Healthier & Safer Scrutiny Committee

4th February 2016

Report of the Children & Families Safeguarding Officer

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to provide a quarterly safeguarding update to the Healthier & Safer Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members:

1. Review the report and raise any questions in relation to the content with the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer in collaboration with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Health, and thereafter endorse.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following Healthier and Safer Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13 August 2015 it was proposed that the Committee receive quarterly statistical reports on referrals made through the Safeguarding channel at Tamworth Borough Council arising from and under the Safeguarding policy. The proposal was approved and minuted. This is the first quarterly report produced following the said meeting.

In the quarter 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015 twelve safeguarding concerns were raised by staff in quarter 3 (October 2015 -December 2015). Three of the concerns related to children, with the remaining nine concerns relating to adults. Concerns were raised from a number of sources: community wardens, customer service staff and housing officers. The concerns related to neglect, financial abuse, welfare issues, emotional and physical abuse. All concerns were referred to the
appropriate agency. A drive to further develop and embed a robust safeguarding culture within the organisation is ongoing.

**Safeguarding Training**

Depot staff including the Environmental Health team received refresher safeguarding training focusing on recognition and response to abuse. Awareness was also raised within these sessions around current safeguarding issues that include: modern slavery, Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation.

Housing staff, including Supported Housing and Housing Solutions officers received a training session that focused on adult safeguarding. The Staffordshire County Council Adult Safeguarding Training Officer supported the Children & Families Safeguarding Officer with the delivery of this session.

Taxi drivers safeguarding training – the Children & Families Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Manager have developed a safeguarding presentation for taxi drivers. The Environmental Licensing Officer is supporting with the implementation of the training sessions. Taxi drivers who have registered on the funded NVQ course will attend the safeguarding training session as part of the NVQ curriculum. Alternative sessions will be provided for taxi drivers who have not registered on the NVQ course.

Safer recruitment training – the Children & Families Safeguarding Officer is supporting the Head of Organisational Development to develop a safer recruitment training session aimed at managers/staff who are involved in the recruitment of staff to work with children or adults at risk. The key learning objectives are:

1. Understand the key features of staff recruitment that help deter or prevent the appointment of unsuitable people
2. Be aware of policies and practices that minimise opportunities for abuse or ensure its prompt reporting
3. Help participants begin to review their own practices in recruitment with a view to making them safe
4. To develop skills and understanding to be able to recognise where additional questions may need to be asked in the interview process

The course will enable the Children & Families Safeguarding Officer to highlight the importance of managers -whose staff are working or coming into contact with children or adults at risk - to include safeguarding as an agenda item at supervision sessions.

Tamworth Castle and Tamworth Assembly Rooms have developed internal safeguarding procedures that compliment the corporate safeguarding policy, these are relevant to these specific service areas and support the council in developing and embedding a robust safeguarding culture, throughout its services.

The Children & Families Safeguarding Officer alongside the Environmental Licensing Officer and Anti-Social Behaviour Housing Officer attended a modern slavery conference held in Staffordshire. The information from the conference will be incorporated into the level 1 safeguarding presentation.
PREVENT training

Prevent is part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST. The CONTEST strategy was created to protect the UK from international terrorism and is led by the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism at the Home Office.

There are four strands to the strategy:

1. Prevent - to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
2. Protect - strengthening our borders, infrastructure and public spaces from attacks
3. Prepare - where we cannot stop an attack, to reduce its impact by responding effectively
4. Pursue - to disrupt or stop terrorist attacks

The aim of the Prevent strategy is to support the reduction of racism and inequalities, and the promotion of cohesion. Prevent focuses on working with individuals and communities who may be vulnerable to the threat of violent extremism and terrorism. The overall principle of Prevent is to safeguard vulnerable individuals.

Prevent training is being delivered to staff in January and February.

The Children & Families Safeguarding Officer is supporting the work of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Staffordshire & Stoke Adult Safeguarding Board around transition arrangements for those vulnerable children reaching 18 and who therefore move from children to adult services.

The Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board District safeguarding subgroup convened an interim meeting in January to look at a new business plan for 2016-17. The business plan will detail how District Councils support both the Children & Adult Boards in delivering their priorities. Alongside this work the Council will be required to complete and submit a peer audit focusing on two section 11 audit standards in Spring. A full section 11 audit will be undertaken later in the year.

Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership continues to provide a valuable multi-agency information sharing forum for staff. The weekly meeting enables staff to share vulnerability concerns early with other key agencies and coordinate a multi-agency response where appropriate. The Children & Families Safeguarding Officer is currently working with the Police Partnership Officer to develop a more appropriate template for recording minutes of the meeting, and to clearly identify risks.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED
The only option apart from producing the report, would be to not produce a report. This report has been prepared at the request of the Chair of Healthier and Safer Scrutiny Committee

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. The cost of training and materials will be met from existing budgets.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

The Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy has been risk assessed and no significant risks exist. From a legal perspective the authority is meeting its expectations and requirements in relation to vulnerable children and adults at risk.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

The policy and staff in this important service will continue to operate locally and in conjunction with partners to sustain the levels of support, training and guidance required.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tamworth Borough Council has both a legal and moral duty to protect vulnerable children and adults at risk from harm. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 along with the associated statutory guidance sets out our legal responsibilities for protecting children. The Care Act 2014 along with associated statutory guidance recognises and reinforces that organisations make a significant contribution to adult safeguarding. Where a member of staff has concerns that a child or an adult with care and support needs, is at risk of, or is suffering abuse or neglect they must report these concerns.

REPORT AUTHOR

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