

WARWICKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

2011 Audit of Compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

Warwick District Council

Key Feature 1

There is senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

* **YES**

If 'YES', please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- The Council is a signatory to the WSCB Compact
- One of the Council's Deputy Chief Executives (DCE) is the Council's Safeguarding Champion and lead.
- The Council is a member of, and represented at senior level (DCE) at meetings of WSCB and its relevant sub-committees
- The DCE also chairs the District Council Sub-Committee and participates in the Chair's meetings
- The Council is represented at WSCB Serious Case Review meetings
- The Council has participated fully in Serious Case Reviews involving children within its district and developed action plans for internal improvement.
- Elements of these action plans have been further developed and adopted in all districts within the county.
- The Council has a robust Prevention and Protection Policy developed for those services which deal directly with children (appended)
- This policy is reviewed on a 2 yearly basis and 'signed off' with the WSCB Development Manager
- The Council seeks CRB checks for any postholder whose duties could involve contact with children
- The District Council's website has a specific page on Child Protection and is linked to the main WSCB site.
- The Council's safeguarding responsibilities are an agenda item at monthly 1-1s between the DCE and the Chief Executive.
- Access to WSCB Level 1 Child Protection training is made available for all staff who have contact with children and young people at the discretion of their service area. More senior staff will participate in Level 2 or 3 training as appropriate.
- The WSCB Development Manager has addressed councillors to brief them on the Council's child protection duties

Appendix One

- The WSCB Development Manager and Training Officer have provided training sessions for senior officers on these responsibilities.
- The Council has an Information Security Policy, which all staff sign to say they have read, understood and will abide by the content. This includes not using Council systems or any personal devices brought into work for “inappropriate use”, including any content of a sexual or offensive nature, with a potential penalty of ‘summary dismissal’.
- IT systems have a content filter in place for the internet that prevents staff (either deliberately or accidentally) from accessing inappropriate content on the internet
- There is a filter on the Council’s e-mail system that is designed to prevent the sending or receiving of any pornographic or offensive material.
- The Council’s responsibility within its programme of ‘Hear by Rights’ standard work is to ensure children and young people are effectively engaged in any decision making around services that affect them.

If ‘NO’ or ‘REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT”, please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- CRB checks are currently the responsibility of individual service areas who receive support from the corporate HR team. The need for a corporate CRB policy will be reviewed.
- The need for a corporate Child Protection policy will be reviewed.
- There is currently no member ‘Safeguarding Champion’. This will be discussed with the new administration after the May 2011 elections.
- The Council is not currently represented in the WSCB Training Pool. This will be reviewed.
- Take up of WSCB training is currently at the discretion of individual service areas; this will be reviewed

Key Feature 2

There is a clear statement in place of the district council’s responsibilities towards children which has been made available to all staff.

* **YES**

If YES’, please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- The Council’s commitment to child protection is detailed in the appended Prevention and Protection Policy.
- The policy includes a specific section on the use of digital cameras and new generation mobile phones in situations where children are present.
- The Council’s responsibilities towards children are detailed on its website for both staff and the public to view and use.

Appendix One

- Child protection is a key feature within the staff induction programme for those staff who have contact with children (primarily in the Cultural Services and Housing & Property Services service areas).
 - The Council's responsibilities towards children are included in the member induction programme for new (and existing) councillors after the May 2011 elections.
 - Corporate policies of relevance to child protection include:
 - Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
 - Whistle Blowing Policy
 - Code of Conduct for Employees
 - Equality and Diversity Scheme
 - The Council has a Complaints and Compliments procedure for use by all members of the public
-

If 'NO' or 'REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT', please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- A "Child Protection - A Quick Guide", referencing the Council's key responsibility for child protection is in production for distribution to relevant staff.
 - Addition of an explanation of our child protection responsibilities to the corporate induction programme for all staff.
 - A review of the corporate training programme to ensure all relevant staff receive the appropriate level of training during their induction and appropriate refresher training.
-

Key Feature 3

There are clear lines of accountability within the district council for work on safeguarding children and promoting their well-being.

