

Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	Wednesday 8 th December 2021
Report Title	Safeguarding Policy refresh 2021
Cabinet Member	Cllr Angela Harrison, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson
Lead Officer	Stephanie Curtis, ECS Manager
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. For Cabinet to approve the revised Safeguarding Policy and associated appendices

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the amendments that are proposed to be made to the Safeguarding Policy and associated appendices and asks that Cabinet agree the revisions made.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Safeguarding Policy was last reviewed in 2019 and is subject to an annual review to ensure that it reflects any legislative or procedural changes. There had been a delay to the planned refresh due to the pandemic and whilst internal and external audits were completed for safeguarding.
- 2.2 The main amendments that have been made to the previous version of the Safeguarding Policy are below:
- Foreword has been amended to reflect new Chief Executive in post;
 - References to 'Safeguarding Champions' has been removed from the Policy as no longer felt that these champion posts are needed as safeguarding is well embedded within teams;
 - Legal duties (section 3) have been amended to reflect:
 - Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Requirements
 - Duties in relation to advocacy services for adults (as recommended by Kent Safeguarding Adults Board audit)
 - Duties in relation to Carers Assessments (as recommended by Kent Safeguarding Adults Board audit)
 - Support to care leavers required (as recommended by Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership audit);

- Upcoming duty in relation to preventing serious violence.
- Section 8 has been added which details the escalation process and the process for which case reviews would need to take place. There was a recommendation this be added by the external audit completed by the Kent Safeguarding Adults Board, however with an increase in cases needing to be escalated due to a differing view by SBC officers and those from another partner this discusses how this should be done. There are still some escalation paths that we need to determine within other agencies (such as health partners), however the principle for escalation as documented remains.
- Section 9 has been added which discusses procurement and contract management and the separate processes in place for these in a safeguarding context.
- Section 10 has been added to ensure clarity regarding the roles of the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership and the Kent Safeguarding Adult Board, at the recommendation of external audits.
- Section 12 which includes the training plan for staff has been reviewed. An addition has been made which includes suicide awareness training inputs for all staff that have contact with residents. There is a large amount of content for completion, with many refreshers for staff due.
- Appendix 1 has been added which details the case standards for which the safeguarding team need adhere to. These had existed as a separate document but have been integrated into the policy to ensure they are also kept under regular review, as recommended by the internal audit.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 For Cabinet to approve the revised Safeguarding Policy and associated appendices

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 That the Safeguarding Policy is not revised. This is not recommended as although the current Policy is largely accurate in relation to legislative requirements, it is not complete; and a number of recommendations were made by internal and external audits for inclusion within the policy.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with team managers, of those teams that identify the greater number of safeguarding concerns.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This policy refresh will contribute to the corporate priority 3 to tackle deprivation and create equal opportunities for everyone
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Existing staffing in place (1 FTE ECS Manager; and 1 FTE Safeguarding Officer) to manage the implementation of this policy. Temporary 0.5 Wellbeing officer in post until March 22 to support increase in referrals and quarterly updates provided to SMT on case levels and any concern in resource levels.</p> <p>In order to deliver the proposed staff training plan, there is a financial cost for some of the sessions. However this would be met through existing budgets or contributions made to the safeguarding Boards/partnerships.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Children Act 1989 states that the child's welfare is paramount and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Children Act 2004 specifies the statutory guidance relating to Swale Borough Council under this agenda.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Policy also highlights other legislation relating to this agenda and requirements upon the Council including The Care Act 2014, Counter Terrorism Act 2015; Modern Slavery Act 2015; and Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Through the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and addressing safeguarding concerns of vulnerable individuals, there will naturally be some cases where the individual is also supported to address crime and anti-social behavioural issues, through referrals and information sharing with other agencies.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No air quality, or climate/ecological emergency implications have been identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	The Safeguarding Policy will ensure that the Council responds appropriately to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. This also extends to welfare concerns that may not have met the thresholds for referrals to statutory services, but by addressing the needs identified, improves the community's health and wellbeing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	This revised Safeguarding Policy details the Council's response to Safeguarding and the process by which it should be managed.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Safeguarding has in the past been one of the risks identified in the corporate risk register, but due to the levels of controls in place as identified by this Policy is now only within the Housing and Communities Service Plan Risk Register.

	An internal audit on safeguarding was completed in October 2021 with a classification of 'sound'. A number of recommendations were identified for inclusion within a revised Safeguarding Policy.
Equality and Diversity	No specific equality and diversity implications have been identified at this stage. All safeguarding concerns are handled in an appropriate manner for the case in question.
Privacy and Data Protection	The safeguarding database 'My Concern' referenced within the Policy as part of the recording process, has a high level of security – all users must be approved by the safeguarding team and given an appropriate level of access. All referrals can also securely be saved here and case notes. The Policy has also been updated to reflect data retention and case standards for logging/monitoring cases to ensure a high level of privacy and data protection compliance. Section 4.4.10 discusses information sharing.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Swale Borough Council Safeguarding Policy 2021 Refresh

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers.

