

To: Cabinet
Date: 12 June 2019
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive
Title of Report: Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2018/19

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To report on the progress made on the Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2018/19
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Safer Communities and Customer Focused Services
Corporate Priority:	Strong and Active Communities
Policy Framework:	Corporate Plan. Safeguarding Policy
Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	Note the key achievements of the Safeguarding work delivered through Oxford City Council during 2018/19
2.	Agree the Safeguarding Action Plan 2019/20 set out in Appendix 1; and
3.	Approve Oxford City Council's safeguarding policy updated April 2019

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2019/20
Appendix 2	Oxford City Council participation in Safeguarding Boards and Working Groups
Appendix 3	Oxford City Council Policy and Procedures for safeguarding children, and adults with care and support needs

1 Introduction

1.1 This report aims to:

- Outline Multi- agency safeguarding arrangements in Oxfordshire
- Share the results of the safeguarding self-assessment audit 2018.
- Highlight the key achievements and progress made in relation to the safeguarding work delivered by Oxford City Council.
- Focus on areas identified for further improvement in 2019/20 collated within an action plan attached at Appendix 1.
- Consider challenges and risks in relation to external service changes and actions identified within the plan.

1.2 Oxford City Council has a legal duty of care to ensure children and adults at risk are protected within the facilities, services and activities under the direct remit and control of the Council. The Council has specific legal responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 (section 11) and the Care Act 2014 (sections 42-46) which aim to make sure the welfare and development needs of children are met and that children are protected from harm.

1.3 Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm as well as protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development and ensuring that they grow up with the provision of safe and effective care enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

1.4 Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Policy builds upon existing good practice across its services and sets out its safeguarding policies and procedures.

2. Oxfordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

2.1 Safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs remains one of the Council's key priority objectives. Under the core objectives in the Corporate Plan 'Strong and Active Communities' the Council aims to safeguard and protect vulnerable people including improving quality of life for older people and protecting children, families and adults at risk of exploitation. The Council therefore takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously and fully engages in multi-agency partnership work across Oxfordshire.

2.2 The development, delivery and quality monitoring of safeguarding service provision is the responsibility of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB).

2.3 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced flexibility to replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with new local safeguarding arrangements. It also established that collective responsibility and accountability of these arrangements lies with Oxfordshire County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Police, "the three safeguarding partners".

2.4 In response to these changes, the three safeguarding partners in Oxfordshire have made arrangements to work together as an Executive Group with overall

accountability for safeguarding consisting of the Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council, the Assistant Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police and the Accountable Officer of The Clinical Commissioning Group.

- 2.5 The Executive Group will work with relevant partners through the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB), under the leadership of an Independent Chair, Richard Simpson. This includes representatives from all of the neighbouring District Councils. The Oxford City Council's representative on this group is the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 2.6 The existing OSCB Executive Group will become the Business Group and continue to work operationally under the OSCB. The Council's Policy and Partnership Team Manager is a representative on the group. The Oxford City Council is further represented on the performance and quality assurance group, training sub groups, exploitation sub group, neglect strategy group, as well other task and finish groups. A flow chart is available in Appendix 2 for reference.
- 2.7 There are no proposed changes to the Adult Safeguarding Board, OSAB, which will continue to have an independent Chair, Dr Sue Ross. The Policy and Partnership Team Manager is the Oxford City Council's representative on this Board.

3. City Council Safeguarding Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that, in discharging its functions, it has regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of children, young people and adults with care and support needs. Day to day safeguarding challenge are managed by the Safeguarding Champions in each Service Area with oversight across all areas being provided by the Safeguarding Coordinator and Designated lead officers
- 3.2 Every year the Council is required to complete an annual self-assessment to evidence standards in the quality of its safeguarding work. The self- assessment audit, which is a joint audit between the OSCB and OSAB spans across all Council departments, is approved by the Council's Strategic Safeguarding Group and the Assistant Chief Executive. The audit then goes through a vigorous peer group assessment process with the Council's County-wide partners for challenge and approval. This year the Council was able to evidence best practice in all areas.
- 3.3 Adult safeguarding procedures support adults who are at greatest risk. Those who rely on others (staff, family and neighbours) for their care and support. In Oxfordshire this is about 43,222 people.
 - In 2017-18, Oxfordshire County Council was contacted 6639 times about concerns that a person with care and support needs was experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - 1666 (1 quarter) of these concerns resulted in further enquiries being conducted.

- 84% of the enquiries¹ resulted in action being taken to reduce the risk of harm.

3.4 The child population of Oxfordshire has grown by 6% in the last ten years and is estimated to stand at 141,800 young people aged under-18. Alongside this growth there has been increased demand for services particularly towards the high end of the continuum of need. Key data presented by the OSCB shows that the local context is one of continued increasing demand on services and higher rates of escalation into child protection and care.

