Need To Know Guidelines for Directors and Members

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Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
0.1	12th June 2012	Version Created	
0.2	4th March 2014	Revised document	
0.3	1 Sept 2016	Revised document.	
0.4	July 2017	Revised document	
0.5	October 2017	Further revisions after discussion at CDLT.	

Related Documents

Reference	Title	Tier
SCOPS	Directors 'Need to Know' System	

West Berkshire COUNCIL

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of these guidelines is to support staff in managing communications with Corporate Directors, Members and, where relevant, partner organisations, to ensure they are informed appropriately about and involved in, as necessary, any incidents involving clients or staff, or business associated with the Communities Directorate.

2. Applicability

2.1. These guidelines are applicable to **all staff** within the Communities Directorate.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Corporate Director of Communities has overall responsibility for ensuring these guidelines are managed appropriately in accordance with these agreed standards.

3.2. Communities Directorate Leadership Team (CDLT) is responsible for:

- Monitoring compliance with and reviewing this standard
- Ensuring that there is effective consultation and communication on related matters
- Publishing and promoting the adoption of this standard
- Ensuring compliance with published standards, procedures, working practices and technology changes

3.3. CDLT is responsible for the day-to-day management of these guidelines including ensuring implementation of this standard.

3.4. All Communities Directorate staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and ensuring that they comply with this standard.

4. When to brief the Corporate Director

4.1. The Corporate Director needs to be briefed about

- Unexpected or unexplained deaths
- Missing clients – at the discretion of Head of Service based on their assessment of the situation
- Fire/flood/vandalism/burglary
- Serious accidents/injuries/violent incidents
- Controversies
- Any other matter which may carry serious, immediate and real risk of adverse consequences, including – but not limited to - negative publicity.

4.2. A fuller list of circumstances can be found below in Appendix A

5. The Briefing Procedure

5.1. When an incident meeting the criteria in Appendix A occurs, staff should follow the operational guidelines below in a manner appropriate to the service involved.

5.1.1. The relevant Service Manager should be the first point of contact or if the relevant Service Manager isn't available then another one of the Directorate Service Managers or the Head of Service if more practicable to do so.

5.1.2. The Service Manager will then contact the relevant Head of Service. If the Head of Service is not available another member of the Communities Directorate Leadership Team should be contacted, or the Director if more practicable to do so.

5.1.3. If at any time there is likely to be delay due to unavailability of the tier of management, the staff member should simply move on to the next tier without delay.

5.1.4. Outline the incident and give a contact name and number of the member of staff who can provide up-to-date information. If there is an available mobile telephone number, provide this too. **Use the form in Appendix B to record the details.**

5.1.5. Form B should always be used to record the details, even where these are limited at first. Staff should not circulate e-mails with the details contained in the body of the e-mail. The e-mail subject line should be simply NTK [initials of person affected] [date of incident]. The body of the e-mail need only say: Please find NTK attached.

5.1.6. The staff involved directly with the incident should keep a full and contemporaneous record of events including timing of incidents, actions, and details of those contacted and information given. The Service manager should do likewise to ensure that overall a comprehensive record is kept. Where a client file exists all such records should be copied to it as soon as possible. **There is no need to reproduce the contemporaneous record in full in the NTK Form B, which should be limited to essential, "need to know" information only.**

5.1.7. The Service Manager will provide the Head of Service with a full written briefing as soon as possible (always within 24 hours) sending a copy by e-mail.

5.1.8. The Head of Service will ensure that relevant Heads of other Services have been consulted about any apparent involvement of their service before submitting the NTK to the Director. Where another service is referenced in the Form B, the Head of that Service should have an opportunity to agree the content of the Form B before it is sent to the Director, if at all possible.

5.1.9. Where information about the incident is updated during the course of the day or over several days, updated versions of the form in Appendix B should be provided to the Director, with the fresh information added under a header indicating the date and time of the newly added information.

5.2. Where a team is a joint team with Health and/or other partners, there may be a similar "need to know" process and Accident/Adverse Incident reporting mechanisms. Service Managers must be aware of these and concurrently trigger them where appropriate.

5.3. The Corporate Director will determine whether any wider circulation of information is required, e.g. Elected Members, Corporate Press Office, Chief Executive, Partner Organisations and will instruct accordingly.

6. When to inform Members

6.1. Elected Members responsible for services in the Communities Directorate shadow portfolio leads, and/or local ward members should be briefed about relevant serious incidents as soon as possible, subject to the Director's instructions.

6.2. The Corporate Director overall is responsible for deciding when a NTK should be shared with Members and providing regular updates once an initial NTK has been shared. Heads of Service will take the lead for ensuring this happens in a timely way.

6.3. All information shared under this protocol must be marked 'not for onward circulation'.

6.4. Where email is sent to an external e-mail address, information must be sent as 'secure'.

7. Out of Hours Incident

7.1. If the incident occurs out of hours it will usually be appropriate for staff to follow normal emergency procedures and contact the relevant Corporate Director or other member of the senior management team first thing the following morning except where an incident is already ongoing and a senior manager or the Director has asked to be briefed when particular circumstances change.