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding policy Refresh 2021

Safeguarding Policy

December 2021 Review

Foreword



Ensuring that the most vulnerable in our community are protected is something which is the responsibility of us all. This policy provides essential information about how we will deal with concerns about the safety of a vulnerable child and adult. This policy also sets out clearly how we will work with others and support people to report abuse or concerns. It also ensures that, through training and review of our policies, the council will always work in a way which promotes safeguarding and tackles any form of abuse of vulnerable people

Larissa Reed, Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council

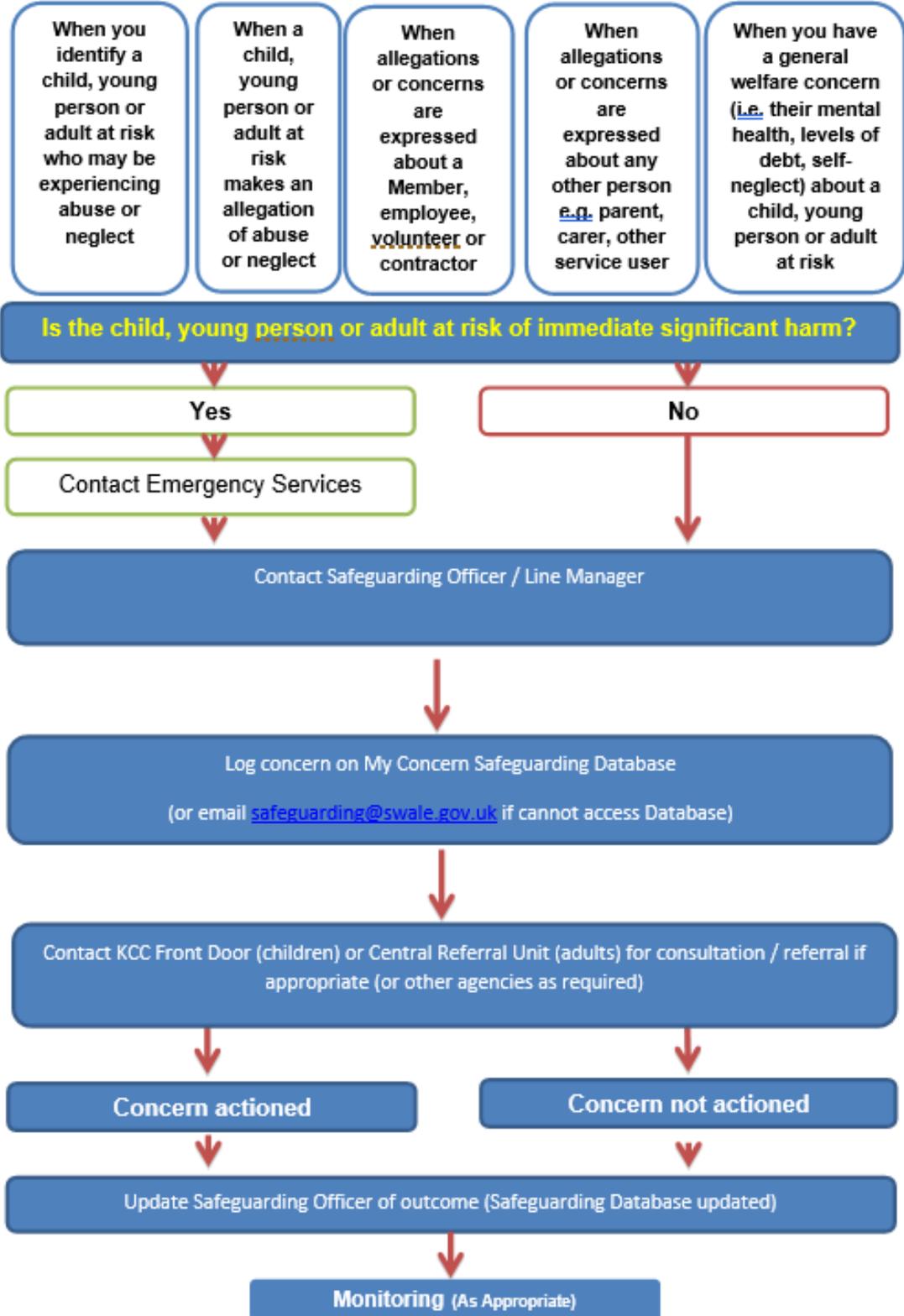


It's not my job. It's none of my business.

How many times have we heard or read that? Well, Safeguarding is our job and it is our business. If in doubt, report it. Someone else can decide whether there is any substance – you don't have to; you just have to be concerned. Better to be Safe than Sorry.

Councillor Angela Harrison, Swale Borough Council

Safeguarding 'Quick View' Procedure



1. Introduction

Safeguarding is 'everyone's business'. This policy sets out Swale Borough Council's (SBC) responsibilities under the Children Act 2004, Care Act 2014 and other legislation to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy and the associated procedures are to protect and promote the welfare of the children, young people and adults using or receiving services provided or commissioned by SBC. The policy also aims to support the Council, its officers, elected members and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. Swale Borough Council is not a Children's Services Authority and it is not the role of the Council to investigate allegations of abuse. However, all Elected Members, employees, volunteers and contracted services providers have a clear responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child, young person or adult at risk may be a victim of significant harm or abuse.

