

## **Adults' and Children's Services**

### **Standards for collaboration in safeguarding work for Children's and Adults' Services**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 These standards have been developed and agreed by Dorset Council Children's Services and Adults' Services to ensure that, each department contributes proactively and effectively to the holistic safeguarding of children and adults who are at risk.
- 1.2 The standards are written with the understanding that children's and adults' safeguarding are based on different legal frameworks; we take the view that these differences present opportunities for, and are not barriers to, effective collaboration. Such an approach will strengthen safeguarding for all those with whom we work; moreover, it will provide a foundation for robust safeguarding for those in transition from children's to adults' services.

#### **2. Context**

- 2.1 These standards were developed in response to a recommendation from The Siblings Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (August 2022):

**Recommendation 6.** There is currently work, ongoing in Dorset, to consider how best to develop closer working relationships between Adult and Children's Services. This work will need to consider the findings from this review. This would include an emphasis on working holistically, to understand the needs and circumstances of all family members, and the importance of information sharing and seeking requirements between Adult and Children's Services and other services, such as Youth Justice.

- 2.2 Through the respective policy libraries of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Board and the Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board, information sharing, and joint working arrangements are already in place with multi-agency partners. This document therefore focuses on collaboration between Children's and Adults' Services.

#### **3. The Standards**

- 3.1 Adults' and Children's Services practitioners are responsible for working with, and safeguarding, the whole family. All work together on a Whole Family, restorative basis, helping the family to develop the strength to succeed wherever possible. All are alert to indicators of possible harm, and share information effectively, so that we take effective safeguarding decisions where these are needed.

- 3.2 If an Adults' Services practitioner suspects that a child is at risk of significant harm, they should discuss this immediately with Children's Advice and Duty (ChAD) team on 01305 228558. They should gain the consent of the child's parent(s) for this discussion, except where they believe that to do so would pose a further risk of harm to the child.
- 3.3 If a Children's Services practitioner suspects that an adult who has care and support needs is at risk of harm, they should refer to Adults' safeguarding on 01929 557712. They should gain the adult's consent for this referral, save where the adult lacks consent to give this, or where there is also a risk to a child.
- 3.4 If an Adults Services practitioner believes that a child is or is likely to be in circumstances where their health and/or development is likely to be impaired, they should discuss this with Children's Advice and Duty (ChAD) team on 01305 228558, with the consent of the young person or the family.
- 3.5 If a Children's Services practitioner believes that an adult's wellbeing is adversely affected because they have unmet care and support needs, and that this is preventing them achieving key life outcomes, they should, with the consent of that adult, make a referral to the Adult Access Team on 01305 221016 or email [adultaccess@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:adultaccess@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
- 3.6 If an Adults' Services practitioner is undertaking an assessment and one or both parents has social care needs, and the practitioner is concerned that a parent who has care and support needs may be being abused (whether by their partner or by another), they should consult with ChAD (details as at 3.1) on the next steps (for example, arrangement of joint assessment with a Children's Services practitioner).
- 3.6 Practitioners from both services work together to ensure that those in transition to Adults' Services are referred in a timely manner and supported through transition by effective joint working.
- 3.7 The fact that a parent needs support to carry out their parenting role should not be taken to mean they lack the ability to parent. Support with the parenting role can be provided under the Care Act.
- 3.8 When carrying out assessment of a parent, Adults' Services practitioners will consider whether their child(ren) is undertaking carer activities, and will follow the referral procedure in [Guidance for Identifying and Assessing Young Carers](#) if so.
- 3.9 Where a family is open to both Children's and Adults' Services, each should inform the other of any significant changes in family circumstances, or in the type of work involved. For example, if a child receiving Early Help steps up to

Child in Need, the child's social worker should inform the lead Adults' practitioner.

- 3.10 Where practitioners from either service have evidence that an adult family member who works with children may not be safe or suitable for that role, they will report their concern to the Designated Officer.
- 3.11 Joint work will take place at strategic as well as practitioner level. Each department will consult the other in the development of its strategy and plans, and each will include the other in its reviews and reports, including Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adults Reviews.
- 3.11 Practitioners from both services will work together on the basis of high support and high challenge. Where informal challenge does not satisfactorily resolve a practitioner's concern, they will escalate this through the normal escalation procedures.

#### **4. Monitoring the standards**

Implementation of these standards will be monitored through:

- i) Individual and group supervision
- ii) Reflective practice sessions
- iii) Dip sampling and audit