7.2. With reference to clients/children looked after who go missing, including those receiving respite care, staff should use their discretion to distinguish between "missing" and "absent without agreement/knowledge". Only contact the Director or senior management team out of hours in exceptional circumstances when it is necessary for the Director to make a decision or take immediate action. **If the media are to be contacted to make a public appeal for information or similar, the Director or senior management team must be contacted to confirm this decision out of hours.**

8. Requests for Information

8.1. Members may request information from staff and to be kept updated on a specific situation, for example complaints, concerns and safeguarding issues raised by residents.

8.2. Any member of staff receiving a request for information should direct the query and subsequent response through the relevant Head of Service who will provide an update on the query where appropriate.

8.3. All responses to requests for information are subject to client confidentiality.

9. Advance Information

9.1. There are a number of other situations which Members should be informed about.

9.2. Members need to know if issues or future policy proposals affect a service in their area and sometimes in adjacent wards. They are interested in all the Council services operating in their area and any affecting the wards they represent wherever those services are.

9.3. Heads of Service or Third Tier managers in liaison with their Head of Service are responsible for liaising with Members.

10. Advice and Guidance

10.1. If any member of staff has a query relating to these guidelines, they should contact their Head of Service in the first instance.

Appendix A

The “need to know” system checklist

Situations where the Director should be briefed	Additional notes
Deaths and serious injury	
Death or serious injury of a child looked after by West Berkshire Council	Highest priority
Death or serious injury of a child on the Child protection Register	Highest priority
Death or serious injury of any other client *	Highest priority
Death or serious injury of any client where there have been problems of non-engagement or refusal to accept service input*	Highest priority
Death, when not clearly of natural causes, of any client*	Highest priority
Any death or serious injury on West Berkshire Council premises *	Highest priority
Death or serious injury in unusual circumstances of any client receiving a service from Children’s Services or Community Services.	Highest priority
Death or serious injury in unusual circumstances of any client in accommodation or receiving a service provided by the independent sector for whom West Berkshire Council is financially responsible	Highest priority
Death or serious injury in unusual circumstances of any resident or user of independent sector services even if they are not West Berkshire clients – if the same unit or service is also responsible for care provision to West Berkshire clients.	Highest priority
Death or serious injury of any member of West Berkshire Council staff or staff seconded or working as a consultant for us.	Highest priority
Missing clients	
Children on the Child Protection Register	
Children Looked After considered to be at risk	Discuss with Service Manager to determine risk level.
Adults in our establishments at the point where police are called	Contact Service manager before police are called.
Adults in private or voluntary sector placements for which West Berkshire Council are responsible – at the point when police are called	Contact Service manager before police are called.
Accidents, injuries, violent incidents	

Any major accident to a client or member of staff, or violent incident involving a member of staff – as defined in the West Berkshire Council Accident/Adverse Incident Reporting procedure.	Highest priority
Fire, flood, burglary, vandalism	
Serious problem in any West Berkshire premises	Property Services may also need to be notified
Serious problem in any premises providing care to West Berkshire clients including out of county placements	Usually initially notified through Business Development Manager, otherwise Accreditation staff or Contracts staff
Controversies	
Case situations (including forthcoming court hearings and inquests) where there may be local or national publicity, controversial issues, or political implications	May be notified via press liaison officers or Legal Services
Controversial service problems or complaints likely to be raised with the Director by clients, Members of Parliament, Members, Town or Parish Councillors etc.	May be notified via press liaison officers or legal Services
Staff, foster carers, adult placement carers, Consultants working on our behalf etc	
Missing – see also Lone Working policy	Highest priority
Allegations of gross misconduct	Highest priority – not necessary to notify Press liaison officers
Suspension of staff under disciplinary procedures	Not necessary to notify Press liaison officers
Any formal investigation and/or arrest for offences that may impinge on their ability to carry out their job	Not necessary to notify Press liaison officers
Employment Tribunals	Not necessary to notify Press liaison officers
Any other issue with serious and real potential to damage the Council's reputation or service performance	Not necessary to notify Press liaison officers – Director will do so where required

(*note this does not include deaths/incidents in WBC Care Homes or expected client deaths unless the circumstances are unusual or risk attracting undue press interest.)

Appendix B

NEED TO KNOW

CONFIDENTIAL HIGH PRIORITY

Name of child/client		**Age/DOB**	
Current Address		**Legal Status (if applicable)**	
Allocated team		**Allocated Social Worker (if applicable)**	
Date of Incident	*This should always be the date of the incident, not the date of reporting of the incident to the service.*		
Summary of Incident	*This should focus on what happened, and when, to the client, staff member or other relevant person directly affected by the incident.*		
Key Events connected to and of relevance to incident	*This should include reference to any other persons related to the person affected by the incident, who are aware, or may need to be made aware of what has occurred. This may also need to include details related to the reporting of the incident if there have been any misunderstandings or delays.*		
Immediate Actions being Undertaken			
Outstanding/ Planned Further Action			
HoS Name		**HoS Comments**	
HoS Decision to pass to Director		**Date and time of notification to Director**	
Checklist of other actions			
EDT Notification	**Yes/No**	**Other Partner Agency Notification**	**Yes/No**
Other Service Notification			

Name of Portfolio Holder(s)		**Director's decision to inform portfolio holder.**	
		Date Portfolio Holder informed	
Key Contact Details of reporting member of staff		**Tel:**	