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| Report To: | SHDC Cabinet |
| Date: | 17 February 2026 |
| Subject: | South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Safeguarding Policy |
| Purpose: | Adoption of a new Safeguarding Policy |
| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr Elizabeth Jane Sneath - Portfolio Holder for Health Wellbeing, Conservation and Heritage |
| Report Of: | Emily Spicer, Assistant Director – Communities and Housing Services |
| Report Author: | David Postle, Wellbeing Service Manager & Deputy Strategic Lead for Safeguarding |
| Ward(s) Affected: | All |
| Exempt Report: | No |

Summary

Following the creation of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP), a review of the Safeguarding Policies has been undertaken. To standardise our approach to Safeguarding children and adults in the work we do, a single policy covering all three councils has been developed.

The key aim of the policy is to ensure our residents, officers and councillors will have a clear understanding of our responsibilities under the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014.

Recommendations

- a) That Cabinet adopts the joint SELCP Safeguarding Policy.
- b) That Cabinet delegates authority to the **Assistant Director – Communities and Housing Services** in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make **minor amendments to the policy**, ensuring it remains up to date with legislative changes and operational requirements.
- c) That the Assistant Director – Communities and Housing Services undertakes a **full review of the policy every four years**, with any proposed revisions presented to **Cabinet for approval** to maintain strategic oversight and governance.

Reasons for Recommendations

Under the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014, all local authorities are legally required to have safeguarding measures in place, helping to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Prior to the three councils moving to the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP), each council had their own safeguarding policy. Following the move to a single workforce, including having a single Strategic Safeguarding Officer for the Partnership, a single policy will ensure a standardised approach to safeguarding exists across the councils and its functions.

Other Options Considered

An updated single policy for each council was considered but discounted due to the possible confusion this may cause. Especially when considering the fundamental requirements of the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014 are the same for all three councils.

1. Background

- 1.1 While Safeguarding is widely accepted as everyone's responsibility, local authorities' duties are specifically detailed in the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014.
- 1.2 While the duty falls mainly to Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) as the top tier authority, the councils within the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP) work closely with LCC as second tier authorities. Our Safeguarding policy supports the Councils in protecting those who need safeguarding, providing a reference point and guidance for staff, Councillors and others such as contractors or volunteers acting on the Councils behalf.

2. The Safeguarding Policy

- 2.1 The policy aims to protect children, young people and adults who need safeguarding, ensuring the Councils play their full role, raise awareness of our duty, ensure a person-centred approach, putting the persons needs and wishes first, helping all those involved to achieve the best possible outcome.
- 2.2 Following the outcome of several national case reviews, we have added a section in the policy to explain what professional curiosity is in a safeguarding context. Using proactive questions to respectfully challenge to ensure situations are not simply taken at face value.
- 2.3 Specific details of named officers who are responsible for Safeguarding across the SELCP are also clearly detailed, providing robust support for officers and councillors, as well as clear reporting pathways should a member of staff or an elected member have a safeguarding concern to report, or simply wish to seek advice on a situation they are unsure about.
- 2.4 A further development included in the combined safeguarding policy for the SELCP has been to move the rolling out and monitoring of Safeguarding Training via the First4Learning system in use across the three councils. The mandatory training modules will be allocated automatically to each officer at a level required by the role they undertake for the council(s). Completion will then be monitored monthly, with Service Managers informed of any outstanding training throughout the year. Face to face sessions will also be arranged for those officers without access to a computer, Additional face to face sessions will be developed via the Strategic Safeguarding group to focus on key aspects of Safeguarding such as Professional Curiosity, as well as providing service managers with further guidance on their responsibilities.
- 2.5 A key approach to ensure safeguarding is at the forefront of what we do is through ensuring staff engage in regular supervision and team meetings, where safeguarding is discussed with their line manager and their peers. Allowing the sharing of good practice, but also ensuring officers are supported to process the impact of dealing with complex cases that often involve upsetting aspects, supervision is essential. The updated policy provides clear details for all involved, highlighting the importance of regular discussion of safeguarding during team meetings and supervision.
- 2.6 Moving to a joint policy also allows us to streamline the reporting process for safeguarding concerns within the SELCP. While LCC remain as the local authority with the main duty, coordinating and accepting direct referrals for safeguarding cases through the long-established direct telephone numbers for children (01522 782111) or adults (01522 782155), we have established a single email address for all general safeguarding enquires, as well as a dedicated electronic referral form, to speed up the process. Furthermore, an updated flowchart has also been developed taking account of updates to the reporting process.
- 2.7 Unchanged elements of the policy include: - Confidentiality, information sharing, multi-agency working, dispute escalation, whistle blowing, audit and quality assurance.

2.8 The policy will in future have a light touch review every year to allow the inclusion of any developments or actions from case reviews or updated processes introduced by LCC. A full review will be carried out every three years, requiring a return through the governance process.

3. Conclusion

3.1. A joint safeguarding policy will facilitate a standardised approach to safeguarding across all three councils in the SELCP, something that is essential following the creation of a single workforce.

3.2. SHDC Cabinet are asked to approve the adoption of the single policy.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

The joint policy will enable positive alignment of the safeguarding approach within the SELCP.

Corporate Priorities

None

Staffing

Adopting the joint safeguarding policy does not have any direct staffing implications; however it is worth noting following the alignment of the workforce across the SELCP, we now have a dedicated full time Safeguarding Officer in place, with all associated costs met by contributions from all three councils.

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

Having an up-to-date safeguarding policy is essential to ensure the SELCP meets its duties under the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014.

Data Protection

None

Financial

None

Risk Management

The risk of non-compliance with our safeguarding duty is increased without having a clear policy in place to guide staff and councillors on their responsibilities relative to

Chronological History of this Report

This is the first time a joint Safeguarding Policy document has been considered for adoption.

Report Approval

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| Report author: | David Postle, Wellbeing Service Manager & Deputy Strategic Lead for Safeguarding |
| Signed off by: | Emily Spicer, Assistant Director Housing & Communities, and Strategic Safeguarding Officer |
| Approved for publication: | Cllr Elizabeth Jane Sneath |