2.2 This policy demonstrates how SBC will meet its legal obligations and reassure members of the public, service users, Members, employees, volunteers and those working on behalf of the Council as to:

- a) What they can expect SBC to do to protect and safeguard children, young people and adults at risk;
- b) That they are able to safely voice any concerns through an established procedure;
- c) That all reports of abuse or potential abuse are dealt with in a serious and effective manner;
- d) That they can raise even a basic welfare concern for a child or adult and that appropriate action will be taken;
- e) That there is an efficient recording and monitoring system in place;
- f) That Members, employees, volunteers and contractors receive appropriate training;
- g) That robust 'safer' recruitment procedures are in place.

3. Legal Duties

3.1 The Children Act 1989 states that the child's welfare is paramount and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 10, 11 and 13 of the Children Act 2004 and specifies what is required of SBC. This includes:

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
- A clear statement of the Council's responsibilities to children, available to staff;
- Clear lines of accountability for work on safeguarding and promoting well being;
- Using the views of children and young people to help shape services;

- Safer recruitment procedures for those coming into contact with children and young people;
 - Appropriate training for staff;
 - A duty to promote inter-agency cooperation between named agencies, including district councils;
 - Representation on, and participation in, local safeguarding children's boards;
 - Effective working relations within the Council and with other agencies to safeguard and promote well-being and to share information effectively.
- 3.2** Under the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, SBC has a duty to co-operate with Kent County Council (KCC) in discharging its duties as a Children's Services Authority and to promote the well-being of children and young people.
- 3.3** KCC is the lead agency for the protection of adults at risk. SBC is committed to working in partnership with KCC in delivering their responsibilities around Safeguarding Adults.
- 3.4** SBC must carry out its responsibilities by ensuring that the needs and interests of children, young people and adults at risk are considered by all Members, employees, volunteers and contracted services, when taking decisions in relation to service provision.
- 3.5** SBC policies and procedures are governed by The Care Act 2014 that provides the legal framework for how local authorities (in this case Kent County Council) and other parts of the system such as relevant partners (which includes SBC as a district council) should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. SBC has a duty to co-operate with KCC in the exercise of:
- (a) their respective functions relating to adults with needs for care and support
 - (b) their respective functions relating to carers, and
 - (c) functions of theirs the exercise of which is relevant to functions referred to in paragraph (a) or (b).
- 3.6** The Counter-Terrorism Act 2015 dictates that local authorities are vital to the Prevent work which exists to reduce the risk of people being drawn into terrorism. Local authorities must use counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLPs) for SBC must be used to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism. SBC must incorporate the duty into existing policies and procedures to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities ensuring there are clear and robust policies to identify and safeguard children at risk. Furthermore SBC must develop a Prevent action plan should there be a risk to identify interventions to be actioned. SBC must also ensure that appropriate frontline staff, including those of its contractors, have a good understanding of Prevent and are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism and are aware of available programmes to deal with the issue. The Community Safety Plan is utilised to ensure a consistent response to Prevent is provided across local partner agencies and that this duty is met by SBC.

- 3.7** Under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 SBC has a statutory duty to report and provide notification to the National Crime Agency about any potential victims of modern slavery or trafficking that we encounter. Adult victims are able to remain anonymous should they wish to do so. SBC are under a duty to co-operate with the Commissioner.
- 3.8** The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 had placed a number of additional duties on Swale Borough Council that must be considered within our safeguarding response. These include:
- The definition of Domestic Abuse has been changed to cover those ‘personally connected’;
 - Children are now to be seen as a victim of Domestic Abuse in their own right, if they hear or experience the effects of the abuse and should be able to access support;
 - Appropriate priority will be given to victims of Domestic Abuse and like for like lifetime tenancies will be upheld. Victims should not find that their tenure is affected by fleeing DA;
 - The individual fleeing DA should be offered safe accommodation or at the choice of the victim to remain in their own home have access to the sanctuary scheme and local support;
 - It is recognised that many people will wish to flee with animals, and will try to accommodate needs or look for solutions;
 - That there should be promotion of the one stop shops and local support groups and services;
 - Swale BC must contribute to the local partnership board and creation of a local needs assessment.
- 3.9** Section 68 of the Care Act 2014 requires that the Local Authority (upper tier authority) must arrange for an independent advocate to represent and support an adult who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or review, where the adult has ‘substantial difficulty’ in being involved in the process and where there is no other ‘appropriate person’ to represent them. For Swale Borough Council, although this duty does not apply directly to us, officers must have due regard to this need and ensure that appropriate signposting can take place to advocacy services as required.
- 3.10** Under the Care Act 2014, a carer is an individual who provides or intends to provide care for another adult. If a carer has any level of needs for support, they are entitled to a carer’s assessment, which would be conducted by Kent County Council. Swale Borough Council must have due regard for the needs of carers and make a referral for a needs assessment, as required.
- 3.11** The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a number of duties on housing authorities to work jointly with a children’s services authorities in relation to housing of care leavers. All young people need to have safe and appropriate accommodation to meet their needs, with planned supportive transitions to independent living. Any homelessness risks should be identified and acted upon at an early stage.

