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Internal Audit Report Review of Safeguarding Self Assessment checklist 2018/2019

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Issued By: Siobhan Martin (Head of Internal Audit)

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.0.1 Internal Audit's overall level of assurance of the arrangements in place over Safeguarding is Good. In the context of this review this means that a thorough self assessment, supported by strong and extensive evidence, has been prepared by the lead officer.
- 1.0.2 This internal audit review confirmed, by a detailed check of the supporting evidence and via discussions, the outcome of the self assessment carried out by the lead officer. There is near full compliance with the required standards, as well as a good level of awareness for potential areas for improvement.
- 1.0.3 A small number of areas were identified where the Council needs to update its arrangements in order to be fully compliant and to ensure it is meeting best practice. The lead officer is aware of existing gaps and is being proactive in addressing them via an action plan with identified timescales and responsible officers.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This audit is one of the reviews contained in the Audit Plan for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 as approved by the Audit & Governance Committee at Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) on 7th March 2018 and by the Audit and Governance Committee at Waveney District Council (WDC) 15th March 2018. It involves a review of the controls in operation over Safeguarding Children, Young Adults and Adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 2.2 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 43 of the Care Act 2014 places similar duties on organisations to help and protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 2.4 County councils are responsible for establishing the Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) and the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) in their area and ensuring that they are run effectively. The SCB and SAB include representatives of the local authority (in this area Suffolk CC) and its board partners – including Suffolk Coastal DC and Waveney DC.
- 2.5 The SCB and SAB are the key statutory mechanisms for agreeing how relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate on safeguarding matters, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The SCB and SAB are undertaking an audit that looks at agencies' compliance with the standards via a self assessment completed by each partner agency.

- 2.6 Each partner agency is asked to complete the self-assessment and provide evidence of how they comply when carrying out their day to day business. This self assessment will give an indication of how well organisations are working to keep children and vulnerable adults safe. Where agencies have not fully met the standards they will be asked to produce an action plan to address any areas of development that they have identified.

3.0 AUDIT OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

- 3.1 The primary focus of this audit is to review the extent to which the assessed risks (at 3.2 below) are being managed. In addition, the audit will review compliance with the Council's own agreed policies and procedures.
- 3.2 In planning this audit, a risk assessment has been undertaken, with the following considered to represent the potential key risks relating to Safeguarding which could impact on the Council's ability to deliver relevant Council Priorities and service objectives:
- The Council is not committed to the Safeguarding requirements;
 - Staff are not clear on their roles and responsibilities regarding Safeguarding;
 - The need to safeguard and/ or take account of their user views is not considered when developing service provision;
 - Staff are not adequately trained;
 - Unsuitable people are recruited;
 - Relevant information is not shared effectively.
- 3.3 The objective of the audit is to ascertain the extent to which the identified risks have been managed (via review of the self assessment completed by Human Resources) and to evaluate whether effective controls to mitigate the risks have been established, and have been operating effectively throughout the period under review.

4.0 ASSURANCE STATEMENT

4.1.1 Overall Assurance Level*

Good	Adequate	Limited	Unsatisfactory

*Note – In the context of this review the definition of Good is that a thorough self assessment, supported by strong and extensive evidence, has been prepared by the lead officer (where the standard definition for Good is 'All controls are being applied consistently and effectively. This means that all the control areas in the audit are being properly managed and the associated risks are being mitigated').

4.0 FINDINGS

- 4.1 The table below summarises the findings against the self assessment checklist and highlights any areas where there is partial compliance. The detailed audit did not identify any additional gaps that had been overlooked by the lead officer when carrying out the self assessment.
- 4.2 The lead officer has identified a range of actions to address any gaps and to ensure full compliance within the next 12 months. We will monitor implementation of the actions when following up this review.

Section	Self assessment risk areas	Findings
1	Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children and adult's welfare.	Fully compliant except for Employee Code of Conduct not referring to safeguarding policy.
2	A clear statement of agency's responsibilities towards children and adults is available for all staff.	Fully compliant except for CSE policy wording, scope to improve recording process and no clear sanctions for commissioned organisations.
3	A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults.	Fully compliant.
4	The views of children, adults and families are sought to develop and monitor services where appropriate.	Fully compliant except for increasing tenant consultation and involvement.
5	Staff training on safeguarding is relevant according to the most recent national and local guidance and incorporates current LSCB and SAB priorities.	Fully compliant except for notifying HR of any training provided directly by service areas and undertaking refresher training on the Mental Capacity Act.
Section	Self assessment risk areas	Findings

6	Recruitment, vetting procedures and allegations against staff.	Fully compliant.
7	Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.	Fully compliant except for undertaking refresher training on the Common Assessment Framework.
8	Information sharing.	Fully compliant except for ensuring compatibility of secure email systems.
9	Commissioned services.	Fully compliant.
10	e-safety.	Fully compliant.

APPENDIX A

1.0 Key Staff Consulted

Name	Job Title
Heather Shilling	Learning and Development Partner

2.0 Bibliography

Key Resources
FRED – supporting documents

3.0 Overall Assurance Level

Control adequacy assessments

We have four categories by which we classify our overall level of assurance of the processes examined and, also, the adequacy of the individual key control areas. They are defined as follows:

Good	All controls are being applied consistently and effectively. This means that all the control areas in the audit are being properly managed and the associated risks are being mitigated.
Adequate	Controls exist but there is some inconsistency in their application. This means that a few of the risks in the audit may need attention.
Limited	Some controls do not exist. This means that a reasonable number of the risks in the audit need attention.
Unsatisfactory	A significant number of controls do not exist and/or there are major omissions in the application of controls. This means that a significant number of risks in the audit are not being properly managed.