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| **Need to Know Guidelines for Directors and Members**  **Need to Know Guidelines** | Reference: | \* |
| Version No: | 0.7 |
| Issue Date: | Dec 2023 |

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**Need to Know Guidelines for Directors and Members**

**Version 0.7**

**Effective date: December 2023**

**Revision date: December 2025**

**Issued by: Paul Coe/AnnMarie Dodds**

**Role: Executive Director People**

**Need to Know Guidelines Version No: 0.7**

**For Directors and Members Issue Date: December 2023**

**Document Control**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document Ref:** | NTK | | **Date Created:** | 4 March 2014 |
| **Version:** | 0.7 | | **Date Modified:** | December 2023 |
| **Revision due** | December 2025 | | | |
| **Author:** | Paul Coe/AnnMarie Dodds – Executive Director People | | **Sign & Date:** |  |
| **Equality Impact Assessment: (EIA)** | Date undertaken: |  | | |
| Issues (if any): |  | | |

**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. |  |
| 0.6 | August 2020 | Further revisions after discussion at PDLT. | PC |
| 0.7 | Dec 2023 | Revision and update |  |

**Related Documents**

| **Reference** | **Title** | **Tier** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SCOPS | Directors ‘Need to Know’ System |  |
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# Purpose

## The purpose of these guidelines is to support staff in managing communications with 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 People Directorate.

# Applicability

## These guidelines are applicable to all staff within the People Directorate.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## The Executive Directors of People (Children’s Services and Adults) have overall responsibility for ensuring these guidelines are managed appropriately in accordance with these agreed standards.

## People Directorate Leadership Team (PDLT) 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.

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

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

# When to brief the Executive Director

## The Executive Director needs to be briefed about.

### Unexpected or unexplained deaths.

### Missing clients – at the discretion of Head of Service/Service Director 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.

## A fuller list of circumstances can be found below in Appendix A

# The Briefing Procedure

## 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.

## 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/Service Director if more practicable to do so.

## The Service Manager will then contact the relevant Head of Service/Service Director. If they are not available another member of the People Directorate Leadership Team should be contacted, or the Director if more practicable to do so.

## 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.

## 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, C or D to record the details.

## The forms – Children & Families, Adult Social Care and Safeguarding, Care Quality and Complaints 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 email. 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.

## 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 Forms. These should be limited to essential “need to know” information only.

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

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

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

## 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.

## The Executive 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.

# When to inform Members

## Elected Members responsible for services in the People 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.

## The Executive 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. Head of Service/Service Directors will take the lead for ensuring this happens in a timely way.

## All information shared under this protocol must be marked ‘not for onward circulation’.

## Where email is sent to an external e-mail address, information must be sent as ‘secure’.

# Out of Hours Incident

## If the incident occurs out of hours it will usually be appropriate for staff to follow normal emergency procedures and contact the relevant Executive 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.

## Exceptions to this may be when an incident is of the highest priority and there is likely to be media interest. Consideration should also be given to informing the Chief Executive and relevant Executive members.

## 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.

## Senior managers have access to the West Berkshire Out of hours Emergency Manual and contact details of key staff.

# Requests for Information

## 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.

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

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

# Advance Information

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

## 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.

## Heads of Service/Service Directors or Third Tier managers in liaison with their Head of Service/Service Director are responsible for liaising with Members.

# Advice and Guidance

## If any member of staff has a query relating to these guidelines, they should contact their Head of Service/Service Director 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 | Discuss with Service Manager to determine risk level. |
| 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 – Children & Families Need to Know

CONFIDENTIAL HIGH PRIORITY

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **‘NEED TO KNOW’ form CONFIDENTIAL and HIGH PRIORTY** | | | | |
| Children/Young Person’s Names: | | Dob and age: | | |
|  | |  | | |
|  | |  | | |
|  | |  | | |
|  | |  | | |
|  | |  | | |
| Current Address: | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| CIN/CP/Looked After/Care Leaver/YOT or other service? |  | | | |
| Legal Status e.g. s20, ICO, CO etc. |  | | | |
| Allocated worker and Team: |  | | | |
| Date of incident: |  | | | |
| Summary of incident: |  | | | |
| Key events connected to and of relevance to incident: |  | | | |
| Summary of risks: |  | | | |
| Immediate Actions being taken: |  | | | |
| Outstanding and planned actions: |  | | | |
| IRO & QAAS Manager Notified (Names, date and time): |  | | | |
| EDT Notified (Date and time): |  | | | |
| Other agencies Notified (Agency, date and time) |  | | | |
| Name of person completing form: |  | | | |
| Service Manager sign off: |  | | | |
| Date: |  | | | |
| Head of Service review: | | | | |
| Head of Service Comments: |  | | | |
| Head of Service Instructions: |  | | | |
| To be Passed to Director and Portfolio Holder / Lead Member by HoS? | YES/NO | | | |
| Ofsted to be Notified?  www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-child-safeguarding-incident | YES/NO | | By whom? |  |
| Update to HoS required by (date/time): |  | | | |

Appendix C – Adult Services Need to Know for Directors and Councillors

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of client\*** |  | | **Age\*** |  | |
| **Current Address\*** |  | | **Allocated team and Social Worker\*** |  | |
| **Date of Incident** |  | | **Multiple People Involved?** |  | |
| **Summary of Incident** |  | | | | |
| **Key Events connected to and of relevance** |  | | | | |
| **Immediate Actions being Undertaken** |  | | | | |
| **Outstanding/ Planned Further Action** |  | | | | |
| **HoS Name** |  | **HoS Comments** |  | | |
| **Checklist of other actions** | | | | | |
| **EDT Notification** | **Yes/No** | **Other Partner Agency Notification** | | **Yes/No** | |
| **Portfolio Holder** |  | **Date Portfolio Holder informed** | |  | |
| **HoS Decision to pass to Director** | | | **Yes** | **No** | |
| **Key Contact Details** |  | | **Tel:** | | |
| **Follow-up Due Date** | |  | **Follow up Completed?** | |  |

*\*if applicable*

Appendix D – Safeguarding, Care Quality and Complaints – Need to Know for Directors and Councillors

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Provider or Inhouse Service Concerned** |  | | | | |
| **Multiple People Involved?** |  | | **Date of Incident or Occurrence** |  | |
| **Type of Incident** | **Safeguarding**  **Care Quality**  **Complaint** |  | **Previous incident(s) relating to the same provider or service?** |  | |
|  |
|  |
| **Lead WBC Officer** |  | | **Email and Tel:** |  | |
| **Summary of Concerns** |  | | | | |
| **Key Events connected to and of relevance** |  | | | | |
| **Immediate Actions being Undertaken**  **(include dates)** |  | | | | |
| **Outstanding/ Planned Further Action**  **(include dates)** |  | | | | |
| **HoS Name** |  | **HoS Comments** |  | | |
| **Other Partner Agency Notification** |  | **If yes, which agencies** |  | | |
| **Portfolio Holder** |  | **Date Portfolio Holder informed** | |  | |
| **Follow-up Due Date** | |  | **Follow up Completed?** | |  |