3.12 Under the Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 21, when enacted, will place a duty on responsible authorities, including district councils, to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. For Swale Borough Council, this duty will be discharged through its cooperation with the Swale Community Safety Partnership. If any victims of serious violence are identified through the safeguarding processes, appropriate referrals will be made to support agencies.

4. Policy Position

4.1 Principles

SBC believes Safeguarding is committed to the following principles for children, young people and adults at risk:

- Their welfare is paramount;
- Whatever their background and culture, parental or pregnancy status, age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, they have the right to participate in society in an environment which is safe and free from violence, fear, abuse, bullying and discrimination;
- They have the right to be protected from harm, exploitation, abuse, and to be provided with safe environments to live and play;
- Working in partnership with them, alongside their parents or carers and other agencies, is essential to the promotion of their welfare.

4.2 Policy Statement

SBC is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by, or on behalf of, the Council. The Council will:

- a) Endeavour to keep residents and service users safe from abuse. Suspicion of abuse will be responded to promptly and appropriately. We will always act in the best interests of the child, young person or adults at risk;
- b) Proactively seek to promote the welfare and protection of all children, young people and adults at risk living in Swale at all times;
- c) Ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk through robust 'safer recruitment' procedures;
- d) Deal with any concern raised by a Member, employee, volunteer, contracted service provider, or member of the public appropriately and sensitively;
- e) Any Safeguarding referrals made by a Member, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the referrers may be required as prosecution witnesses;
- f) Not tolerate harassment of any Member, employee, volunteer, contracted service provider or child, young person or vulnerable adult who raises concerns of abuse or neglect;
- g) Work in co-operation with KCC as required under the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 to make appropriate changes and amendments to improve the

Council's safeguarding policies and procedures as recommended by Adult and Child Safeguarding Partnership Boards;

- h) Prevent abuse by using good practice to create a safe and healthy environment and avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse could occur;
- i) Establish an appropriate governance structure, made up with delegates from appropriate departments across the Council to monitor activity and make necessary improvements around this agenda, led by the Safeguarding Officer.

4.3 Scope

4.3.1 This policy covers all Members, employees and volunteers at SBC, including contracted service providers

4.3.2 While Members, employees, volunteers and contracted services providers are likely to have varied levels of contact with children, young people and adults at risk as part of their duties and responsibilities for the Council, everyone should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and be clear about what to do if they have concerns. Responsibilities are limited and it is important to remember the following:

IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY SBC MEMBER, EMPLOYEE, VOLUNTEER OR CONTRACTED SERVICE PROVIDER TO DETERMINE WHETHER ABUSE IS ACTUALLY TAKING PLACE

HOWEVER:

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEMBER, EMPLOYEE, VOLUNTEER OR CONTRACTED SERVICE PROVIDER TO TAKE THE ACTIONS SET OUT IN THE PROCEDURE, IF THEY ARE CONCERNED ABUSE MAYBE TAKING

4.4 Safeguarding Roles, Responsibilities and Governance in SBC

4.4.1 SBC offers a range of training dependent on the role. Safeguarding training offered ranges from basic awareness training via Elms E-Learning, to more in depth training provided through the Safeguarding Boards or other external training providers. Staff at SBC are assigned a role category which determines the level of Safeguarding training required. Below are the categories of staff roles. All staff will be advised of the required safeguarding training for their level by the Safeguarding leads, as agreed with Senior Management Team. This training plan is shown in Appendix I.

0 – No contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers;

1 – Limited contact with children/young people/adults at risk/ and/or parents/carers-no unsupervised contact;

2 – Regular contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers or any unsupervised contact;

3 – Professional advisers and designated leads for children’s and/or adults at risk safeguarding irrespective of the level of contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers.

4 - Strategic responsibility for safeguarding children and/or adults at risk for the organisation irrespective of the level of contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers.

4.4.2 Chief Executive or Officer from the Strategic Management Team (SMT)

The Chief Executive and SMT are responsible for ensuring that this policy and related procedures are implemented, monitored and consistently reviewed.

4.4.3 Lead Cabinet Member

The Member with the portfolio for safeguarding children and adults at risk is responsible for ensuring the implementation, consistent monitoring and improvements of the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures.

4.4.4 Economy and Community Services Manager

The Economy and Community Services Manager is responsible on behalf of the Head of Housing and Community Services for implementing this policy and procedures and ensuring regular monitoring.

4.4.5 Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children, young people and adults at risk appropriately and in accordance with the procedures that underpin this policy.

4.4.6 All Heads of Service must ensure that appropriate employees are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks and that their staff members comply with this policy and the related procedures.

4.4.7 All Service Managers (and Contract Managers responsible for contracted service providers) are responsible for ensuring that employees follow this policy and its related procedures and receive the safeguarding training and support they need, in line with their responsibilities and level of contact with children, young people and adults at risk.

