

REPORT OF: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

TO: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 25th June 2015

Contact Details: Sarah Astin
Tel. No: 1782
E-mail: sarah.astin@pendle.gov.uk

FAMILY SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To discuss and agree the updated corporate Policy for Pendle Council (attached) and associated learning and development needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive agrees:

- (1) To endorse the updated Family Support and Safeguarding of Children Policy;
- (2) To agree an appropriate way to communicate the updated Policy and its learning and development implications with Elected Members.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To support Councillors and staff in protecting the welfare of young and vulnerable people in Pendle;

To comply with our statutory duty to safeguard children and young people (Children's Act 2004).

Background

This Policy was first produced and approved in 2010, and was updated in 2011, 2013 and was taken to Management Team in November 2014.

It has now been refreshed again, in light of the Rotherham report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the recent Council restructure. It was taken to Management Team on 26.5.15.

A Section 11 Audit was carried out on Pendle Council in March 2015, by a Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Officer. Feedback to date is positive regarding Pendle Council's approach to safeguarding children.

Whilst Pendle Council has, and continues to, demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding children in the Borough, we recognise that there is always more that can be done, as outlined below.

Our Policy and Procedure

The updated policy for family support and safeguarding children is presented here for approval.

The policy and procedure has considered the following:

- Links to existing Council policies and practices at district and county level;
- Appropriate contacts for dealing with issues;
- Staff training needs;
- A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Pathway (Appendix 1 to the Policy);
- Examples of situations (Appendix 2 to the Policy);
- A system for recording incidents (Appendix 3 to the Policy)
- Reporting domestic abuse (Appendix 4 to the Policy)

The Policy still recognises the broad scale of support which families may require on the Continuum of Need, and has been refreshed to include:

- A joint policy and approach to safeguarding between Pendle Council, Liberata and Pendle Leisure Trust;
- Explicit reference to Child Sexual Exploitation as part of 'understanding abuse' on p.5;
- Additions to the Code of Conduct for staff, volunteers and councillors on p.11, to include reference to Pendle Leisure Trust's previous policy;
- Updated web links to our policies and other websites/guidance;
- Changes in staffing – regarding the Designated Safeguarding Children Officer role and addition of a Pendle Leisure Trust Lead;
- Common Assessment Framework CAF pathway (appendix 1) – updated in light of changes at LCC and removal of Help Direct role;
- Examples of situations (appendix 2) – updated to remove references to vulnerable adults and to include examples relevant to Pendle Leisure Trust services;
- Reporting domestic abuse (appendix 4) – updated by the PDVI Manager;
- A 'benchmark' of good practice with other District Councils.

Learning and Development

Some members of staff across the council have previously completed some online and face to face training in relation to CAF and Safeguarding Children. More recently, a presentation has been delivered to staff in Parks, Grounds Maintenance and Enforcement (Environmental Crime) including definitions, policy, procedure and the CAF and Safeguarding Children processes.

It is proposed that this presentation is updated to include specific reference to Child Sexual Exploitation (including how to spot signs of grooming) and to reflect the changes noted above.

It is recommended, due to these changes, and to ensure appropriate staff are trained, (or have refresher training if previously completed), that a corporate training programme for Family Support and Safeguarding is introduced. This would be recognised in the PMR process, and include:

Safeguarding Level 1 – for all members of staff

E-learning module via the Lancashire Children and Young People's Trust website:

<http://cypvle.lancsngfl.ac.uk/>

For those who don't have online access, managers should request that the above-mentioned presentation is delivered. This takes about 20-30 minutes and can also be delivered to others on managers' request, for example in a team meeting.

Safeguarding Level 2 – for front-facing staff with contact with children/young people and/or parents/carers.

This is available via the e-learning as with Level 1, however it is recommended that an external trainer delivers this as a face-to-face session. This would be delivered jointly to the appropriate Pendle Council, Liberata and Pendle Leisure Trust staff.

The Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has provided a list of approved trainers and there is potential to join the training sessions with other districts in Lancashire to achieve economies of scale.

The Lancashire CAF and Continuum of Need (CON) – for front-facing staff with contact with children/young people and/or parents/carers.

E-learning module via the Lancashire Children and Young People's Trust website:

<http://cypvle.lancsngfl.ac.uk/>

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) training – for those members of staff identified in the 'contacts and communications' section of the policy (p.15):

- Senior Manager with responsibility for safeguarding
- Designated Safeguarding Children Officer
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Children Officer
- Liberata / Human Resources and Staff Issues Lead
- Pendle Leisure Trust Lead

This would be a one to two day face-to-face training course, delivered either by the LSCB or the NSPCC. Again, there is potential to join the training sessions with other districts in Lancashire to achieve economies of scale.

Elected Members

Awareness -raising for Elected Members is recommended (based on the LGA: Tackling child sexual exploitation, A resource pack for councils, Dec 2014). The training would link to, or be incorporated into, the Member training programme, particularly for those Elected Members who sit on Committees such as the Licensing Committee. Ideally it would form part of the induction training for committee members and portfolio holders, and be a mandatory requirement – even if Members have completed the training previously.

Next Steps

The updated Family Support and Safeguarding Children Policy needs to be communicated with staff so they are aware of the amendments.

The Safeguarding Children and Young People procedure / poster needs to be updated and to replace the previous procedure in council buildings.

The presentation (mentioned above) needs to be updated and delivered to staff as appropriate. The Designated Safeguarding Children Officer is happy to come and deliver the presentation to teams if it is felt this would be beneficial.

Training with staff to commence as outlined above. This will be coordinated by the Designated Safeguarding Children Officer, with support from the Learning and Organisational Development Officer.

An agreement should also be reached on how to communicate the agreed Policy and Procedure with Elected Members.

To continue the joint work with PLT, other districts and the LSCB. The DSCO has reconvened the meetings with other district DSCO's and LSCB representation, with an initial meeting in Pendle in May. The group will continue to share information as appropriate (for example in organising training sessions) and has agreed to meet on a quarterly basis going forward.

The Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) is in place and, whilst it is operating separately from the Children's Board, it is proposed that it will operate in a similar way to the LSCB. In light of this, it is expected that the LSAB will provide a similar directive to district councils as to that of the LSCB. A Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy should then be developed for Pendle, taking a similar approach to that of Safeguarding Children. This will be developed working together with other local authorities. A further report on this will be submitted in due course.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The CAF and safeguarding processes are particularly relevant to Pendle Council as a statutory 'duty to cooperate' partner under the Lancashire Children's Trust arrangements. They will also contribute to our delivery of Lancashire's Children and Young People's Plan and Burnley and Pendle Children's Partnership Board priorities.

Financial: Staff time for training and to record and potentially, follow up, family support or safeguarding issues when they arise is regarded as part of existing relevant job roles. Additional training costs to be funded from the central training budget and potentially achieve economies of scale by joining with PLT and other district councils.

Legal: Pendle Council has a statutory duty to safeguard children and young people (Children's Act 2004).

Risk Management: The risks of not having a process to deal with potential CAF and safeguarding issues are high for the families concerned, as well as for Pendle Council's reputation.

Health and Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Climate Change: None arising directly from the report.

Community Safety: Safeguarding children links directly to the work of the Community Safety Partnership in protecting our communities.

Equality and Diversity: Safeguarding children could be a particular issue in more deprived Pendle wards where other geographical inequalities exist.

APPENDICES

Family Support and Safeguarding Children Policy, including:
CAF Pathway / process (Appendix 1)
Examples of situations (Appendix 2)
Recording system (Appendix 3)
Reporting domestic abuse (Appendix 4)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/view.asp?siteid=3829&pageid=20739&e=e>