

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 21 APRIL 2021

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGULATORY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK OF ABUSE REPORT

EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to provide a biannual safeguarding update to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That members:

Review the report and raise any questions in relation to the content with the Assistant Director Partnerships in collaboration with the Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Community Safety, and thereafter endorse.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tamworth Borough Council has a legal responsibility to safeguard children and adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect. The safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect policy and procedure provides a framework for safeguarding, and demonstrates the council's commitment to safeguard children and adults at risk.

Safeguarding is integrated into the day-to-day operations of the council. The council responds to all safeguarding concerns raised in line with the safeguarding procedure. Reporting of concerns is fundamental in ensuring that children and adults at risk receive the necessary support to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The following information provides an overview of the number of safeguarding referrals received and an update on the safeguarding work that has taken place since the last update provided to the committee on the 8th December 2020.

Safeguarding Statistics

The number of safeguarding concerns referred via the council’s safeguarding reporting procedure for the date period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 are detailed in the table below:

Referral type	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Child referrals	9	8	3	2	22
Adult referrals	9	11	8	14	42
Total combined referrals	18	19	11	16	64

Table 1: Safeguarding concerns raised by staff 2020-21

Referrals continue to be received from a wide range of council staff including, customer service officers, housing solutions officers, tenancy sustainment officers, sheltered housing managers, private sector housing officers and members.

A quarterly and yearly overview of safeguarding referrals is attached at Appendix 1.

Safeguarding children and adults at risk policy and procedure

The safeguarding policy and procedure has been reviewed, updated and circulated to staff via Astute. Guidance for staff in responding to individuals threatening suicide has been embedded within the safeguarding policy. A number of briefing sessions introducing the guidance to frontline staff have been delivered.

Appropriate staff are also able to access a half day online suicide awareness and prevention training course delivered by Mind via Zoom.

The training will help staff to:

- Tackle misconceptions and stigma regarding suicide
- Recognise the signs that someone may be at risk
- Have open and honest dialogue about suicide
- Use a simple 4 step suicide intervention
- Signpost to local support services

Safeguarding Training

Level 1 safeguarding training is delivered to staff/members via eLearning or face-to-face sessions (due to current restrictions face-to-face sessions are delivered via Microsoft Teams). 2020-21 has seen the development and rollout of two safeguarding eLearning modules to staff and members. Level 1 safeguarding training must be refreshed every 3 years and is delivered as a rolling programme.

Level 2 safeguarding children training is delivered by the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) training team. Staffing roles that require this enhanced level of training have been identified and officers requested to complete this training. The training is delivered via Microsoft Teams and 8 officers attended the training in the

last quarter of 2020-21.

Level 3 safeguarding children training provides subject specific training courses. Appropriate staff are encouraged to attend courses to gain better understanding of the subject area and improve practice; going forward the Partnership Vulnerability Officer will be working with managers to identify relevant safeguarding courses that will support staff in their job role.

Level 4 specialist training i.e. Designated Safeguarding Lead training. This training is specifically for individuals with operational responsibility for receiving concerns about the safety and welfare of children and young people, and who make decisions about what action needs to be taken. The Assistant Director Partnerships attended the training in the last quarter of 2020-21.

Taxi driver safeguarding training

The Partnership Officer has been working with the partnership team at Newcastle Borough Council to develop and pilot a safeguarding training course webinar for taxi drivers. The safeguarding training course webinar will be delivered to small groups of Tamworth licensed taxi drivers throughout 2021-22.

Modern Slavery

The Committee have recently requested an update on the Partnership approach to Modern Slavery which is included within the Vulnerable Persons and Contextual Safeguarding priority.

Modern Slavery refers to the offences of human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. This can then be considered as five sub threats: sexual exploitation of adults; trafficking of adults into conditions of labour exploitation; trafficking of adults into conditions of criminal exploitation; trafficking of minors into conditions of sexual, criminal or labour exploitation; and other forms of exploitation. Staffordshire has seen a gradual increase in the reporting of Modern Slavery which is in line with the national picture.

The Partnership approach is as follows:

- The publication of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement [Safeguarding | Tamworth Borough Council](#)
- Staff training to identify threat and risks including partners duty as a First Responder
- Inclusion of Modern Slavery within safeguarding policies
- Attendance at County tactical meetings with Staffordshire Police to identify hotspot areas and emerging trends
- Joint Partnership operations at targeted premises where appropriate
- Information on the Council's webpages on modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism [National referral mechanism guidance: adult \(England and Wales\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Contextual Safeguarding

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking; online abuse; teenage relationship abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

The Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE) is the forum for safeguarding children at risk of exploitation within a partnership arena. MACE meetings take place bi-monthly, the Partnership Vulnerability Officer attends and contributes to this meeting. The partnership team are currently working with the Staffordshire County Council Families First Child Exploitation Coordinator, to explore how the council can strengthen current partnership working arrangements to prevent child exploitation, and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

The following projects are currently being delivered to provide additional support to vulnerable children and young people.

Sapling Project

The Sapling Project supports young people in the 7-11-year-old age group who are at risk of being excluded from education, via direct / targeted work with the young person and their family.

Vulnerable Adolescence Support Programme (VASP)

The Vulnerable Adolescence Support Programme, delivered through a whole family approach, enables young people and their families to “own their own road to change” through the development of resilience which is empowered by networks of support within the family, education and the community.

Prevent

Prevent’ is part of the government’s overall counter-terrorism strategy which is called CONTEST. The aim of Prevent is to reduce the threat from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy has three specific objectives:

1. Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
2. Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
3. Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

The Assistant Director Partnerships is the district council representative on the County Prevent Board. The Prevent audit has been completed and returned to the Board. The Assistant Director Partnerships along with the Vulnerability Officer will undertake a piece of work to review the current Prevent work stream and develop an action plan in response to audit findings.

Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership (TVP)

The Partnership Vulnerability Officer, Community Partnership Manager, Assistant Director for Partnerships and the Tamworth Harm Reduction Hub Sergeant are currently reviewing the terms of reference and governance arrangements for the TVP.

The weekly partnership meeting continues to be well attended by representatives from statutory organisations. The partnership provides a joined-up response to vulnerability within the community and endeavours to provide help at the earliest opportunity to improve outcomes for vulnerable people.

Vulnerable Persons and Contextual Safeguarding (including Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health) remains a priority for the Tamworth Community Safety Partnership.

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 IMPLICATIONS

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 children and adults at risk from harm and abuse. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 along with the associated government 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.

REPORT AUTHOR

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Partnership Vulnerability Officer

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)

[Care Act Statutory Guidance](#)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Safeguarding referral overview