4.4.8 All Members, employees and volunteers are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that actively safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible. They must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer.

4.4.9 Contractors, sub-contractors or other organisations funded by or on behalf of the Council are responsible for applying the correct safeguarding procedures. Please see section 9 of this policy for more information.

4.4.10 Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk. The lawful basis for processing most safeguarding-related personal data will usually be ‘public task’ or ‘legal obligation’, and the consent of the data subject is therefore not necessary. Information which is relevant to safeguarding will sometimes be ‘special category’ data, meaning it is particularly sensitive and therefore subject to more stringent restrictions. The Data Protection Act 2018 allows special category personal data to be processed without the consent of a child or an at-risk adult for the purpose of protecting their wellbeing or preventing harm to them, as long as the processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest and their consent cannot reasonably be obtained.

5. Safeguarding Procedures

5.1 Introduction

The procedure for reporting a concern or allegation informs all SBC Members, employees, volunteers and those contracted service providers that have accepted this policy, of what actions they should take if they have concerns or suspicions, or encounter a case of abuse or neglect in any child, young person or adult at risk.

Even for those experienced in working with child or adult abuse it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or already has taken place. Whilst it is accepted that staff are not experts at such recognition all staff have a duty to act if they have any concerns and discuss with an appropriate Safeguarding representative within SBC.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment that can occur in several forms which are not mutually exclusive.

<p>For children, types of abuse include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Psychological Sexual Grooming Child Sexual Exploitation Female Genital Mutilation Online Abuse/Cyberbullying/Bullying Child Trafficking/Modern Slavery Domestic Abuse Self-neglect/Self-injurious Forced Marriage 	<p>Types of adult abuse include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Sexual Psychological Discrimination Exploitation Financial Organisational Domestic Abuse Self-neglect/Self-injurious Modern slavery/Human trafficking Neglect and acts of Omission Female Genital Mutilation Inappropriate Restraint
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There are five main situations when Members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers may need to respond and report a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse. These are set out below:

5.2 When you identify a child, young person or adult at risk who may be experiencing abuse or neglect, you should:

- Stay calm and try to get another witness, if it does not compromise the situation;
- If you believe the person is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which any Member, employee or volunteer would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you must contact the relevant emergency service and notify the Safeguarding Officer, Line Manager or Head of Service;
- Immediately report to and inform the Safeguarding Officer, Line Manager or Head of Service (as appropriate and where possible);
- Record all details you are aware of and log your concern, as soon as possible, on the My Concern Database (Safeguarding Database). If you are not registered on the Database, please email your concern to safeguarding@swale.gov.uk
- Consultation with the Kent Front Door (Children Social Services) or Central Referral Unit (Adult social services) and/or referral to be made and recorded with support from the Safeguarding Officer/Safeguarding Champion/Line Manager.
- The Kent and Medway Self Neglect Protocol is in place to guide all agencies in the process to follow for cases of possible self-neglect by adults. As an identifying agency, it may be that Swale BC needs to lead this process. This protocol can be found at <https://kmsab.org.uk/professionals/kmsab-policies>
- Outcome of the consultation/referral to be recorded on the Safeguarding Database.

5.3 When a child, young person or adult at risk makes an allegation of abuse or bullying, you should:

- Stay calm and try to get another witness, if it does not compromise the situation;
- If you believe the person is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which any Member, employee or volunteer would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you must contact the relevant emergency service and notify the Safeguarding Officer, Line Manager or Head of Service;
- Listen carefully to what is said and allow the person to talk at their own pace, being careful not to compromise potential evidence;
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain it is likely that information will need to be shared with other responsible people, do not promise to keep secrets;
- Only ask questions for clarification, the use of open questions e.g. what, where, when, who? is advisable, do not ask leading questions (that suggest certain answers as this could compromise evidence);
- Reassure the child, young person adult at risk that they have done the right thing in telling you;
- Tell them what you will do next and who you will inform;
- Immediately report to and inform the Safeguarding Officer, Line Manager or Head of Service (as appropriate and where possible);
- Record all details you are aware of and log your concern, as soon as possible, on the My Concern Database (Safeguarding Database). If you are not registered on the Database, please email your concern to safeguarding@swale.gov.uk

- Consultation with the Kent Front Door (Children Social Services) or Central Referral Unit (Adult social services) and/or referral to be made and recorded with support from the Safeguarding Officer/Safeguarding Champion/Line Manager.
- Outcome of the consultation/referral to be recorded on the Safeguarding Database.