* **YES**

If YES', please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- There are clear lines of accountability within the service areas with direct contact with children (Cultural Services, Housing & Property Services and the joint WDC/WCC Community Partnership Team).
- The Council's lead officer for child protection (DCE) is identified on the website
- The DCE is the Council's nominated representative at the WSCB and meetings of its relevant sub-committees
- The DCE has monthly meetings with the Chief Executive, at which he reports on child protection and safeguarding issues.

Appendix One

- Co-ordination of the corporate child protection training programme is undertaken by the DCE in conjunction with Learning & Development Manager

If 'NO' or 'REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT', please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- An explanation of the lines of accountability needs to be developed for the Council's intranet.
- A network of nominated officers, with child protection responsibilities, within each service area needs to be developed.

Key Feature 4

The views of children and young people are used to help shape services.

* **YES**

If 'YES', please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- Children and young people have been involved in developing a range of services including:
 - Skateboarders and BMX projects at Newbold Comyn, Leamington and Castle Farm, Kenilworth
 - Development of basketball facilities at Christchurch Gardens, Leamington
 - Play area improvements at Mason Ave, Lillington, Shrubland Street, Leamington and the Woodloes estate, Warwick
 - Play area development at the Chase Meadow estate, Warwick
 - An application via their local Community Forum for disc golf in Cubbington.
 - Introduction of a Junior Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Lillington
 - Improvements to Priory Pools Park, Warwick.
- The Council has adopted the 'Hear by Right' standard to evidence the engagement of young people in decision making and this is being deployed within the Cultural Services and Housing & Property Services service areas.
- A Community Engagement Strategy has been adopted to support the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the 'Hear by Rights' standard which includes the development of structures for engaging with children and young people, for example locality youth forums and a district youth forum, in partnership with the WCC Youth Service.
- The 7 existing Community Forums within the district have consulted with children and young people to identify their locality based priorities.

Appendix One

- The current (March – July 2011) consultation programme on the development of a Local Plan for the district includes opportunities for children and young people to input into the process through consultation events at local schools

If 'NO' or 'REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT', please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- There is a need to develop capacity building workshop with young people to enable effective engagement
- There is a need to build awareness across all the Council's Service Areas around the engagement structure developed in partnership with the youth service.
- The Community Partnership Team needs to develop its work to help facilitate effective engagement with young people

Key Feature 5

Staff are provided with appropriate training in safeguarding children.

* **YES**

If 'YES', please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- Staff who come into contact with children and young people during the normal course of their duties have the opportunity to attend the WSCB Level 1 Child Protection training.
- Managers with child protection responsibilities have opportunities to attend Level 2 or 3 training.
- Training needs are identified at induction and during annual appraisals. Child protection responsibilities are discussed at an early stage and any training needs identified.
- All relevant Cultural Services staff receive guidance on the procedures within the Prevention and Protection Policy which is the subject of on-going training at the Council's Leisure Centres
- Leisure Centre managers are directly involved in the two yearly review of the policy to ensure they have an in-depth understanding of the policy and the Council's responsibilities.
- Leisure Centre managers will be directly involved in any review arising from an incident.
- Staff working within swimming and sports facilities are made aware of the Policy's provisions relating to the use of new generation mobile phones and/or video equipment within the facilities as part of their induction.
- Staff who undertake the direct delivery of services to children and young people often have additional training on related issues (e.g. Coach

Appendix One

Education Courses include a section on child protection and protecting yourself from allegations.).

- Housing & Property Services staff have received training on MAPPA, CAF and the WSCB Protocol
- The WSCB Development Manager has addressed senior officers on a number of occasions to raise awareness of safeguarding issues and the Council's responsibilities.

