

Teignbridge District Council
Executive
4th November 2024
Part i

Safeguarding Policy Review

Purpose of Report

To seek authority to amend the Safeguarding Policy

Recommendation(s)

The Executive recommends that:

- (1) the Safeguarding Policy in Appendix 1 be adopted
- (2)a member working group is established to review the inclusion of DBS checks for members within the Council Safeguarding Policy and DBS policy, and consider safeguarding training becoming mandatory

Financial Implications

See section 5.1 for the financial implications arising.

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Legal Implications

There are no legal implications per se arising from this report save that the Council has a duty to review and update its policies as appropriate

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Risk Assessment

The EIA is attached and no negative impacts have been identified

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Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

There are no specific environmental or climate change implications

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Executive Member

Executive

4th November 2024

Cllr Linda Goodman-Bradbury

Appendices/Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Amended Policy

Appendix 2 – Amended Safeguarding Policy EIA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 The current policy was adopted in May 2021. A policy review has been undertaken by the Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager in consultation with the Executive Member and HR. The review has considered recommendations from the Internal Audit report completed in November 2023, inclusion of new sections on the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and updates to legislation and guidance. Views were also sought from safeguarding leads from across the County.

2. BACKGROUND

2.0 The policy sets out our duties as a Council relating to safeguarding and the commitment that the Council believes all children, young people and adults have the right to be safe and deserve protection from harm and abuse.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager is an active member of the Devon Safeguarding Officers Network where operational practice and policy is discussed. This network includes the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Councils and includes the Partnership Business Manager from the Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership and the joint managers of the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Policy is built around the Council's duties under the Children's Act 2004, the Care Act 2014 and other relevant legislation mentioned in section 5 of the Policy.

3. AMMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY

3.1 The amended policy includes clearer definitions of who is covered by the safeguarding legislation and key contacts have been updated. There is more specific mention of volunteers and new sections have been included in relation to events, land hire and grant information. A further addition is a section on the role of the LADO which was recommended by the internal audit report. There is also a new section covering the emerging focus on Corporate parenting and mental capacity.

4. FURTHER ACTION

4.0 In order to be confident in discharging our legislative duties and ensure mitigations to reduce safeguarding risk is in place it is essential to ensure that all staff and members are aware of their role. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This is detailed in section 7 of the Policy but also should be underpinned by awareness and training. Safeguarding training is mandatory for staff and compliance is reviewed by HR.

4.1 Elected Member Training

As part of the Council's Induction, elected members were offered training which was delivered by the Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager and ASB and Safeguarding Officer. Twenty-four Members attended the Safeguarding induction training on 21 and 28 June, and 7 July 2023. Feedback from those that attended was positive, rating the session 4.86 out of 5 with 86% saying that attending the session increased their knowledge and 100% felt confident to report concerns and were clear about the way to do so.

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It would be best practice to have all members undertake safeguarding training to ensure awareness of what is covered by legislation, safeguarding risks, referral processes and how to report.

4.2 Members Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Many specific staff roles require a check being undertaken before employment which is known as a DBS check. Although many of our residents may assume this is the case for members there is currently no legal mandated requirement.

It would be considered best practice from a safeguarding perspective given the role of members:

- As trusted community leaders at a very frontline ward level, there is often direct engagement with community members
- Being provided sensitive information and where consent is given by the person, being involved in safeguarding discussions
- Ensuring the Council provides an effective response to safeguarding

Whilst there is no mandated requirement, this is now in place in Devon County Council and East Devon and being developed in Mid Devon. A recommendation for Procedures Committee to review the potential to mandate this for members is included as part of this report.

5. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

5.1 Financial

Safeguarding training for Elected Members could be delivered internally so there would be no additional costs.

There would be a financial implication for requiring DBS checks for Elected Members. A basic DBS check is £18 so for 47 members this would be a cost of £846. There would however be administrative tasks required to undertake the reviews and address any findings. There are also options for outsourcing the DBS completion and review. If the recommendation is approved members should undertake a DBS check the procedure and method of obtaining the check would alter the costs.

5.2 Risks

There were no risks identified in the EIA. Implementation of the Policy is an important way of reducing inequality to ensure vulnerable people are protected.

5.3 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

4. Conclusion

The Policy helps the Council meet its legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility the amendments to the Policy will enhance our response.