5.3 When allegations or concerns are expressed about a Member, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider, you should:

- Take the allegation or concern seriously;
- Immediately inform the Safeguarding Officer, Line Manager, Head of Service or Contract Manager (as appropriate);
- The Safeguarding Officer informs Human Resources or Contract Manager at the earliest opportunity, provides a report of the incident and the intended action in accordance with 'Managing Allegations' procedure;
- If you believe the child, young person or adult is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which you would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you should contact the relevant emergency service and then notify the Safeguarding Officer, Line Manager or Head of Service;
- Record all details you are aware of and log your concern, as soon as possible, on the My Concern Database (Safeguarding Database). If you are not registered on the Database, please email your concern to safeguarding@swale.gov.uk
- The Safeguarding Officer has a consultation with Kent Front Door/Kent Central Referral Unit or makes formal referral
- The Safeguarding Officer follows procedures outlined in 'Managing Allegations' procedure and makes contact with the KCC Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The KCC LADO can support Human Resources or Contract Manager with appropriate decision-making;
- Any Member, employee or volunteer can make a referral to the KCC LADO if they believe a case has been inappropriately or ineffectively investigated by SBC

5.4 When allegations or concerns are expressed about any other person (e.g. parent, carer, other service user), you should:

- Take the allegation or concern seriously;
- If you believe the child, young person or adult is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which you would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you should contact the relevant emergency service and then notify the Safeguarding Officer, Line Manager or Head of Service and immediately ;
- Immediately report to and inform the Safeguarding Officer & Line Manager or Head of Service (as appropriate);
- Record all details you are aware of and log your concern, as soon as possible, on the My Concern Database (Safeguarding Database). If you are not registered on the Database, please email your concern to safeguarding@swale.gov.uk and contact your team's Safeguarding Champion;

- Consultation with Kent Front Door/Kent Central Referral Unit and/or referral to be made with support from the Safeguarding Officer/Safeguarding Champion/Line Manager;
- Outcome of the consultation/referral to be recorded on the Safeguarding Database.

5.5 When you have a general welfare concern (i.e. their mental health, levels of debt etc) about a child, young person or adult at risk you should:

- Discuss your concern as soon as possible with a Safeguarding Officer – formal consultation or referrals to social care or the Police may not be needed, but a wider range of referrals to support agencies could be looked into and made.

5.6 For all concerns, there may be cases identified to the Safeguarding Officers that meet the criteria for the multi-agency Swale Vulnerability Panel. This panel focuses on adults that have been or are likely to be a victim of crime or ASB; are isolated; felt to be self-neglect; have a diagnosed, or felt undiagnosed, mental health condition; meet the threshold for statutory services but limited engagement. Cases should be referred to this panel by the Safeguarding Officers if it is felt the criteria are met, for a multi-agency discussion on how best to support the adult.

5.7 Recording Concerns

If any Member, employee or volunteer has concerns about the welfare or safety of a child, young person or adult at risk, or has concerns about the behaviour of a Member, employee or volunteer, it is vitally important to record all relevant details regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with the Police, KCC or other appropriate partners.

The My Concern Safeguarding Database is in place to record and manage all safeguarding concerns. A new Concern should be logged on the database for all events of concern (even if no referral is subsequently made).

The Safeguarding Database can be found at: <https://www.myconcern.education>

It is the responsibility of the person who directly observes/witnesses the event (e.g. living situation) of concern or who has participated in the meeting/conversation that has caused concern, to record details of the concern. The record should be clear which person provided the information and there must be clear differentiation between opinion and fact.

If the person who has witnessed/observed/participated in the event of concern and is unable to log their concern on the Safeguarding database, the details of the concern should be emailed directly, as soon as possible, to safeguarding@swale.gov.uk to alert the Safeguarding Officer. Their Line Manager should also be alerted to this, who may be able to log the concern on their behalf.

Records may be used for: Evidence for investigations and inquires; Court Proceedings; Monitoring Quality Assurance; and Disciplinary procedures. The Safeguarding Officer will then manage the process and follow guidance on information sharing, confidentiality, consent and making appropriate referrals to KCC and other agencies.

Appendix 1 details the case standards that are expected for the online case management of safeguarding concerns. This covers the logging of; ongoing management; and closure of concerns.

Employees will be allocated a My Concern Login within those teams that identify the greater number of safeguarding concerns. User accounts will be reviewed at least annually, or when notification of a leaver is received by the safeguarding team, with accounts deactivated as required.

6. Recruitment

SBC is committed to safer recruitment procedures set out by the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) Where it is identified that services or staff have regular contact with children, young people and adults at risk, or will hold safeguarding responsibility, then appropriate procedures are initiated by the recruiting Manager and the relevant Human Resources Officer. Managers who are recruiting for a post of safeguarding level 2 or 3 are required to have completed 'Safer Recruitment' training within the last 3 years.

It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to undertake a risk assessment for the job description and person specification for those roles likely to involve regular and/or substantial unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk before recruitment takes place. This will determine the safeguarding level of all roles and ensure that only appropriate individuals are selected to undertake DBS procedures.

7 DBS Disclosures

SBC is not a Children's Services Authority therefore scope for working directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults is limited. DBS disclosures should only be sought where a Member, employee or volunteer has substantial, regular or unsupervised contact with children, young people and adults at risk as part of their duties or responsibilities for, or on behalf of, the Council.

SBC will refer any member of staff or volunteer to DBS for consideration for the barred list(s) if SBC thinks a person has:

- harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult
- has satisfied the harm test; or
- has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence and;
- the person they're referring is, has or might in future be working in regulated activity and;
- the DBS may consider it appropriate for the person to be added to a barred list

Please see the separate DBS Policy for further information.