- The number of children on a child protection plan rose from 569 March 2017 year to 730 at the end of March 2018 (higher than national average).
- Neglect is the most common reason for children to be subject to child protection plans (65%). This is higher than the national average

4 Safeguarding Audit 2018

4.1 The Council is required to evidence its standard of work in the following areas:

- (1) Leadership, Strategy and Working Together
- (2) Commissioning, Service Delivery and Effective Practice
- (3) Performance & Resource Management
- (4) Outcomes for, and Experiences of, People Who Use Statutory Services

4.2 The evidence provided is given the following BRAG rating:

Blue – the standard/compliance point is fully met and can be evidenced as completed

Green – the standard/compliance point is near completion or fully met but cannot be evidenced at this point

Amber – the standard/compliance point is not met but work has begun or work is underway but has experienced delays in completion

Red – the standard/compliance point is not met, work is not underway and there are issues with commencing work

4.3 Oxford City Council's assessed standards were as follows:

2018

	1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	2C	2D	3A	3B	4A
Oxford City Council	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

The full Self-Assessment is available here: [Self-assessment 2018](#)

¹ An enquiry is any action that is taken (or instigated) by a local authority, under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, in response to indications of abuse or neglect in relation to an adult with care and support needs who is at risk and is unable to protect them because of those needs.

5. Key achievements to note 2018/19

5.1 Leadership, Strategy and Working Together

5.2 The Assistant Chief Executive has overall responsibility for Safeguarding. Four senior staff members are designated as safeguarding leads. These members of staff have been consistent and engaged throughout.

- The Council's Policy and Partnership Team Manager / Assistant Chief Executive have attended all four board meetings and Executive board meetings for both OSCB and OSAB this year.
- The Council's partnership support and input as a council has been noted at OSCB executive board level.
- The Council's Policy and Partnership Team Manager has participated in the development of the safeguarding in housing sub group of the OSCB
- The Policy and Partnership Team Manager and Assistant Chief Executive were involved in the interview process for the new independent chair of the OSAB
- The Policy and Partnership Team Manager co-ordinated an external deep dive audit of housing providers' safeguarding practice across Oxfordshire on behalf of the Partnership. This audit is in its final stages.

5.3 The Policy and Partnership Team Manager provides the link between the OSAB, OSCB and the Council's strategic safeguarding group which oversees the safeguarding champions and supports the co-ordination and decision making about safeguarding practice across the Council.

5.4 The Council's Safeguarding Coordinator has been responsible for sourcing, procuring and implementing the new central recording system MyConcern. The MyConcern application has had a positive impact on the safeguarding culture within the Council. Quarterly reports are published on the intranet to show staff across the organisation the current areas of concern. Reporting trends in relation to topic or service area are brought to the attention of the strategic safeguarding group for discussion and further consideration.

5.6 Commissioning, Service Delivery and Effective Practice

5.7 The Council has a robust system for ensuring that any grant and commissioned services have a suitable safeguarding policy and procedure before committing any funding.

5.8 In 2017 Oxford City Council ran a pilot of the commissioned services safeguarding audit. This means organisations that receive grants or funding from Oxford City Council were asked to complete a self- assessment of their safeguarding practices and policies. In 2018 the audit was expanded to 14 organisations that work directly with, provide services to, or have contact with children or adults with care and support needs. The audit included the Council's leisure provider Fusion,

Homeless Oxfordshire as well as smaller organisations such as Oxford Friend and Arts at the Old Fire Station

5.9 The recommendations below from the audit have been provided to the service providers and commissioning departments as part of their feedback:

- Service providers are advised to inform the commissioning team manager of all safeguarding incidents that result in an adult safeguarding enquiry² or child protection procedures³.
- Service providers are advised to complete the annual safeguarding audit and discuss any issues as soon as possible with the commissioning agent and safeguarding coordinator if necessary.
- Commissioning teams within the Council are advised to inform all commissioned services of their safeguarding responsibilities and request that an annual audit is completed.
- The Council's commissioning teams should inform one of the four designated safeguarding leads when a safeguarding enquiry is raised from an external commissioned service.

5.10 Performance & Resource Management

5.11 Now that the MyConcern application is fully implemented the Council is able to track the number of safeguarding concerns raised, referral rates and reporting trends. From 1st August 2018 – 30th April 2019 there have been 135 concerns logged. The proportion of adult concerns to child concerns is 70%-30%.

5.12 From these 135 concerns, 63 were referred to either adult or child safeguarding teams or directly to emergency services. The remaining concerns, not referred further, were managed internally or sign posted to a different service for support.

5.13 The Council has continued to provide a bespoke one hour safeguarding briefing for all members of staff. This briefing is an introduction to safeguarding awareness, policies and procedures and real life scenarios for discussion on what to do and who to speak to. It is the Council's policy to remind staff that they must share their concerns but must also work with other agencies and internal teams to provide safe outcomes.

5.14 The Council's one hour awareness briefing is updated annually; it is shared with the other District Councils and with the two safeguarding boards. This year's update addressed all forms of exploitation (e.g. cuckooing and county lines), hate crime statistics and information on PREVENT and how to safeguard people and communities at risk of becoming or supporting terrorists.

² See footnote 1.

