



## AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE OFFICER REPORT

### Safeguarding Audit - Management Update

#### 1. Introduction / Background

- 1.1 An internal audit was done by Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) on the SDC safeguarding framework and the report was produced in December 2023. The findings of the audit resulted in 14 recommendations, prioritised as follows: 2 High Priority; 10 Medium Priority; and 2 Low Priority. These are featured in the ARA report (Background Paper A).
- 1.2 Relating to the recommendations in the ARA report is a Management Action Plan which includes comments from the respective service manager and agreed action dates.
- 1.3 This Management Update will give insight into the actions carried out to date in respect of the recommendations.

#### 2. Main Points

- 2.1 Recommendation 1 (High Priority): A risk management process has been created in the form of a risk register and is now being populated by respective service managers following the approval of the Councils new safeguarding policy and procedures guide (by CS&L Committee on 14 March 2024).
- 2.2 Recommendation 2 (High Priority): In unison with the development of a new safeguarding policy and procedures guide, a range of measures have been introduced with regards to the management of safeguarding training for staff and elected members. Essentially these measures focus on determining whether a staff member should complete safeguarding Level 3 training in addition to the mandatory Level 1 and 2 training. These include:
  - a) The staff Selected Candidate Form, used at recruitment stage to make an offer of employment to someone, has been amended to capture (from appointing managers) the level of safeguarding training required for each post.
  - b) The staff Induction Plan has been amended to ensure the correct safeguarding training level required for the post, is included. The respective manager will continue to ensure the training is completed as part of the probationary review. HR will continue to ensure all elements of the induction plan are completed before formally signing off a probationary review.
  - c) A master spreadsheet is being created by HR, to capture all requirements for safeguarding level 3 training. Support for this is coming from the Leadership Management Team (LMT) to define which current roles / members of staff are required to undertake Level 3 training. The aim is to have this task completed by the end of April 2024. The requirements for Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks and respective management, are being combined with this in one system.
- 2.3 Recommendation 3 (Medium Priority): A new Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Guide (Appendix B) has been developed in line with the Councils Policy Development and Review Framework and reflects our statutory duties as determined by legislation

and national guidance. The guide was approved by Community Services and Licensing Committee on 14 March 2014.

- 2.4 Recommendation 4 (Medium Priority): Ubico give a presentation to new staff on their safeguarding responsibilities as part of their induction. Staff from SDC Community Services have set up a rota to ensure respective spot checks are being carried out on a quarterly basis, as part of a new monitoring system.
- 2.5 Recommendation 5 (Medium Priority): The HR service plan for 2024-2025 features a full HR policy review, to bring them in line with the Councils Policy Development and Review Framework. The DBS policy will be considered as part of this in the first quarter, with a completion expected by end of June 2024. Obtaining the correct data in respect of staffing and their roles, as outlined in 2.2, is required for the policy revision work to be accurate.
- 2.6 Recommendation 6 (Medium Priority): We are awaiting an update from Tara Skidmore on the progress of carrying out spot checks for DBS certification of housing contractors.
- 2.7 Recommendation 7 (Medium Priority): Services relating to the Canal Restoration Project and the Canal Engagement Project will carry out a review of DBS checks and their record keeping, once a review of the Council's DBS policy has been completed. Risk assessments will be updated once the policy and procedures have been completed.
- 2.8 Recommendation 8 (Medium Priority): A excel-based spreadsheet has been produced and is now functional, as the Corporate Safeguarding Group (CSG) Action and Decision-Making Log. This document is constantly 'live' in respect of the groups work and is used to capture and manage the actions and decisions of the group. It also includes a record of attendance at meetings for officers involved. Terms of Reference for the CSG have been updated since the approval of the policy and procedures guide (see 2.3) and these will be presented to the Strategic Leadership Team in July 2024.
- 2.9 Recommendation 9 (Medium Priority): The CSG agreed (on 28.03.24) that half yearly updates will be received by them on data, in reference to the following: concerns and incident reporting and referring; training participation and DBS checks. Further conversations with SLT will be held regarding how data is reported to the CS&L Committee.
- 2.10 Recommendation 10 (Medium Priority): Internal forms have been renamed as Report Forms to differentiate from that used for referrals. The matter of clarification on language, referencing internal and external safeguarding procedures and processes, has been addressed in the new policy and procedures guide (Background Paper B). The use of correct language (terminology) and familiarisation of correct procedures will be addressed via training and access to revised information on The Hub and Members Hub. A communication plan is being devised in which to introduce these revisions. The plan includes discussion by Leadership Management Team in quarter 1 of 2024/25 and an offer of bespoke support to service teams.
- 2.11 Recommendation 11 (Low Priority): A new Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Guide (Background Paper B) has been developed in line with the Councils Policy Development and Review Framework and reflects our statutory duties as determined by legislation and national guidance. The guide was approved by Community Services and Licensing Committee on 14 March 2014.
- 2.12 Recommendation 12 (Medium Priority): As stated in 2.2 and 2.3, the development of a new safeguarding policy and procedures guide highlights a range of measures being introduced with regards to the management of SDC's safeguarding responsibilities. The role of the Service Safeguarding Report Lead Officers and their respective services is stated in Background Paper B, Section 3.6. A record of community and customer facing services and corresponding Service Safeguarding Report Lead Officers, is being created

in unison with the work by the HR Service to manage safeguarding training for staff and elected members. The aim is to have this task completed by the end of April 2024.

2.13 Recommendation 13 (Medium Priority): As stated in 2.5, the HR service plan for 2024-2025 features a full HR policy review, which includes the DBS policy. Obtaining the correct data from other services in respect of staffing and their roles is required for the policy revision work to be accurate. Support for this is coming from the Leadership Management Team (LMT) to define which current roles / members of staff are required to have DBS checks. The aim is to have this task completed by the end of June 2024.

2.14 Recommendation 14 (Low Priority): As stated in 2.3, a new Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Guide (Background Paper B) was approved by Community Services and Licensing Committee on 14 March 2014. The guide includes reference to those persons undertaking work experience with the Council, including workers aged under 18 and modern apprentices – see Section 3.8.5 of Background Paper B.

### 3. Conclusion

3.1 The recommendations in the Management Action Plan have either been completed or are progressing towards completion. The main points above highlight the work carried out since the ARA report was published. The Corporate Safeguarding Group acknowledge that there is more work involved in addressing all recommendations.

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| <b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>   | BP-A: Audit Risk Assurance Report<br><a href="#">BP-B: Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Guide</a> |
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