



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



## Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside  
Cabinet Member for People and  
Communities

# Safeguarding Update and updated Safeguarding Policy 2024 - 2027

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

The Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 place responsibilities on the Council to safeguard vulnerable people from harm. The Authority is currently undertaking a review of its safeguarding practices to ensure they remain fit for purpose. This report provides an update on the progress of the review and the updated Safeguarding Policy 2024 – 2027 for review.

### Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes the contents of the report and the updated Safeguarding Policy**
- 2. Recommends to Cabinet the approval of the updated Safeguarding Policy**

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any  
exempt or confidential  
information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Housing that meets the needs of all residents

Which wards are impacted? All

## **1. Implications**

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance & ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

### ***Legal and Governance***

1.1 There are no significant legal or governance implications which are not already referenced in the body of the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

1.2 The policy which provides the framework around our responsibilities for Safeguarding.

Completed by Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

## **2. Background to the Report**

2.1 As a District Council we have a general duty of care and statutory requirements in relation to the safeguarding of both children and adults. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff and elected members, so the Council must ensure that staff and members have access to support, are trained, are able to recognise signs of safeguarding issues and, most importantly, act upon concerns.

2.2 In October 2023 the Council identified the Head of Housing Services as the Designated Lead for Safeguarding.

- 2.3 It is recognised that the Council has excellent practices, strong clear practices and a robust Safeguarding policy which has been reviewed and updated and is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Areas for improvement were identified which focus on two key themes: Tools and Training and Policy update.
- 2.5 The golden thread linking each of these themes is the challenge to ensure safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. By embedding improved understanding and awareness of the legal and moral responsibilities we are better able to help protect the vulnerable from harm.
- 2.6 The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress made to date in updating the Safeguarding policy and to seek their views on further improvements.
- 2.7 Although our responsibilities as a District Council are, in essence, the same for both adults and children the thresholds for referrals are different and the levels of available support, particularly in relation to early help are significantly different for children and adults. Referral pathway flowcharts have been developed which will assist officers and elected members in identifying the most appropriate pathway for referral.
- 2.8 Safeguarding policy and practices are tested on a three-year cycle by means of self-assessment/peer moderated audits coordinated by Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 2.9 The last audit was completed in 2022 and focused on the safeguarding of adults (the Lincolnshire Assessment and Assurance Framework), the Council achieved green (effective) status across all relevant categories.
- 2.10 A Children's Safeguarding Audit is currently being completed. The audit is a statutory requirement under the Children Act and is made up of two parts: self-assessment and peer moderation. The self-assessment element of the audit was completed in March 2024 and the moderation is currently underway. The results of the audit will be reported to Governance and Audit Committee as part of the annual report on Safeguarding.
- 2.11 The annual report also provides details regarding the Council's Safeguarding responsibilities, the progress of Safeguarding training and development, and updates regarding new safeguarding arrangements. The 2022/23 Annual Safeguarding Report was presented to the committee on 13 March 2024.
- 2.12 There is currently no collective system in place across the Authority for the recording and sharing of safeguarding cases. Individual case files are retained by responsible officers which has the potential for a lack of information sharing and creates limitations for a joined-up approach across teams.
- 2.13 The Housing and Neighbourhoods teams currently utilise a system called ECins which is a secure, GDPR compliant, case management system through which information can be stored and shared. Officers have liaised with the operators of

ECins to investigate the suitability of the system for logging and sharing safeguarding case information.

- 2.14 This system is used for sharing information by other agencies and has proven to be an effective tool. In utilising this system for safeguarding we can collate information relating to early intervention cases (additional support for families) through to protection cases. The system will also allow for the identification of themes, for example, types and locations of abuse and provides links to potentially associated cases, for example anti-social behaviour and noise complaints, to improve opportunities for contextual safeguarding within the district.
- 2.15 Safeguarding training is available to all officers and elected Members via Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board. The requirements for training are set out in the Council's Safeguarding Policy. Training requirements are determined by the level of direct involvement officers have with vulnerable individuals.
- 2.16 There is also face to face training on Safeguarding awareness delivered to all frontline staff, Senior Management and elected members. Safeguarding also forms part of our corporate induction process.
- 2.17 A register of completed Safeguarding training is maintained by the Deputy Safeguarding Officer and officers are sent reminders when they are required to update their training which are both manual processes. The review team is investigating the viability of building training requirements, reminders and a central record of completed training into the existing iTrent system to fully automate the process across all service areas with Heads of Service being responsible for ensuring all team members have completed mandatory training.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 The Safeguarding Policy provides details of the Council's legislative requirements regarding the delivery of the Safeguarding responsibilities.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 The Council could choose not update the policy and continue with the existing policy which is out of date.

### **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 The current policy is out of date and requires review.

### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 There is no statutory requirements for a consultation on the proposed policy and no consultation is proposed. The policy is merely a document that pulls together the legislative requirements around the delivery of the Council's responsibilities around Safeguarding.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix A: Safeguarding Policy 2024 - 2027