

Waverley Borough Council: Annual Safeguarding Report

Subject: Annual Safeguarding Report: April 2021 – October 2022

Author: Samantha Hutchison and Katie Webb

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1. Background

Waverley Borough Council has a responsibility to adhere to safeguarding legislation set out in the Working Together To Safeguard Children 2018 framework and The Care Act 2014 for vulnerable adults.

Best Practice under the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 framework suggests borough and district councils report every 12 months on their safeguarding practice towards children. The Care Act 2014 section 42 places the responsibility of an annual adult safeguarding report with the local safeguarding adults board – which for Waverley, the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board publishes.

2. Purpose of this report

At Waverley, we have a joint safeguarding policy for both children and vulnerable adults and this report will evaluate safeguarding protocol and practice within the council from April 2021 – 30 September 2022. The report will also inform on the audit performed on internal safeguarding this year by Southern Internal Audit Partnership as part of our internal audit programme. Annex 1 provides key findings from the internal audit.

3. Safeguarding practices from April 2021 – September 2023

I. Key activities

During this period the council has:

- Started to deliver on the Action Plan which is now monitored through the Internal Safeguarding Board and Audit Committee.
- Held four internal safeguarding board meetings - one focussed specifically on safeguarding protocol for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Held four internal safeguarding monitoring meetings to review all referrals to Surrey County Council services, action taken and any follow up required.
- Held four safeguarding champion meetings.
- Performed an internal management review on a specific safeguarding case – including officer involvement, action taken as well as identifying future learning. This case is now subject to a Surrey Adult Safeguarding Case Review.
- Included a Safeguarding Action in the Corporate Compliance area of the Council's Service Plan 2022-25

(HDC13.9 - HoS to ensure that all staff within the service are aware of the current Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults-updated2020.docx process and procedures including the Safeguarding referral process and that any issues are dealt with in a prompt manner. Where required make sure that key members of staff complete appropriate training recommended by Waverley's Safeguarding Board.)

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- Ensured the annual PAM process identifies safeguarding training requirements.
- Delivered a safeguarding training session for Managers who report directly to EHoS, EHoS, Strategic Directors and the Chief Executive.
- Delivered bespoke safeguarding awareness sessions to Careline, Customer Services, Housing Rents Account Team, Housing Maintenance staff and external contractor Ian Williams.
- Provided Suicide Prevention Training to the Housing Management Team
- Ensured Waverley Training Services staff completed; Level - 2 Advanced Safeguarding Children, Safer Recruitment Training, Level 3 - Safeguarding Adults Training and Level 3 -Designated Safeguarding Lead Training.
- Facilitated new starter E-learning for all councillors on safeguarding – however the take up from councillors has been low.
- Used 2 articles in Cascade to raise awareness of the council's safeguarding reporting and recording process.
- In partnership with Guildford Borough Council delivered two South West Surrey 'Ask Me' Domestic Abuse Webinars to staff, partners and local businesses.
- Provided annual funding to support the work of the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Surrey Safeguarding Adult Board.
- Attended the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Conference

II. Data for April 2021 – September 2022

During this period, we have had 97 staff monitoring forms where the cases feature the following safeguarding concerns

Adult Safeguarding

- 47 cases featuring mental health – including suicide
- 11 cases featuring adult self-neglect
- 5 cases featuring adult exploitation
- 47cases featuring domestic abuse / coercive control
- 3 cases featuring financial abuse
- 3 cases featuring modern slavery
- 2 cases featuring substance misuse
- 1 case featuring physical abuse
- 3 cases did not fall into a specific category

Child Safeguarding

- 8 cases featuring child neglect
- 3 cases featured young people presenting themselves at being at risk of being homeless at the council offices
- 3 cases featuring child exploitation
- 1 case of possible honour-based violence

The table below indicates the services areas where the referrals originated

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Service area	Number of concerns raised
Audit	1
Careline	1
Communities	4
Corporate	1
Customer Services	9
Environmental Health / services	8
Finance	6
Homes for Ukraine	6
Home Choice	10
Rents team	1
Senior Living	2
Housing management	25
Housing Development	1
Housing Options	12
HR	1
Legal	2
Licensing	1
Parking	1
Parks and Countryside	1
Planning	2
WTS	2

Additionally, the council has

- Responded to 25 MASH enquiries relating to children– where 20 of these enquiries had some interaction with council services.13 of these 20 were WBC tenants.
- Not received any MASH for adults which does not correlate with the safeguarding monitoring data
- Provided a Summary of Involvement request to the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board for a possible Safeguarding Case Review.
- Provided a Summary of Involvement request, senior officer panel representative and independent management review from the Safer Waverley Partnership in relation to a joint Domestic Homicide / Adult Safeguarding Case review.

III. Safeguarding referrals and monitoring

The Internal Safeguarding Audit highlighted the two areas below as particular areas of concern.

- There is no regular monitoring of concerns recorded in ECINS for compliance with the safeguarding policy.
- Although the Internal Safeguarding Board was introduced following the last audit to provide leadership and co-ordination of the council's approach to safeguarding, there

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is no established reporting framework to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are discharged.