If 'NO' or 'REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT', please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- A review of take-up of WSCB training will be undertaken with a view to having a corporate policy rather than relying on individual service areas to identify which staff should attend such training.
- No WDC staff are currently members of the WSCB training pool and volunteers will be sought.
- There is a need to review how refresher training is identified to ensure staff remain aware of their responsibilities.

Key Feature 6

There are sound procedures in place for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff and for managing allegations made against staff.

* **YES**

If YES', please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- Sound recruitment procedures are identified in the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy:
 - Trained staff undertaking recruitment
 - References being taken up
 - Identity and qualification checks being carried out
 - Face to face interviews being held
 - Anomalies in work history being investigated
 - All necessary checks being carried out (e.g. CRB)
 - Records being maintained
 - The provision of probationary periods for all new staff
- Procedures for handling allegations against staff are set out in the Prevention and Protection Policy including the need for contact to be made at appropriate times with the County Council's Local Authority Designated Officer, the Children Team and/or the Police, as necessary.
- The Council's Complaints Procedures also include provisions for handling allegations or other complaints against staff
- The Council's Disciplinary policy provides a framework for dealing with serious allegations.

Appendix One

If NO' or '**REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**', please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- Further training on the handling of specific safeguarding related allegations will be sought from the WSCB.

Key Feature 7

There are effective working relationships within the district council and with other agencies to safeguard and promote children's well-being and to share information effectively.

* **YES**

If 'YES', please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- The Council has developed good working relationships with the local Children's Team, the WSCB Development Manager and its Training Officer, the Education Safeguarding Officer and the Police.
- The Council is a signatory to the Warwickshire Sharing of Information Protocol.
- Senior officers are aware of their responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding as a consequence of induction, training and awareness raising through sessions organised in conjunction with WSCB.
- The Council's website provides child protection information, to its staff, other agencies/partners and to the public and provides links to relevant agencies.
- The Council is represented by a member of its Senior Management Team at the Children's Trust.
- The Council is represented by a member of its Corporate Management team at the WSCB.
- The Council has been the lead agency amongst the borough/district councils in working with the County Council to develop a countywide Protocol for Households with Vulnerable Children.
- The Housing & Property Services team has worked with the other district/borough council housing teams on the development of a joint Protocol with the County Council to support homeless 16 and 17 year old young people.
- The Local Strategic Partnership for Warwick, the multi-agency group tasked with delivery the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy has a number of projects/initiatives that will directly or indirectly promote the well-being of children and young people within its 2010-13 work programme:
 - Provision of housing support and accommodation to Priority Prolific Offenders, to reduce re-offending levels
 - Establish a Youth Foyer or alternative training accommodation.
 - Improving young people's ability to manage 'risky behaviour' related to teenage conceptions, drugs and alcohol, smoking and personal safety.

Appendix One

- Introduce a range of measures to get people moving, make it easy and enjoyable for people to take part in physical and cultural activity and, in particular, look at possibility of identifying resources to maintain free swimming for under 16s
- Establish a Family Intervention Project with a team of Key Workers to provide intensive support and help to turn around the behaviour of 'problematic families' and reduce their impact on their community.
- A range of measures to improve flow of information to and from partners
- Clubs and groups involving in teaching or coaching children and young people are required to provide details of the qualifications of their staff
- Clubs working with children and young people who apply for grants are asked to provide details of their compliance with, or progress in working towards, National Governing Body Accreditation which includes child protection provisions.
- The Council's housing advice and homelessness teams work closely with the County Council's Children, Young People and Families teams and it is standard practice for housing advice officers to ascertain whether service users are in contact with Children's Services and if so to link in with the appropriate team.
- Housing Advice Officers will also make contact, and if necessary make a formal referral to Children's Services if they had concerns about a particular individual.
- An officer from the Housing Advice Team attends the monthly MARAC meetings sharing information both on tenants and individuals accessing the Housing Advice Service.
- Housing and Property Services are represented at the monthly MAPPA meetings for the district.
- Housing staff will attend Common Assessment Framework meetings as appropriate.
- The Council has a track record of working with local schools and the WSCB when issues arise. Following concerns raised by schools over the lack of separate changing rooms for children and young people at the Newbold Comyn, Leamington, leisure centre temporary provision has been created pending a major refurbishment scheme.
- Such a refurbishment scheme will start at the Abbey Fields, Kenilworth, swimming pool in the winter of 2011/12 while the St. Nicholas Park, Warwick, leisure centre already has separate changing facilities.
- The District Council works in partnership with the Warwick District Youth Service to share information on the well being of young people

