action taken and outcomes. This group also determines if a case, deemed not to meet a safeguarding threshold by Social Services, requires intervention and escalation by the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

## Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant agencies in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The Children Act 2004 requires each local Children Partnership authority, which in this area is Lincolnshire County Council, to establish a Safeguarding Partnership.

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as laid out in statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, detail how each Local Safeguarding Children Partnership should operate. 'Relevant agencies' in the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership include:

- District Councils (in local authority areas which have them)
- The chief officer of Police
- The National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies
- The Youth Offending Team
- NHS England and the Clinical Commissioning Groups
- NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts (all or most of whose hospitals, establishments and facilities are situated in the local authority area)
- Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service)
- The governor or director of any secure training centre in the area of the authority
- The governor or director of any prison in the area of the authority which ordinarily detains children
- Two lay members

The over-arching objectives of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership are to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented in the Partnership for the purposes

of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority and to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose, as set out in Section 14 of the Children Act 2004. District Authorities have one seat on the Partnership and on each of its sub-groups, therefore representation at Partnership meetings is shared across the seven districts. SKDC's Deputy Safeguarding Officer is the district representative at the Policy, Performance, Education and Training sub-group for which she became Chair in 2018.

### **Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board**

Safeguarding Adults Boards became statutory with the introduction of the Care Act 2014. The aim of Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) is to ensure the effective co-ordination of services to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, in accordance with the Care Act 2014, Making Safeguarding Personal and Care and Support statutory guidance 2014.

Core membership of an Adult Safeguarding Board includes:

- Local Authority
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- The Police

As the responsible authority in this county, Lincolnshire County Council is the local authority in this list. Membership can be extended to include other 'useful partners' and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board includes amongst its members the seven district authorities. This Council is a member of the LSAB primarily, but not exclusively, because of its housing function. Partners are required to work together, alongside individuals and communities, to safeguard adults in ways that support them to make informed choices and enable them to have control in how they will live their lives. As with the Children's Partnership, District Authorities have one seat on the Board and on each of its sub-groups therefore representation at Board meetings is shared across the seven districts. Input to, and feedback from, the representatives on this and the Children's Partnership is coordinated through a District Safeguarding Leads Group which meets every two months.

### **Lincolnshire Assurance and Assessment Framework (LAAF)**

The Care Act 2014 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions and any services they contract to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults. As a district authority these duties relate to the delivery of services such as: housing, sport, culture and leisure services and also to our responsibilities as a licensing authority.

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board requires its partners to carry out assessments of partner compliance with their duties on a three-yearly cycle; the most recent of which took place in 2019.

The process is actioned through self-assessment – whereby each organisation completes an online assessment tool under seven headings, which is further broken down into 37 questions. Each organisation is required to provide an explanation of the services or arrangements in place under each of the 37 questions that are applicable to their organisation and related responsibilities and to provide evidence to prove they fulfill each requirement. Most of this evidence is uploaded onto the online toolkit and some (case file evidence) is viewed on site by the moderator. A self-assessed grading is given for each question of red, amber, green or blue as follows:

Evidence uploaded as part of this authority's submission focused on our safeguarding policy and procedures, recruitment practices and the services we provide to families such as housing,

homelessness, community safety and leisure and cultural services. Confirmation was received at the start of 2020 that this Council achieved green status (Effective) across the whole spectrum of the audit. A copy of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board Completion Summary is provided as an appendix to the report accompanying this document.

## Section 11 Audit

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions and any services they contract to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As a district authority these duties relate to the delivery of services such as: housing, culture and leisure services and also to our responsibilities as a licensing authority.

Safeguarding Children Partnerships are required to carry out assessments of partner compliance with their duties under Section 11.

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership undertakes these audit assessments on a three-yearly cycle. Under the audit timetable the Section 11 audit had been scheduled to begin in April 2020. This was postponed as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and rearranged to begin in September 2020. Our self-assessment response to this audit must be completed by the end of December 2020.

The Section 11 assessment in Lincolnshire is a multi-agency process consisting of a strategic and case file assessment and is undertaken in two stages:

1. Self-assessment process – whereby each organisation completes an online assessment tool under 10 headings, which is further broken down into 35 questions. Each organisation is required to provide an explanation of the services or arrangements in place under each of the 35 questions and to provide evidence to prove they fulfill each requirement. Most of this evidence is uploaded onto the online toolkit and some (case file evidence) is viewed on site by a moderator. A self-assessed grading is given for each question of red, amber or green. Red represents no or inadequate arrangements in place and green represents excellent services.
2. Multi-agency peer audit assessment: once each organisation has uploaded its evidence to the online assessment tool it is assigned a moderator from a bank of LSCP partners. Moderators scrutinise the evidence submitted and make an assessment of the score which reflects the quality and relevance of that evidence. In addition, each moderator undertakes a face-to-face review meeting with the organisation and audits three case files and three human resources files to ensure that what happens in practice supports the strategic assessment. Moderation on the 2020 assessment will be undertaken in January/February 2021.

As previously mentioned, the services provided by a district authority are primarily aimed at adults and families. Evidence uploaded as part of this authority's submission will be broader than simply the participatory activities we provide for children and focused on the services we provide to families such as housing, homelessness, community safety and leisure and cultural services.

At its last audit in 2017 this Authority was one of two district council's in Lincolnshire that was rated as having excellent services across all 10 of the assessment headings, achieving green status in all categories.

## Going Forward

Safeguarding requires the commitment of the Council as a whole if we are to help to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm. **Safeguarding is everyone's business** and we must ensure that elected members and staff from all our service areas, particularly the community-focused services, are trained, are able to recognise signs of safety and, most importantly, act upon concerns.

An internal review of our Safeguarding practice is currently being undertaken. The review will help determine areas of improvement under the headings of:

- Governance and Visibility
- Tools and Training
- Processes and approach

Recommendations resulting from this review will be implemented as soon as possible to ensure the Authority's safeguarding practices remain fit for purpose.