8. Escalating Concerns and Case Reviews

There may be times when officers working on a safeguarding case cannot resolve the concern, or may disagree with another professional from another agency as to the best way forward. These should in the first instance be flagged to the ECS Manager or Safeguarding Officer, if not already done so. These officers may determine the best path forward, particularly if relating to another agency, may be to raise to the Head of Housing and Communities. A referral can also be made to the Vulnerability Panel to problem solve an approach for a case.

The Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board have an escalation policy in place for when professional disagree about a way forward with a safeguarding adult case. This can be found at <https://kmsab.org.uk/professionals/kmsab-policies>

There are also occasions when either the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board, Kent Children Safeguarding Multi-agency Partnership or Kent Community Safety Partnership convene a case review to identify any lessons that can be learnt from the handling of a case between agencies. There are set criteria for when each of these can be convened and procedures in place for their management, but are typically when there has been a death or serious harm caused. Details of these can be found as follows:

- Domestic Homicide review: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/partnerships/kent-community-safety-partnership/domestic-homicide-reviews>
- Safeguarding Adult Review - <https://kmsab.org.uk/professionals/kmsab-policies>
- Kent Child Safeguarding Practice review – <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/prcedures>

The ECS Manager and Safeguarding Officers will hold details of the procedures for these reviews and will be the point of contact for the lead agencies that may convene these reviews.

Should any officers feel that a case that they are working on meets the criteria for one of these reviews, the ECS Manager will lead on the completion of any relevant notifications to the above Partnership(s) as appropriate.

9. Procurement and contract monitoring

Where Council services are contracted externally, assurance needs to be in place that the contractor or sub-contractor adequately deal with safeguarding concerns. The Safeguarding Contract Management Framework is in place to manage this compliance. At the point of all procurement, all contracts with a level of engagement with children, young people or vulnerable adults need to be graded 'Gold, Silver or Bronze' depending on their level of contact. Compliance to a range of measures will be confirmed by the Safeguarding Team. A

contractors ongoing compliance to these safeguarding measures will also need to be monitored by the lead contract manager, in line with the Council's Contract Monitoring Procedure.

10. Safeguarding Partnership Boards

Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KCSMP) is set-up as a result of the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and is led by the Local Authority (Kent County Council), Kent Police and Health to ensure partners work together to safeguard children. Swale Borough Council has a duty to cooperate with this partnership and any relevant sub-groups, including compliance with its partnership policies. This includes to complete a bi-annual Section 11 Audit to ensure compliance with all safeguarding children legislation. Further details on the KSCMP are available at <https://www.kscmp.org.uk>

The Kent Adult Safeguarding Board is an equivalent statutory partnership to ensure member agencies work together to help keep adult's safe from harm and to protect their rights. Again, Swale Borough Council has a duty to cooperate with the partnership including its sub-groups; compliance with multi-agency policies; and to complete a bi-annual audit to ensure compliance with all legislation to safeguard adults.

11. Key Safeguarding Contacts

Safeguarding Officer:

Email: safeguarding@swale.gov.uk

This email must be used to ensure all safeguarding concerns or questions are picked up by the Officers and wider team. Personal email addresses should not be used for reporting of new concerns or urgent case updates.

Phone: 01795 417457 or 'Safeguarding' on Skype

Kent County Council

Kent County Council Adults Social Services – **03000 41 61 61**
Social Services Children & Families – **03000 41 11 11**
Social Services Out of Hours – **03000 41 91 91**

Kent Police

Emergency – 999
Non-emergency - 101

12. Safeguarding Training

Table 1 details the agreed minimum level of training expected for each Safeguarding Contact Level (see section 4.4.1 for definition of levels). Specific roles will also be offered enhanced training to improve their safeguarding response.

E-learning will be required to be refreshed every three years. The Face-to-face training will also be three years, with the exception of Safeguarding Children (Designated Officer) which will be refreshed every two years.

Training compliance will be reported quarterly to Senior Management Team.

Table 1: Safeguarding Training Plan: Minimum learning requirement

Safeguarding Contact Level	Level of Contact definition	Minimum learning requirements
0	No contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers	Elms e-learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding Children 2. Safeguarding Adults 3. Combined Safeguarding Issues 4. Domestic Abuse
1	Limited contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers-no unsupervised contact	Elms e-learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding Children 2. Safeguarding Adults 3. Combined Safeguarding Issues 4. Domestic Abuse 5. Suicide Awareness
2	Regular contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers or any unsupervised contact	Face-to-Face <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent (Counter-Terrorism) training 2. Modern Slavery training 3. Child Sexual Exploitation training 4. Child Protection: Basic Awareness 5. Safeguarding Adults 6. Domestic Abuse 7. Suicide Awareness
	Professional advisers and	Face-To-Face

3	designated leads for safeguarding children and/or adults at risk, irrespective of the level of contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent (Counter-Terrorism) training 2. Modern Slavery training 3. Child Sexual Exploitation training 4. Child Protection: Basic Awareness 5. Safeguarding Adults 6. Domestic Abuse 7. Suicide Awareness 8. Safeguarding Children (Designated Staff)
4	Strategic responsibility for safeguarding children and/or adults at risk for the organisation irrespective of the level of contact with children/young people/adults at risk and/or parents/carers.	<p>Elms e-learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding Children 2. Safeguarding Adults 3. Combined Safeguarding Issues 4. Domestic Abuse <p>Face to Face</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding Children (Designated Staff) 2. Safeguarding Adults

Appendix 1 – Case Standards

Introduction

This case note guidance is to be used to inform the management of safeguarding cases by Swale Borough Council and its Safeguarding Leads. It aims to ensure that a 'good' standard is reached and maintained for all safeguarding case records.