If 'NO' or '**REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**', please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- There is a need to consider how the emerging public health/health and well-being debate can focus on the needs of children and young people within the district.

• **Key Feature 8**

Contractors who provide services for children and young people on behalf of the district council have equivalent safeguarding procedures in place.

* **YES**

If 'YES', please describe how this key feature is demonstrated.

- Where contracts have recently been renewed for either the direct provision of services to children and young people or the management of facilities that will be used by these groups, the contractors are required to ensure that relevant staff have been CRB check, for example:
 - Mack Golf (who run Newbold Comyn golf course)
 - Action 21 (who employ the Ranger for Jephson Gardens)
 - Glendale (who undertake play area inspections)
 - Contract currently being tendered for running the catering facilities in the Royal Pump Rooms and Jephson Gardens
- Where contractors engage volunteers to assist them to run services, for example, Action 21 in respect of the Jephson ranger service, they are also subject to a CRB standard disclosure
- Where we work in partnership with organisations to deliver services, e.g. Positive About Young People on summer activity programmes, the organisation is required to demonstrate they have a robust Child Protection Policy
- In regard to other contracts that don't involve direct contact with children and young people, for example contractors working within council owned homes, the contract preliminaries have recently been updated to request details of the contractor's policy on CRB checks and child protection issues but this was not in place for some older, extant, contracts where the requirement was simply for the contractor to provide their Code of Practice for working within tenant homes.
- The framework of regular contract monitoring meetings provides a mechanism for child protection issues to be discussed informally.

If 'NO' or '**BEING DEVELOPED**', please describe what steps are being taken to demonstrate this key feature.

- Work is being undertaken by the WSCB local authority sub-group to develop a consistent county-wide approach to the engagement of contractors whose staff may have access to children and young people with consideration of standard contract clauses specifying the need to ensure compliance with relevant child protection policies and procedures, safe recruitment, vetting and training of their staff and the need to have information sharing and escalation procedures in place.
- An agenda item will be added to contract monitoring meetings to discuss any safeguarding issues or information.

Appendix One

- Reporting and escalation procedures will be formally added to all contract set-up meetings with prospective contractors.

And Finally: Please give your assessment of the challenges your borough/district council faces in continuing to deliver these key features and how you think you will address these challenges.

The Council is fully committed to understanding and discharging its child protection responsibilities and has developed effective working relationships with the WSCB and multi-agency partners.

The Council faces financial challenges, in common with the rest of the public sector, but is confident that these can be met without the need to reduce the range of current service provision or to reduce the size of its workforce through redundancies so is well placed to ensure that it doesn't lose experience or processes that could otherwise compromise its ability to deliver its responsibilities.

The Council has a children's champion at Deputy Chief Executive level but no equivalent member lead. This will be discussed with the new Administration that will be formed after the May 2011 elections that involve every Council seat.

The DCE will lead on work to ensure that the Council's child protection training arrangements and processes for identifying posts requiring a CRB check are standardised at the corporate level rather than being left as the responsibility of relevant service areas.

The Council has recently reviewed and updated the information provided on its website. There is a need to provide clear guidance for staff on lines of responsibility and to raise awareness on how to identify and escalate potential issues. A similar review and updating of the information provided on the Council's internal intranet will also be undertaken.

Name of person completing this template on behalf of Warwick District Council:

Bill Hunt, Deputy Chief Executive

Signature of Chief Officer or Designated Senior Manager:

30th March 2011