In response to these points,

- The Internal Safeguarding Board decided to hold a separate meeting quarterly to review and monitor safeguarding cases and referrals.
- ECINS was replaced with a Safeguarding Monitoring Form for officers to record safeguarding cases, referrals and action taken. These cases are to be compiled on an excel spreadsheet for review at the safeguarding monitoring meeting. All safeguarding cases are stored in a restricted folder. We are working on the safeguarding monitoring form to be transferred to an online form via the liberty create work programme.

Throughout this year, there are some anomalies in relation to the monitoring information we hold. Our central referral and monitoring data does not include every safeguarding case that frontline services are managing due to certain teams noting their safeguarding concerns as part of business as usual within their case management systems Orchard or Jigsaw.

Some officers have struggled to understand the need for a central record of safeguarding referrals and hence our data is not complete. This presents a risk to the council acutely demonstrated through the Summary of Involvement request from Surrey Safeguarding Adult Board for a possible Safeguarding Case Review and the current Safer Waverley Partnership joint Domestic Homicide / Adult Safeguarding Case review.

4. Aims and Objectives October 2022 onwards

I. Respond to increasing demand

There is no doubt that since the pandemic the pressure around safeguarding vulnerable children and adults has increased. This combined with stretched services at Surrey County Council has resulted in many cases no longer meeting their adopted threshold of intervention.

We are seeing many level 4 cases now being deemed level 3 cases and therefore left with us to manage.

In response to this, we will

- Establish a central safeguarding operational group for frontline staff whose primary role will be to review all safeguarding cases across the council on a monthly basis and ensure necessary support from other agencies is in place
- Establish a mechanism to receive feedback from children and Adult MASH referrals.
- Facilitate training for staff on note taking and recording for safeguarding records.
- Include in our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults at Risk Policy a protocol on the corporate safeguarding monitoring process.
- Establish a mechanism to receive feedback from children and Adult MASH referrals.

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ii: Develop safeguarding knowledge, expertise and risk management.

Safeguarding Champions

Following the 2018 internal safeguarding audit, the role of the safeguarding champion was introduced. The purpose of the role being to provide a consistent approach to safeguarding concerns raised by staff across all service areas.

The discrepancies experienced in reporting and risk management highlight that the role of the safeguarding champion is not working as well as it could.

The report also found that in addition, that due to the increased complexity of safeguarding cases it had not been realistic to ensure all Safeguarding Champions were trained to the appropriate level to deal with these cases when safeguarding was not the primary function of their role therefore this function has fallen Community Services Manager and Communities Support Officer which is not sustainable.

Developing Knowledge and Facilitate Key Training

It has been identified that amongst our staff there is confusion as to who manages the safeguarding risk and consequently there is a need to reiterate that multi- agency forums such as the Safer Waverley Partnership Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting (CHaRMM), Surrey Police Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination (MATAC) for high-risk domestic abuse cases and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) **do not** replace the council's risk management processes for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

These forums should be part of a safeguarding plan for our safeguarding cases.

We can also see via a review of the data that risk assessments and safeguarding plans are not routinely used in high risk safeguarding cases

The internal independent management review for the current Safer Waverley Partnership and Surrey Safeguarding Adult / Domestic Homicide Review has also identified the need for specific mental health and suicide prevention training, particularly in relation to domestic abuse.

In response to these issues, we recommend that

- The role of the safeguarding champion is removed as it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure safeguarding is a priority.
- All staff where safeguarding responsibilities are a key part of their role undertake advance level safeguarding children and / or vulnerable adult training.
- All staff where safeguarding responsibilities are a key part of their role to complete mental health and suicide prevention training.
- Mandatory Safeguarding training for all councillors as part of their induction following elections in 2023.

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- We continue to work with partners to provide learning opportunities following serious case reviews
- We make risk assessments and safeguarding plans part of the safeguarding process on high-risk cases.
- A dedicated safeguarding role sits within community services to support all council officers in the management of safeguarding cases.

5. Conclusion

This annual report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022 and provides key insights to the council's approach to safeguarding children and adults.

It is evident that high risk safeguarding cases are becoming more prevalent to frontline services and it is important that we strive to achieve best safeguarding practices in our management of these issues.

In response to some of the challenges we face, we have adapted an Action Plan that will be monitored by the Internal Safeguarding Board (Annex 2). This plan includes actions to

- Establish a central safeguarding operational group whose primary role will be to review all safeguarding cases across the council on a monthly basis.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding training – that includes risk management/record keeping and safeguarding plans is available to all staff in frontline roles and is managed through Performance Agreement Meetings.
- Revise The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults at Risk Policy to reflect the outcomes and recommendations of this report

6. Actions for Corporate Management Board

The Internal Safeguarding Board requests that Corporate Management Board

- Consider this Annual Safeguarding Report for 2021/2022
- Approve the Action Plan (Annex 2)
- Approve the creation of a dedicated safeguarding role to support all officers in the management of safeguarding cases.

Internal Safeguarding Audit 2020/21

As part of the council's Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21, Southern Internal Audit Partnership undertook a review of the council's internal safeguarding processes.

