



## Communities Scrutiny Group

Thursday, 22 July 2021

### Safeguarding Update

## Report of the Director – Neighbourhoods

### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To provide an update on the Council's approach to safeguarding.
- 1.2. The Group is asked to acknowledge and provide feedback on the report and the supporting presentation.

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group considers the report and provides feedback on the Council's approach on safeguarding.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

To update the Group on the Council's approach to safeguarding.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Council has adopted the Nottinghamshire District and Borough Council Children and Adults Safeguarding Policy which is available on the Council's website.
- 4.2 The aims of this Policy are as follows:
  - Ensure that concerns about abuse and neglect to children and adults at risk are reported promptly to the appropriate authorities.
  - Offer guidance and support to employees and volunteers to assist them in recognising and responding to indicators of possible abuse or neglect of a child or adult at risk.
  - Clarify the organisations role and responsibilities in protecting children from abuse and neglect and to ensure that its actions follow the appropriate guidance.
- 4.3 Led by Nottinghamshire County Council the Policy helps to ensure a consistent policy framework and is recognised and adopted by all Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils and their key partners. The principles of this Policy apply equally to children and young people, and adults

at risk. An adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness either mental or physical. Officers, contractors and volunteers supporting the Council should therefore recognise their responsibility to protect children, young people and adults at risk from all types of abuse. This can be achieved through maintaining a sound basis for recruitment, training and development, monitoring and adequate supervision which enables the Council to work together with other agencies and where appropriate parents/carers in making sure that the needs and welfare of these groups remain paramount.

- 4.4 More specifically the Council's duties include ensuring that employees are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults and children. This includes ensuring employees are aware of how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns, including signs of possible maltreatment, abuse or neglect. This is particularly relevant for certain public facing services such as environmental health, planning etc where officers will be visiting homes and workplaces. Knowing when and in what circumstances to report concerns to the County wide Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the critical role. In discharging this responsibility, the Council ensures that all staff undertake mandatory awareness training / e-learning and also additional training when appropriate, for example in the last year this has included training on coercive control.

## **5. Children**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on the Council to make arrangements for ensuring that its functions and services are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In meeting this responsibility, the Council must undertake a self-assessment audit which is provided in the Appendix.

## **6. Adults**

- 6.1 The Care Act 2014 requires that an upper tier local authority must co-operate with each of its relevant partners, and each relevant partner must co-operate with the upper tier local authority in relation to relevant functions, one of which is specifically stated as protecting adults with care and support needs who are currently experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect. It is this part of the legislation which places the requirement on the Council to act in cases of suspected neglect or abuse.
- 6.2 Adult safeguarding is managed through the NSAB (Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board) which is made up of representatives from various organisations including the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, NHS, local authorities and voluntary organisations. Their main responsibility is to work together to help adults who may have been abused and to help prevent such abuse. The NSAB meets with a wider partnership of agencies including

District Council's twice a year to check the Board's progress, provide support and guidance to the Board, and to raise awareness of key issues relating to safeguarding. Through this mechanism wider partnership members have the opportunity to contribute to the overall strategic direction of safeguarding adults in Nottinghamshire. As a result of this collaborative working with multi-agency partnerships across Nottinghamshire, the NSAB are able to focus on prevention and improving strategic links particularly in relation to; carers, social isolation, fraud against the vulnerable and self-neglect.

- 6.3 Recently NSAB has decided to create an interim one-year plan rather than the usual three-year strategic plan. This gives the Board the flexibility to respond at pace to the challenges facing partners in responding to rapidly changing Covid-19 pressures.
- 6.4 In this manner the Board will be able to complete outstanding actions from 2020/21 and begin to shape new work streams and priorities. In consultation with their partners the Board has also agreed the following three strategic priorities for the plan:
- Quality Assurance (QA);
  - Prevention (P); and
  - Engagement (E).
- 6.5 Covid-19 has unsurprisingly had a marked impact on referral numbers in 2020-21 as there were 6,698 Safeguarding Referrals which is 884 (15%) more than the previous year, this being the most safeguarding referrals on record.
- 6.6 A more positive development is that the MASH is now receiving a higher proportion of referrals that meet the criteria of Section 42 Care Act enquiry which has increased from up to 43% to 47% this year. The higher proportion of such referrals mean that more resource at the MASH can be focused on supporting those most at risk of abuse and neglect.
- 6.7 The most prevalent type of abuse in Rushcliffe is neglect; however, this remains below the County average at 28%. The majority of other abuse types are at similar rates to the average within Nottinghamshire. The data is used to shape the Board's response to abuse and neglect in Nottinghamshire and this helps to ensure the wider partnership will benefit from targeted learning opportunities and communications to reflect the most prevalent type of abuse.
- 6.8 The proportion of neglect and organisational abuse associated with enquiries received by the MASH decreased when the restrictions were announced by 8% and 4.8% respectively. This is a significantly higher decrease when compared regionally and nationally.
- 6.9 However, there was a substantial increase in the proportion of domestic abuse, which more than doubled to 12.1% of all enquiries. This was similar to the national trend, with 27% of local authorities noting an increase, but the average remained relatively static regionally.

## **7. Risks and Uncertainties**

None identified.

## **8. Implications**

### **8.1 Financial Implications**

The fulfilment of the Council's safeguarding responsibilities is contained in the annual budget setting process.

### **8.2 Legal Implications**

Ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements is an important part of the Council fulfilling its statutory duties.

### **8.3 Equalities Implications**

The Nottinghamshire District and Borough Council Children and Adults Safeguarding Policy has been subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment and equality considerations have been incorporated into its development. The monitoring of the Policy, and in particular referral data is also reviewed from an equality perspective to identify any specific needs or concerns, which can then be highlighted and actioned through the Boards plan and by the wider partnership.

### **8.4 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications**

Ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements is an important part of the Council fulfilling its statutory duties and wider community safety responsibilities.

## **9. Link to Corporate Priorities**

Quality of Life	The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy has a direct impact on our resident's quality of life providing vital support for our most vulnerable residents.
Efficient Services	The reporting arrangements detailed in the Policy and via the MASH help to ensure that public sector services are working efficiently and effectively to discharge their duties and help to protect those most at risk.
Sustainable Growth	NA
The Environment	NA

## **10. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group considers the report and provides feedback on the Council's approach on safeguarding.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	David Banks Director - Neighbourhoods 0115 9148438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	<a href="https://nottsdistrict.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html#ch_young">https://nottsdistrict.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html#ch_young</a>
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Section 11 Self-Assessment Audit 2021