

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Executive Summary

The Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and updated. The purpose of the update is to ensure the policy is current and user-friendly, for everyone to use who are working for and behalf of Woking Borough Council. The policy now includes a quick reference guide for making safeguarding referrals, links to relevant training pathways from key providers and statutory bodies, and wider signposting for staff and teams providing support to vulnerable residents.

The Council maintains a reputation for providing excellent safeguarding practice, as noted by the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership in 2020, following completion of the statutory Section 11 Safeguarding Children's audit. This policy will enable the organisation to continue to safeguard children, adults at risk of harm and to support staff, elected members, volunteers and relevant external services to stay updated with the current safeguarding practices and procedures on a local and national level.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) **the Safeguarding Policy dated April 2022, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be implemented with a formal review every two years; and**
- (ii) **the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to update the Policy when changes occur, as informed through countywide safeguarding networks and lead officer/member groups.**

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To ensure Woking Borough Council's Safeguarding practice is current and agreed at all levels.

The item(s) above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

Background Papers: None.

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Safeguarding Policy

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council interacts with many residents who are vulnerable and support includes preventative services, early help and statutory safeguarding interventions. A safeguarding policy is paramount to informing staff and anyone working on behalf of the Council with the knowledge they need to work effectively. It ensures the safety and wellbeing of residents, based on local and national guidance and best practice.
- 1.2 This safeguarding policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, has been updated to ensure that the Council's procedures are clear, accessible and current. It is a joint policy for safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm, therefore it makes reference throughout to both the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board. Both of these bodies have had sight of the policy and inputted to its content.

2.0 Safeguarding in Woking

- 2.1 The Safeguarding Officers Group meets quarterly and is chaired by the Lead Safeguarding Officer. This group includes representation from across the organisation to ensure that consistent messages are given and that each directorate has a named safeguarding champion who has knowledge to support safeguarding referrals. Current safeguarding champions include staff from Family Services, Housing, Customer Services, Community Safety, Environmental Health and HR. The group updates the organisation on safeguarding procedures and practice, reviews learning from serious case reviews and oversees trends in safeguarding referrals from the Council, in order to inform training and development needs. The group is responsible for keeping safeguarding procedure up to date provides evidence and responses to statutory safeguarding audits.
- 2.2 Feedback from staff regarding the previous policy was that it was unnecessarily lengthy and staff did not feel that it was clear or accessible. Key changes in the 2022 policy have therefore placed the safeguarding flow-chart at the start of the document and generally includes less detail, instead signposting to the original sources of information mostly from the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Adults Board. Staff can therefore access the key information effectively and link to further sources for developing their continuous professional development and that of their teams as needed.

3.0 Corporate Strategy

- 3.1 The safeguarding policy underpins all corporate priorities to ensure that the organisation is safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in its core functions, wider projects and future plans.

4.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 4.1 The safeguarding policy does not hold budget implications and is produced and overseen through existing staffing.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 4.2 The safeguarding policy is to be read in conjunction with the Council's wider policies, as listed in the document.

Legal

- 4.3 The Council has a statutory duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

5.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 The safeguarding policy has been reworked utilising relevant information from the previous policy. However, the material has largely been updated and re-written to incorporate current procedures and guidance as informed by local and national safeguarding bodies. The Safeguarding Leads across Surrey District and Borough Councils have shared their policies and some content has been used in this policy, however, most of the narrative has come from the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board. Representatives from both of these groups have had sight of this policy and given feedback which has been acted on in order to produce this final document. The Lead Member for Safeguarding has also been consulted, as have the Safeguarding Officers Group.

REPORT ENDS