The audit report was received on 18 July 2021.

The review focused on safeguarding policy and how compliance with policy is ensured, monitored and reported.

The review also looked at arrangements for managing concerns and referrals - including the sharing of information with partner agencies.

The findings of this audit mirror the findings from the 2020 Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Section 11 Self-Assessment Audit.

Summary Finding of the Safeguarding Audit

Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

Key Observations

Areas assessed to be working well/controls are effective:

- a. There is a safeguarding policy setting out how the Council will meet its obligations to safeguard children and adults at risk; the policy is dated January 2020 and has a review date of January 2022.
- b. Safeguarding information, including access to the policy and processes, is available to staff from a link on the homepage of the intranet; members of the public can access safeguarding information via the website.
- c. The safeguarding policy includes a clear framework for dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- d. An Internal Safeguarding Board was introduced following the previous internal audit in 2018 with responsibility for overseeing the Council's safeguarding responsibilities, outcomes of the Section 11 Audit, delivering the actions of the audit and monitoring and evaluation of all safeguarding referrals.
- e. There are safeguarding champions across the council to provide a consistent approach to dealing with and recording safeguarding concerns raised by staff and elected members.
- f. Waverley Borough Council is represented at key safeguarding meetings and forums including Surrey Safeguarding Leads Meeting (Children and Adults at Risk), Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership Executive and Surrey Safeguarding Children Executive Group.

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- g. Measures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding training; we found that a course evaluation form was sent to attendees for safeguarding training carried out via zoom in October 2020.

Areas where the framework of governance, risk management and control could be improved

1. There is no regular monitoring of concerns recorded in ECINS for compliance with the safeguarding policy.
2. Although the Internal Safeguarding Board was introduced following the last audit to provide leadership and co-ordination of the Council's approach to safeguarding there is no established reporting framework to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are discharged.
3. Portfolio Holder information in the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Corporate Safeguarding Board Terms of Reference are out of date; The Corporate Strategy does not set out the Council's role in safeguarding, and it is not included as a Portfolio Holder responsibility on the Council website.
4. Roles, responsibilities and targets for Safeguarding Champions are not included in performance agreements.
5. The Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk states that Safeguarding is referenced in the general conditions of contract for suppliers, however further discussion showed this is not the case.
6. Members do not have access to the safeguarding policy online. There have been no recent or regular communications to staff or members to promote the policy.
7. From a sample of five new starters, two had not completed safeguarding induction training within one month of appointment. Outstanding training has not been followed up recently due to other operational priorities.

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Action Plan

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Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Priority (RAG)
1. Review the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults at Risk Policy	Sam Hutchison / Katie Webb	31 May 24	Medium – policy is reviewed 6 monthly
2. Include in protocol / policy. If there hasn't been a referral on the central system for risk management then need to know why.	Sam Hutchison / Katie Webb	31 May 24	High
3. Establish a central safeguarding operational group whose primary role will be to review all safeguarding cases across the council on a monthly basis.	Sam Hutchison / Katie Webb	First meeting 12 Dec 22	Complete
Agree Terms of Reference for the safeguarding operational group	Sam Hutchison / Katie Webb	17 January 23	
4. Ensure risk assessments and safeguarding plans part of the safeguarding process on high-risk cases.	Sam Hutchison / Katie Webb	Started to implement	Established SG case conference or complex cases
5. Training for staff on how to accurate note taking and recording.	Katie Webb / Paul Stevens	31 March 24	High

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6. Mandatory Safeguarding training for all councillors as part of their induction following elections in 2023.	Fiona Cameron Katie Webb	May 2023	Complete
7. Establish a mechanism to receive feedback from children and Adult MASH referrals.	Sam Hutchison / Katie Webb	Ongoing as feedback is patchy – would like a consistent approach	Complete – feedback from SSAB on process for feedback
8. Continue to develop and implement an online report it and a recording and monitoring report with Liberty Create Forms for the Internal safeguarding to review quarterly	Cecilia Beck – IT Programmer, Katie Webb, Community Services Manager & Clare Arnold, Community Support Officer	CB / CA testing form to allow for updates on cases to be recorded	Medium – current process is working well
9. Review the role of the safeguarding champion	Sam Hutchison and Katie Webb	Complete – Create SG Coordinator Role	SG Role going to Executive Nov 23
10. All staff where safeguarding responsibilities are a key part of their role staff to complete mental health and suicide prevention training.	Kate Ferguson / Sam Hutchison and Katie Webb	31 March 24	High
11. All staff where safeguarding responsibilities are a key part of their role to undertake advance level safeguarding children and / or vulnerable adult training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrey Children/Adults thresholds for a safeguarding response • Staff ownership of safeguarding cases 	Kate Ferguson / Sam Hutchison and Katie Webb	31 March 24	High
12. All staff where safeguarding responsibilities are a key part of their role to undertake Domestic Abuse Awareness Training	Katie Webb / Southwest Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service	31 Dec 23	Training scheduled for 13 Dec 23
13. Work with partners to provide learning opportunities following serious case reviews, including domestic abuse in older residents	Sam Hutchison and Katie Webb	Ongoing – as each review is concluded	Medium