It is important that case records are 'good' as they demonstrate the actions taken to safeguard individuals; can evidence why decisions were made and support provided; and allow for better information sharing and cross-agency communications. They may also be provided as evidence in case reviews by other agencies. It will also ensure that other members of the Safeguarding team can sufficiently cover the service in the absence of the Safeguarding Officers(s).

These standards have been compiled following guidance and advice from the Kent Safeguarding Multi-Agency Partnership and internal Audit team.

Recording of new cases

- All concerns should be logged on the My Concern database for management.
- All new cases should be logged within 2 working days of them being raised to the Safeguarding Leads,
- As far as possible, the officer raising the concern should be encouraged them to log the case on the database. If this is not possible, the reporting team should be included in the initial details of the concern.
- A new case should be logged for all concerns raised to the team.
 - If the personal details of the individual(s) in question are unknown such as name, these should be logged as 'unknown' but with as many details as possible to differentiate them.
- A case owner should be allocated to each case at the point it is logged, dependant on the date it is received by the team. For example:
 - Case allocation to Leanne Cook if received on a Monday/Tuesday/Weds PM
 - Case allocation to Laura Harmsworth if received on a Wednesday AM/Thurs/Fri
- For concerns raised by Housing Options, their housing database (Locata) must be reviewed at the point the concern is raised. Appropriate notes should be copied or transposed across to the Safeguarding Database to detail the safeguarding concern.
- All notes should be recorded in clear English, within any use of acronyms explained. These should also be explained in any notes copied over from Locata.
- As far as possible, distinction should be made between opinion and fact.

Ongoing case management

- Ongoing cases should be reviewed in a timely manner, a minimum of bi-weekly. If it is felt that a case does not require update on this frequency, the case notes should reflect the reasoning for this e.g. a meeting is due to take place in 2 weeks.
- If there are no updates to note, but the case review has been completed, a note should be added to state this.
- Case owners are responsible for flagging to the ECS Manager if their updates are falling outside of this time period.
- All case updates must be logged on the database within 2 working days of their receipt, or another team member be asked to complete if needed.
- An update should be logged that the case has been reviewed, even if there are no updates to provide.
- The case owner is responsible for logging of all updates on each case, unless they are on leave or off sick. In which case another member of the team will log these.
- Justifications should be added in for decision making where appropriate, such as information sharing or any deviation from procedures.
- Emails that detail any specific issues with the case and action taken, should be attached as separate files, rather than the body of the text copied and pasted into a file note. This does not need to be all correspondence.

Referrals and Outcomes

- All referrals should be logged in the 'referral section' of the database.
- This should include when it is not necessary to make a referral, due to the case already being open to another agency.
- Outcomes of referrals must be chased prior to a case being filed. If an agency is unable or unwilling to provide an outcome, in discussion with the ECS Manager a decision can be made to file a case without this.

Case Filing

- A case should be filed when:
 - I. the appropriate agencies are engaged with the family/individual and taking appropriate action;
 - II. The individual/family has been signposted to support;
 - III. The individual/family will not consent to referrals and its deemed they have capacity;
- When it is determined that a case can be closed, a note should be logged detailing the reasoning for this and the outcomes achieved.
- Case closures must be reviewed by the ECS Manager. A task must be raised for them to review and close the case. If it is the case that the ECS Manager is the lead for a concern, another Safeguarding Lead should review that case for closure.

- Case closures must be completed within 2 weeks of being raised.
- If the reviewing officer does not feel the case can be closed, this must be documented within the case notes and feedback to the case owner.
- As far as possible, case closures should be completed by the ECS Manager or an officer independent to the case.

Handovers

- A handover email should be sent to the other Safeguarding Officer (or ECS Manager in the absence of the other Safeguarding Officer) at the end of a working period of any cases that require update, review or action for the following period.

Management Oversight and Review

- In Safeguarding Officer's 121s, cases that have been open longer than 3 months will be discussed. Any other cases that the Safeguarding Officer feels should be raised may also be discussed, including any that they are struggling to progress or are facing difficulty with.
- Team meetings will also be used monthly to highlight any cases that are of concern or an officer is unsure how to progress.
- A performance report will be presented to Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis. A Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for the development of this.

Re-opening of cases

- If a similar concern is raised for an individual within 1 month of a previous one being filed, the concern can be re-opened and where possible, allocated to the previous case lead.
- If a longer time period has passed or the concern is of a different nature, a new concern should be logged.

Review

This guidance will be reviewed on an annual basis.