

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Safeguarding Sub Committee	27 November 2014
Subject: City of London Children and Families Staff Escalation of Safeguarding Concerns Process	Public
Report of: Chris Pelham, Assistant Director, People Services	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report informs Members of the mechanisms in place in the Department of Community and Children's Services that enable staff at all levels in the Children and Families Service to raise safeguarding concerns and issues with managers, if they feel these issues and concerns are not being considered appropriately, how they will be escalated to senior managers as necessary.</p> <p>The report also highlights that there is now a formal Escalation Policy agreed by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (see Appendix), which provides transparency and organisational accountability for ensuring that conflicts between staff from partner agencies are formally addressed and, if necessary, escalated to the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>For Members to note the report.</p>	

Main Report

Background

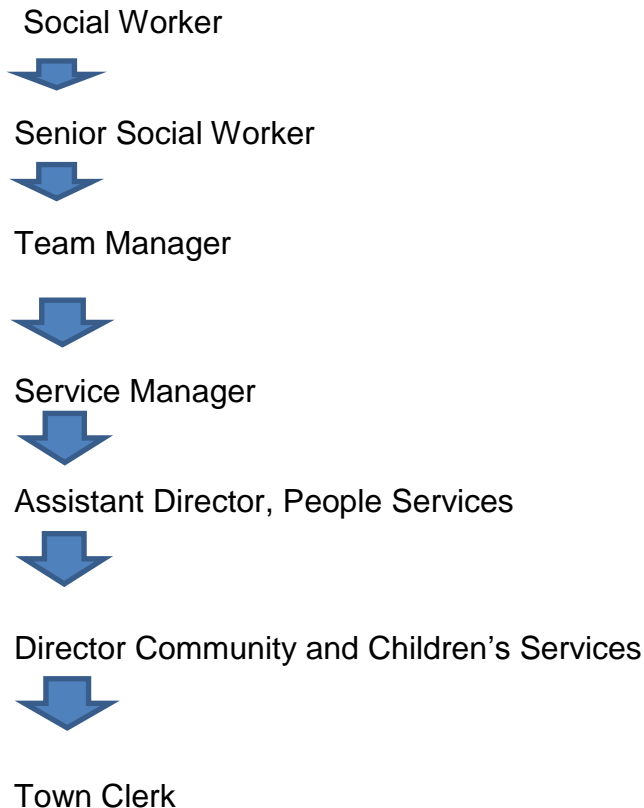
1. Recent events in other parts of the country in relation to issues of child sexual exploitation have highlighted how organisational cultures and behaviours which do not promote openness, transparency and accountability can have devastating impacts on the safety and welfare of young people in the local community.
2. It is essential therefore that all those responsible for ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place, including officers, Members, police and partner agencies, support an honest, open and transparent culture of awareness raising and information sharing that treats the safety of the child and young person as paramount.
3. In recent months the City of London has demonstrated this commitment through prioritising safeguarding on the Corporate Risk Register and through the launch of the Notice the Signs campaign.
4. In addition to these initiatives and the ongoing day-to-day safeguarding arrangements that are commissioned and/or delivered for our children and families, the following information sets out the escalation process in the City of London for members of staff who have a concern about matters of a safeguarding nature. The process is aligned with the Whistleblowing Policy which makes reference to the need to consider whether investigations should progress under the Whistleblowing Policy or via a Safeguarding or Conduct route.

Current Position

5. Staff working with children and families at risk of harm do so within a supportive/supervisory environment where concerns/issues are reported to line managers to ensure there is clear accountability regarding assessment, decision making and review.
6. Safeguarding procedures clearly set out responsibilities for staff to escalate their concerns to their line managers.
7. When escalating concerns, these issues must be recorded. They could be recorded in supervision notes, individual files, team minutes etc.
8. Agreement should then be sought as to the course of action that is going to be taken, by whom and when, and this should also be recorded.
9. If they feel that their concerns are not being addressed or appropriately acted upon by their direct line manager, staff must be able to pass their concerns up through the organisation to supervisors, middle and senior managers.

10. Staff in the Children and Families services will have formal supervision on a monthly basis (as a minimum) as per the Supervision Policy.

11. The following figure highlights the Children and Families staff escalation hierarchy:



12. There are a number of mechanisms in place to ensure that staff are able to escalate concerns above their direct line manager. These include the following.

- a) The Director's confidential surgery is open to all staff in the Department of Community and Children Services.
- b) The Service Manager (SM) and Team Manager (TM) meet with the Director two or three times per annum. The SM and TM are invited to meet the Director without the Assistant Director (AD) People present, although to date they have chosen not to do so.
- c) The AD People attends the team meetings of the Children and Families Team on a quarterly basis.
- d) The Children and Families quality assurance programme provides opportunities for the staff to meet with members of the Departmental Leadership Team (DLT) to discuss their practice.
- e) Unlike other local authority social care services, all the staff up to Director level work on the same floor. This is highly unusual in the context of local authorities delivering statutory safeguarding services and provides

opportunities for staff interaction across all levels of the departmental hierarchy.

- f) Senior managers have an open door policy for staff. Workshop sessions are held with the Children and Families Team which seek to provide opportunities for staff to express service-related issues in a safe and non-blaming environment.
 - g) The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) oversees a survey of staff that is anonymous and provides opportunities for staff to raise issues.
 - h) The DLT also meets as a DLT+ on a quarterly basis (which includes all service managers) and the People Senior Management Team (SMT) meets as an SMT+ on a quarterly basis (which includes all team managers). This ensures that there is an opportunity for all supervisory staff to be engaged in service planning and development and it supports the raising of key issues from the front line to Senior Management.
 - i) The Assistant Director People Services will also meet with the Town Clerk twice per annum to discuss safeguarding issues. This meeting can take place with or without the Director also present.
 - j) The Independent Chair of the CHSCB meets with the Director on a quarterly basis and with the Town Clerk at least twice per annum. These meetings provide additional opportunities to consider any safeguarding concerns that might require attention at the highest level of the organisation.
13. These opportunities all contribute to encouraging an organisational culture that prioritises the safety and welfare of our children and families, that encourages staff engagement and that is open, transparent, accountable and non-threatening.
14. The CHSCB has also produced an Escalation Policy that clearly sets out the process by which a conflict, disagreement, concern etc. between practitioners /managers from different organisations can be formally addressed to reach a satisfactory conclusion.
15. The CHSCB will monitor the use of the policy and report to the Executive Board on when the policy has to be utilised, why and any learning that emerges from the process.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

16. There are no financial, legal or strategic implications associated with this report.

Conclusion

17. This report has provided Members with information on the various ways in which staff are able to ensure that any concerns they have, which they do not feel are being addressed by their line manager appropriately, can be progressed via a range of routes.

18. The report has also introduced the new CHSCB Escalation Policy which sets out the framework by which staff across agencies can raise issues if they are also concerned that matters of a safeguarding nature are not being addressed appropriately in an organisation.

Appendix

The Local Safeguarding Children Board Escalation Policy

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