

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Approving Portsmouth City Council's Safeguarding Policy for the Housing Needs, Advice & Support service
<b>Report By:</b>	James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
<b>Report Authors:</b>	Jo Bennett - Assistant Director - Housing Need & Supply Michael Swann - Commissioned Support & Safeguarding Manager
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Darren Sanders - Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## 1. Purpose of the report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to update members about the processes and approaches taken by officers in the Housing Needs, Advice & Support (HNAS) service to meet its statutory safeguarding obligations, and -

1.2. To seek approval to implement a new Safeguarding Policy for the HNAS service.

1.3. The policy sets out:

- 1.3.1. The key overarching principles which inform the service's work, as embedded in the relevant legislation, and its commitment to them.
- 1.3.2. Identification of key safeguarding roles and responsibilities of specific officers in the service, including the senior management team and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL.
- 1.3.3. The recruitment, induction and training processes for all staff which support the principles and requirements of the policy.
- 1.3.4. Identification of different types of abusive and neglectful behaviours, which may require a safeguarding response from officers in the service

- 1.3.5. The processes in place which HNAS staff will follow to report and escalate safeguarding concerns, and how it will work with partner agencies as necessary to meet its safeguarding responsibilities.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Cabinet member for housing and tackling homelessness approves the new Safeguarding Policy (Appendix A – HNAS Safeguarding Policy) and asks the Housing Needs, Advice & Support service to implement the new policy with immediate effect.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The HNAS service did not previously have a specific Safeguarding Policy, although many of the processes and responsibilities described in the proposed policy were already embedded into the service's operations. This is the first policy of its kind for the service.
- 3.2 The safeguarding of adults and children is a statutory duty for local authorities.
- 3.3 The Care Act 2014 and the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 identify safeguarding as everyone's responsibility and that professionals, organisations and local authorities must work in partnership when carrying out their duties under the relevant legislation.
- 3.4 When working with adults, the Care Act 2014 makes it a duty on local authorities to promote individual wellbeing in the exercise of its functions and to safeguard adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect.
- 3.5 When working with children, the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts set out the duties on the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people in their area.
- 3.6 Every two years, the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) asks officers in HNAS to complete a self-assessment of safeguarding systems and practice.
- 3.7 The self-assessment is carried out under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, which as above sets out the statutory duties on the HNAS service to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 3.8 The purpose of the self-assessment is to

- 3.8.1 consider the extent to which safeguarding children is embedded within the service
  - 3.8.2 to inform the development of action plans to address any areas identified within the audit as being less than 'outstanding'.
- 3.9 The PSCP will request evidence that these actions have been implemented within agreed timescales.
- 3.10 The most recent self-assessment was implemented by HNAS officers in autumn 2023. The self-assessment included consideration of HNAS compliance against the specified standards, which included:
- 3.10.1 Standard 1.6: "The organisation has safeguarding policies and procedures which are reviewed regularly (at least every three years)"
  - 3.10.2 Standard 1.7 "Policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are in accordance with local processes and the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton ("HIPS") safeguarding procedures"
- 3.11 The HNAS self-assessment against these standards was that the service required improvement, on the basis that it did not yet have a specific Safeguarding Policy in place.
- 3.12 Similarly, HNAS officers complete a bi-annual self-audit tool in respect of its processes and arrangements in place in relation to safeguarding adults. The self-audit has been developed by the four local Safeguarding Adults Boards in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton ("4LSAB").
- 3.13 The 4LSAB self-audit also specifies the need for relevant organisations and services, including HNAS, to have
- 3.13.1 "Aligned relevant corporate, strategic, and operational plans, policies, and programmes to ensure the safeguarding of their service users/customers" (Standard 1b); and that
  - 3.13.2 "Safeguarding roles, responsibilities and duties are embedded within job descriptions, policies, and standard operating procedures" (Standard 1d).

#### **4. Reasons for recommendation**

- 4.1 To ensure the HNAS service is operating fully compliant with local safeguarding processes and procedures, as set out in the HIPS framework for children and the 4LSAB framework for adults.
- 4.2 To further embed the service's statutory responsibilities to safeguard children and adults within its operating procedures, and to ensure there is a regular review of these by the senior management team.

4.3 To set out the safeguarding responsibilities of all staff working within the HNAS service, and the expectations of individuals and organisations contracted to work with customers of the service on its behalf.

4.4 To clearly identify the key roles and officers within the service with additional responsibilities around safeguarding, and the responsibilities of managers in the service to follow the appropriate processes and procedures to be followed in respect of recruitment, induction and training of new staff.

## **5. Engagement and review**

5.1 The HNAS Safeguarding Policy will be published on Portsmouth City Council's website. The policy includes information for any member of the public that wishes to contact the service in relation to its contents, or to raise a safeguarding concern in relation to any HNAS activities.

5.2 All staff within the service will be required to read the policy, and it will form an essential part of the induction process for all new staff joining the service.

5.3 The policy will be reviewed at least every two years by the DSL and senior management team, and updated as required.

5.4 The policy may be reviewed and updated on an ad hoc basis as required, such as following any serious case review or learning event which highlights a relevant need, or following any change to legislation, regulation, best practice or operational procedure.

## **6. Integrated impact assessment**

6.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and submitted and is shown in Appendix B.

## **7. Legal implications**

7.1 The report accurately considers the statutory implications and requirements of the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2015. In addition, the policy has considered the key areas of equality of access to facilities and services along with the necessary safeguarding applicable to the recruitment, induction and training of staff within the council's Housing Needs, Advice and Support service.

## **8. Director of Finance's comments**

8.1 The approval of the Safeguarding Policy for the Housing Needs, Advice & Support service does not change the cost of the service being provided.



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Signed by: James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

**Appendices:**

Appendix A - HNAS Safeguarding Policy

Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
The Care Act 2014	<a href="http://legislation.gov.uk">Care Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>
The Children Act 1989	<a href="http://legislation.gov.uk">Children Act 1989 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>
The Children Act 2004	<a href="http://legislation.gov.uk">Children Act 2004 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>
The Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton (HIPS) Safeguarding Children Procedures	<a href="http://hipsprocedures.org.uk">Welcome   Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (hipsprocedures.org.uk)</a>
The Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (4LSAB) Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Guidance	<a href="http://hampshiresab.org.uk">Hampshire, IOW, Portsmouth and Southampton 4LSAB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Guidance   Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board (hampshiresab.org.uk)</a>

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

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Signed by: **Councillor Darren Sanders - Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness.**