³

Section 17 of the Act places a general duty on all local authorities to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.' Basically, a 'child in need' is a child who needs additional support from the local authority to meet their potential.

Section 47 of the Act requires the local authority to investigate the child's circumstances where they have 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child ... is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm,' and to 'take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.'

5.15 In addition the Council has provided internal level 2 safeguarding adults and child courses, meaning a further 50 staff members have renewed or completed their appropriate level training. There have been three sessions provided so far for councillors with 19 out of 48 members attending one of those sessions.

5.16 **Outcomes for, and Experiences of, People Who Use Statutory Services**

5.17 The MyConcern application is also available to staff at Oxford Direct Services Limited (“ODSL”). ODSL team managers completed the introductory training so they are able log safeguarding concerns raised from home visits. ODSL staff have identified and reported child neglect, self-neglect, mental health concerns, financial abuse and suicidal thoughts.

5.18 As part of the Health Inequalities Project the Council has funded two embedded mental health workers who sit within the Tenancy Sustainment Team. The team manage high risk tenants with complex needs. The two mental health professionals are supporting housing officers to better understand mental health issues, risk and management of concerns and navigate the most appropriate pathways for support for these clients. The Council is evaluating the client experience of this project and will provide a full report to the Health and Wellbeing Board at the end of the project. The project has also provided mental health first aid training for front line workers in the Housing and Community Safety Teams. The Health Inequalities Project reports progress into the Health Inequalities Commissioning Group, which works in partnership with many agencies across Oxfordshire and is currently chaired by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

5.19 The inclusion of modern slavery in the Care Act 2014 as a form of abuse means that the subject of modern slavery is included in the remit of adult safeguarding in England. Oxford City Council As part of the Thames Valley Partnership is hosting the Victims First Willow Project⁴. The Thames Valley-wide service seeks to identify and support those individuals who are assessed as being victims of exploitation or who are deemed to be at risk of exploitation. The project has also provided in house modern slavery training to front line staff in the Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Response Teams. Research is currently being carried out by out by Elmore Community Services, the research project was set up to investigate the nature and extent of modern slavery and trafficking in Oxford. The findings will be used by city and county-wide bodies responsible for community safety to:

- Identify where exploitation is happening and who is vulnerable
- Understand how to protect and support victims better
- Make it harder for exploiters and traffickers to operate in our area

⁴ [The Willow Project is part of ‘Victims First’ and is one of a number of services for victims commissioned by the PCC. It will be delivered by Thames Valley Partnership under a two year contract with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.](#)

6 The key areas of focus for 2019/20

6.1 To support the priorities of the OSAB and OSCB and to improve safeguarding provision in all of the Council's Service areas the key areas of focus will include:

- Identifying lessons learnt through the MyConcern application and assessing training needs in specific service areas including ODSL.
- Recognising and naming neglect early
- Increasing Councillor safeguarding training participation
- Providing staff with support and training for incidents involving suicide threats
- Continuing to strengthen the work with the Council's Thriving at Work programme to support staff where safeguarding concerns have been raised.
- Incorporating the principles of contextual safeguarding into the Council's safeguarding culture i.e. understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.
- A strategic, planned approach to domestic abuse, modern slavery and peer on peer abuse
- Internal audit of safeguarding across the Council's housing services and identification of further training needs / procedures.

7. Risks and Challenges

7.1 This year has seen changes to service areas, the creation of Oxford Direct Services Limited as well as changes in senior management roles and team leadership. It is important in the next 12 months to ensure that:

- Safeguarding is embedded across all services areas
- Team managers are able to support staff with safeguarding concerns
- Staff can confidentially raise concerns for colleagues
- New staff induction programmes include access to MyConcern and appropriate training
- Members receive training and understand how to report safeguarding and handle sensitive information
- Training addresses local and national concerns
- Sufficient horizon scanning is conducted to allow the Council to predict impending trends and changes to government priorities and funding opportunities
- Staff are listened to through the internal survey about what they feel they need support with most in relation to good quality safeguarding practice.

7.2 Following the deaths of 5 individuals who were or had previously been through the Oxfordshire homeless pathway Oxford City Council made a referral to the OSAB to undertake a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR). The OSAB concluded that (under the Care Act 2014 definition) the 5 individuals did not have care and support needs, so therefore did not fit the criteria for a formal adult safeguarding review. It did however recommend that an investigative review is established into the systems that are in place to support those who are on the homeless pathway but are not engaging in services, but do have significant health issues and care

and support need . The scope of this review is being developed with input from Council Officers.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The Council has committed within the budget to make an annual contribution towards the running costs of the OSCB of £10,000 and the OSAB of £10,000. The Council has two members of staff who are active trainers who contribute to the OSCB training pool and one for the OSAB training pool.

8.2 All work identified in this report can be funded from within the Policy and Partnerships budget.

9 Legal issues

9.1 The Council's legal responsibilities are set out in the body of the report and otherwise there are no legal implications arising from the report.

10. Equalities impact

10.1 Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Policy is attached as an appendix

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Background Papers:	
1	Oxford City Council Safeguarding Self- Assessment 2018

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