

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(VI) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**Report by Councillor Calum Watt, Member Safeguarding Champion****Safeguarding Policy**

The City Council's Safeguarding Policy is currently being reviewed and this is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. There will be amendments required to incorporate the new Domestic Abuse Act and the Local Partnership Board for Lincolnshire, which is being made more user-friendly (further details below).

The Current Picture

Towards the end of 2021 figures related to child and sexual exploitation in Lincoln had been down on previous years, likely thanks to a very active programme of disruption activities by the Police, the City Council and other agencies through the Child Safeguarding Partnership. Cases have risen in 2022 possibly as a result of the easing of lockdown restrictions but work is being done to identify and map the extent of the criminal networks which support the forms of exploitation. An analyst has now been employed to look for trends and identify possible disruption methods and a bespoke database is in development to ease multi-agency working on individual cases.

It is difficult to predict how many cases relating to safeguarding that will emerge within the next 12 months. There are concerns across a number of public sector agencies that the legacy of the Covid pandemic will continue to affect children and adults with regards to mental health concerns/illness. Deteriorating health due to Covid, as well as the delay in accessing healthcare and the difficulty in identifying vulnerable children and adults during lockdown periods across the sector with schools not seeing children and adults not having professionals visiting as much etc had a serious impact.

Another contemporary challenge we face (in common with all public sector services, not just CoLC) comes in the form of staff shortages through sickness, isolation etc. We continue to make referrals when concerns are identified, and we attend multi-agency meetings and assist with providing services when appropriate. This is sometimes difficult due to pressure from external agencies, but these cases are escalated appropriately if required.

We are in a good position to deal with these challenges, however, as we press ahead with more extensive training for staff and members, improve our methods of working with vulnerable people (such as through the Team Around The Adult approach), and continue to work actively with our partners and agencies across the City and County.

Safeguarding Training

Officers continue to complete the training requirements that are expected of them. All staff complete a basic safeguarding course and a Prevent course (Radicalisation & Extremism). The LSCP and LSAB training pathways are completed by staff that are

heavily involved in safeguarding work (Tenancy Services, Public Protection & Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Housing Solutions Team (Homelessness & Allocations), Rough Sleeper Team, City Centre Intervention Team). Some teams that have some involvement with safeguarding have also been requested to complete bespoke packages of training relevant to their role.

Council Members and frontline staff have also completed training with the Safeguarding Lead or have been forwarded the video of the session and requested to view it. Some officers have also been attending additional training relating to Protecting Vulnerable People which has been completed with external agencies or the Home Office etc.

Officers must also take part in a Professional Supervision procedure involving a one-to-one to discuss their cases at least once every three months, this is also an opportunity to discuss their own wellbeing which can be undertaken more frequently depending on their caseload.

At time of writing, Members are due to take part in Modern Slavery Training on 14th September.

Section 11 Audit

During last year's Section 11 Audit for Children's Safeguarding (an annual statutory requirement) on which we were 96% compliant. The few areas that we were not fully compliant were at amber level and were for areas of work that are in development or we are unable to complete e.g., connected to services that we don't offer with children.

Officers are currently planning to run a similar audit for Adult Safeguarding services (which is not currently a statutory requirement) every three years in conjunction with that year's Section 11 Audit.

The Lincolnshire Assurance and Assessment Framework audit has been taking place this summer and will continue into the autumn.

Representation on Groups/Boards

There continues to be representation by number of officers at meetings related to protecting vulnerable people. There has been a recent addition which is Daren Turner representing us and other district councils on the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board Executive. The City Council's Safeguarding Lead also Chairs the County MACE Steering Group.

Team Around the Adult

This process - which involves officers filling in assessments of citizen's needs and reporting them to the Safeguarding Lead - is now fully embedded with officers, and we are monitoring the number of cases that are referred by us or require further officer involvement.

This data will then be used when considering whether to reintroduce a Vulnerable Adults Panel in Lincoln and whether this should be led by us. Although there isn't one currently in place the cases still get multi-agency involvement when appropriate and some are discussed in other forums e.g., the Rough Sleeper Action Group, Team Around the Adult discussions.

IT System

City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) is looking to start using a new system called "e-cins" for recording vulnerable people and people of concern. This is now at the pilot stage and is hoped to be embedded by the end of autumn.

Domestic Abuse Act

A new county-wide strategy is now in place to comply with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. In principle, the new arrangements are not very different from what was already in place, with the County Council acting as the "relevant" (Tier 1) authority and district authorities in a supporting role (most notably of course in the area of housing provision) via a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. We were given a small amount of funding in order to adapt to the changes, although. A breakdown of how the funding was distributed amongst local authorities in Lincolnshire is below.

A notable part of the new act is that it now requires local authorities to give priority need to victims of domestic abuse, however this is not expected to impact on our local housing provision as it merely codifies existing practice in Lincoln.

A serious problem in our current provision of housing with regards to safeguarding is a distinct lack of accommodation of older male (over 16) children and victims of drug abuse.

There is a piece of work ongoing which is focusing on the move-on accommodation for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and we have officer attendance on this group who can identify potential weaknesses in the system.

The funding was direct from Government and the following was allocated within Lincolnshire:

Lincolnshire County Council (Tier 1) 2021-22: £1,454,133

District Councils (Tier 2)

- Boston £31,477
- East Lindsey £31,477
- City of Lincoln £32,219
- North Kesteven £32,617
- West Lindsey £31,785
- South Holland £32,038
- South Kesteven £31,920

In 2021, we were uncertain as to whether this funding would be ongoing but it now appears that this will be the case.

We received less than LCC as our funding is to co-operate with the duty that a Domestic Abuse Board has and this is the responsibility of a Tier 1 authority to implement or commission.

Councillor Calum Watt, Member Safeguarding Champion