

# **East Herts Council Report**

## **Executive**

**Date of Meeting: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**Report by: Cllr Mione Goldspink, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods**

**Report title: Revised East Herts Council Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**

**Ward(s) affected: All**

## **Summary**

The report presents the draft revised version of the council's Safeguarding Policy. The Executive is asked to consider the revised policy, propose any amendments for the Executive Member to include prior to consideration by Council and recommend the policy, with any amendments, to Council for adoption.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS THAT:**

- (a) the Head of Housing and Health incorporates any amendments to the Safeguarding Policy suggested by the Executive, acting in consultation with the Lead Member for Neighbourhoods, prior to presentation to Council by the Executive Member for adoption**
- (b) the revised Safeguarding Policy be recommended to Council for adoption.**

## **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 It is proposed that the Executive reviews the changes made to the draft revised version of council's Safeguarding Policy and, with the inclusion of any

further amendments proposed by the Executive, recommends it to Council for adoption.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 East Herts Council, as a second tier local authority, has a statutory responsibility and a duty of care which, in the simplest of terms, means it has a duty to co-operate and report issues relating to safeguarding to the appropriate authorities.
- 2.2 The council firmly believes that children, young people and adults at risk have the right to be safe when using our services. They have the right to be protected from being hurt or suffering abuse regardless of age, race, disability, culture, sex or sexual orientation.
- 2.3 The purpose of the policy (draft revised version attached at Appendix A) is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk by:
  - a) respecting their rights, wishes, feelings and privacy
  - b) ensuring all employees understand the different forms abuse can take, how to identify them and how to act on their concerns
  - c) taking any concern raised seriously and sensitively
  - d) implementing effective procedures for recording, reporting and responding to any allegations, incidents or suspicions of abuse
  - e) ensuring that larger contracted/commissioned services have safeguarding policies and procedures consistent with the council's commitment to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk
  - f) ensuring grant funded services acknowledge they should have due regard to this policy when carrying

- out activities funded or partly funded by the council
- g) encouraging safeguarding best practice at the council
- h) ensuring unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk through a robust recruitment policy.

- 2.4 The council requires the Safeguarding Policy to be reviewed every three years (or sooner if there are any changes in legislation or best practice). The existing policy, stemming from April 2020 was reviewed during the latter half of 2023.
- 2.5 To bring the policy up-to-date and incorporate the latest best practice:
- 2.6 nine recently updated district council safeguarding policies from across the country have been reviewed
- 2.7 a check of whether there is any relevant new guidance since the April 2020 version was produced has been carried out
- 2.8 the views of Elizabeth Hanlon, Independent Chair of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB), were sought at a meeting in November 2023
- 2.9 the findings from the self-assessment of safeguarding practice, carried out by the Head of Housing and Health and Interim Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships were drawn upon
- 2.10 the views of the members of the internal Safeguarding Policy Group have been sought. The group is chaired by Cllr Mione Goldspink, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and includes Cllr Peter Boylan, given his knowledge and expertise regarding safeguarding, along with senior officers from the Housing and Health and Human Resources services.
- 2.11 Based on this review, the substantive updates to the policy are summarised below.

<b>Page / section in the revised policy draft</b>	<b>Changes made</b>
Page 2	An 'Overview of the Safeguarding Policy' section has been included to provide a succinct summary for the reader when accessing the policy.
1.2	The six principles of safeguarding as outlined by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Local Government Association (ADASS & LGA,2017) are now explicitly referenced.
4.4	Reference is now made to hate crime and its links to safeguarding, especially as the council is registered as Third-Party Hate Crime Reporting Centre.
7.3 – 7.4	There are different procedures to follow should children and young people or adults at risk fall victim of suspected abuse by an East Herts officer or elected member. Therefore, clearer and more explicit reference has been made to the distinction between a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and guidance provided for managing allegations against People in a Position of Trust (PiPoT).
12	A new section on 'Practice supervision and support' has been included. This acknowledges the impact raising safeguarding concerns and the handling of such cases can have on East Herts Council officers. The policy now clearly

	outlines the availability of supervision and support in response to this, both of which both help maintain high standards of care of officers and ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable individuals.
14	A 'Participating in safeguarding reviews' section has been included to outline the type of reviews that may arise in response to tragic incidents of serious harm or death. This section clearly communicates that East Herts Council officers will participate fully where needed and are committed to learning from such reviews.

### 3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The Safeguarding Policy has been updated in line with the three year review cycle the council has agreed for this policy.

### 4.0 Options

- 4.1 Do nothing, that is, maintain the existing Safeguarding Policy in force without updating it. NOT RECOMMENDED as best practice has advanced since the existing policy was formulated in 2020 and thus the council could be at risk of not recognising or effectively handling any suspected or actual safeguarding issues in the district.
- 4.2 Recommend the policy to Council without first considering the changes to the existing policy. NOT RECOMMENDED as an integral element of the policy is that it is understood and owned by all members and officers. Consideration of the draft by the Executive, with or without amendments being proposed, clearly signals the importance placed on the policy by the Executive.
- 4.3 Review and recommend the latest draft of the

Safeguarding Policy to Council for adoption.  
RECOMMENDED as a means of ensuring that East Herts Council has an up-to-date, fit-for-purpose Safeguarding Policy in place which supports members and officers to identify, report and act on safeguarding issues in an appropriate and timely way which underlines the paramount importance placed on this issue by East Herts Council.

## **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Types of abuse, legislation and best practice are ever changing. This policy is reflective of current known types of abuse, legislation and best practice but could become outdated leaving the council at risk of not identifying or reacting appropriately to a potential safeguarding issue. To mitigate this, the policy states that it will be reviewed every three years or when changes are made to legislation or best practice, whichever is the sooner. The Safeguarding Policy Group will continue to stay abreast of developments.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 This Safeguarding Policy has been developed through consultation with the Safeguarding Policy Group, which includes representatives of the Housing and Health service and Human Resources and Organisational Development and is chaired by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods. The review has also taken on board best practice identified by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

## **Community Safety**

Yes – this policy furthers the aspirations of the Community Safety Partnership to protect vulnerable people and develop community

safeguarding.

### **Data Protection**

Yes – the investigation of a safeguarding concern is likely to cover a considerable amount of sensitive information about individuals. This policy gives detailed guidance on confidentiality and data protection when sharing a safeguarding concern.

### **Equalities**

Yes – this policy aims to safeguard the interests of the potentially most vulnerable residents of East Herts, including a number of people with protected characteristics such as, though not limited to, older people and disabled people, and has been developed with this in mind. By the time this policy is proposed to Council an Equalities Impact Assessment will have been completed. It will accompany the report for members of full Council to refer to when considering adoption of the policy.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

### **Financial**

No – there are no financial implications arising from either consideration or subsequently adoption of the revised policy. The costs associated with the member and officer training required by the policy can be met from existing budgets.

### **Health and Safety**

No

### **Human Resources**

Yes – this policy outlines the requirements for safer recruitment and safeguarding training for staff.

### **Human Rights**

Yes – this policy outlines the rights for children, young people and adults at risk to be safe and protected from mistreatment or abuse,

regardless of age, race, disability, culture, sex or sexual orientation.

## **Legal**

Yes – this policy outlines East Herts Council’s statutory responsibility and duty of care relating to safeguarding.

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Revised East Herts Council Safeguarding Policy - Draft.

### **Contact Member**

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