

For General Release

REPORT TO:	Cabinet 13 July 2015
AGENDA ITEM:	11
SUBJECT:	Mandatory Training for Elected Members on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
LEAD OFFICER:	Paul Greenhalgh Executive Director, People
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning Councillor Louisa Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Health and Social Care
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: The Safeguarding of our most vulnerable Children and Adults is a key priority and statutory responsibility for the Council. Members also have direct responsibility to safeguard. This report should be read in conjunction with the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny about further strengthening safeguarding processes.	
AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON & WHY ARE WE DOING THIS: Our ambition is to further develop and maintain a strong culture of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults across Croydon.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT None.	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is recommended to agree that:

- 1.1 All members undertake at least one face to face mandatory training session on an annual basis about the safeguarding of children and of adults during the period of a four year administration.
- 1.2 Additional discretionary training be provided for members to opt into, both in the form of additional face to face sessions, and access to e-training.

Next Steps

Officers will liaise with the groups to establish dates for the proposed mandatory training, which it is proposed takes place in autumn 2015.

KEY DECISION REFERENCE.: not a key decision

2. Background

The recommendations in this report have arisen from the following aspects of content:

2.1 Children and young people’s scrutiny recommendations

In November 2014 elected members of the Children and Family Scrutiny Panel identified that they needed training in relation to:

- their specific safeguarding responsibilities as elected members;
- their desire to learn more about the complexities of Children’s Safeguarding in order to ask more demanding questions of council officers;
- to strengthen their knowledge to rigorously interrogate reports and data;
- to know what to do when confronted with a safeguarding concern;
- To strengthen their knowledge of specific safeguarding issues affecting children and vulnerable adults in Croydon.

Recommendations about member training form part of the recommendations to Cabinet arising from scrutiny on safeguarding issues conducted by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee since October 2015.

2.2 Training for members of children and scrutiny panel

Following the scrutiny panel’s request a bespoke training was organised for the panel in February 2015. The training consisted of:

- 1. An overview of the local children safeguarding context and demographic changes and pressures on services. This included principles of children’s safeguarding and the national and local context and priority areas such as child sexual exploitation, missing children, the vulnerability of pre-birth and children Under One, domestic abuse, staff turnover, serious case reviews

- and historic allegations of sexual abuse (post Saville) and the need to identify vulnerability as early in the 'child's journey' as possible.
2. Members were provided with a guide as to Croydon's Early Help offer, local family support services, the 'Troubled Families' agenda and the application of thresholds to different specialist services.
 3. An overview of the work of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board, its role and function, membership, priority areas, strengths and gaps in current practice, the need to promote a learning culture, the role of the elected member and the Board and the importance of partnerships, (Police, Health, Education, the voluntary sector and local communities), in protecting children were also discussed.

We discussed what elected members needed to do when a child was at risk. At the start of the training members were provided with four case studies (involving incidents of child abuse) and asked what they would do in each circumstance which they analysed in groups and fed-back. Members reportedly found this very helpful and brought their own dilemmas when meeting with children and families. Members were then provided with a definition of what it is to be a good corporate parent for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. We then identified opportunities where members could improve in this role i.e. creating opportunities to listen to children and bringing 'alive' the Pledge to Children Looked After and Care Leavers. The training was interactive and reflective to maximise members learning and their time. The training concluded by revisiting case studies from the start of the training. Members were asked: *'What would I do differently and what have I learnt and what else do I need to learn and how can I be better informed?'* All members were encouraged to complete the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board Level 1 and 2 Safeguarding Training via e-learning. Members reported they wanted to learn more. Feedback from members was that the greatest benefit to learning had been in the case led interactive session. This encouraged members to request a more "advanced" session. A further suggestion from the panel was that this training be made available for all members and two safeguarding training dates were arranged for September 2015.

2.3 Safeguarding training for groups

In November 2014 the Labour group considered children's safeguarding at their Policy Development Meeting. In March 2015 the Conservative Group was provided with a briefing on children's safeguarding. Since then the delivery of an Adults Safeguarding Board has become mandatory, as part of the implementation of the Care Act.

2.4 Quarterly meetings with the Independent Chairs of the Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Boards, the Leader of the Council, relevant Cabinet member, Chief Executive and Executive Director, People

The quarterly meetings set out above have affirmed the Administration's intention to propose the mandatory training recommended in this report. This also reflects the Administration's desire to further strengthen members' responsibilities as corporate parents, the safeguarding of looked after children being part of this agenda.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is recommended that:

3.1.1 All members undertake a face to face mandatory training session on an annual basis about the safeguarding of children and of adults during the period of a four year administration. It is proposed that the first such session takes place in the two groups, during autumn 2015 and initially consists of a two-hour session which covers both the safeguarding of children and of adults.

3.1.2 Additional discretionary training be provided for members to opt into, both in the form of additional face to face sessions, and access to e-training.

3.2 Officers will liaise with the groups to establish dates for the proposed mandatory training, which it is proposed takes place in autumn 2015.

3.3 Officers will make known to members through the regular arrangements for member training the additional discretionary training offer on safeguarding that members will also be able to access.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 As set out in Section 2 above.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, as these proposals will be delivered within existing resources.

(Approved by: Lisa Taylor – Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer)

6. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 The Solicitor to the Council comments that there no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

(Approved by: J Harris Baker head of social care and education law on behalf of the Borough Solicitor & Director of Legal & Democratic Services)

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.1 The proposed training will be delivered within existing resources. There are no other human resources implications arising from this report.

(Approved by: Deborah Calliste on behalf of the Director of Human Resources)

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 The training will ensure that equality and diversity in respect of safeguarding are incorporated.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

9.1 None.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

10.1 None.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

11.1 As set out in Section 2 above.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 None.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Gavin Swann, Head of QA and Local Safeguarding Children Board;
Kay Murray, Head of QA and Local Safeguarding Adult Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None.