

North East Derbyshire District Council

Audit Committee

4 December 2023

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Report of the Managing Director

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Lee Hickin, Managing Director

Contact Officer: Lee Hickin, Managing Director

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

- To update Members of the Audit Committee regarding safeguarding arrangements/referrals.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Audit Committee notes the report.

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

There are no additional financial implications arising out of this report

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

There are no legal or data protection issues arising out of this report

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

No direct issues outside already recognised budgets and resources.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Significantly Affected	None
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> SMT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes Details:

Links to Council Plan priorities, including Climate Change, Equalities, and Economics and Health implications.

REPORT DETAILS

1 **Background** *(reasons for bringing the report)*

1.1 **Safeguarding Referrals.**

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, well-being and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) is the statutory lead for safeguarding in Derbyshire as they have responsibility for adult care and children's services. However, there is a requirement that North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) must work in partnership with DCC to protect adults and children who are most at risk.

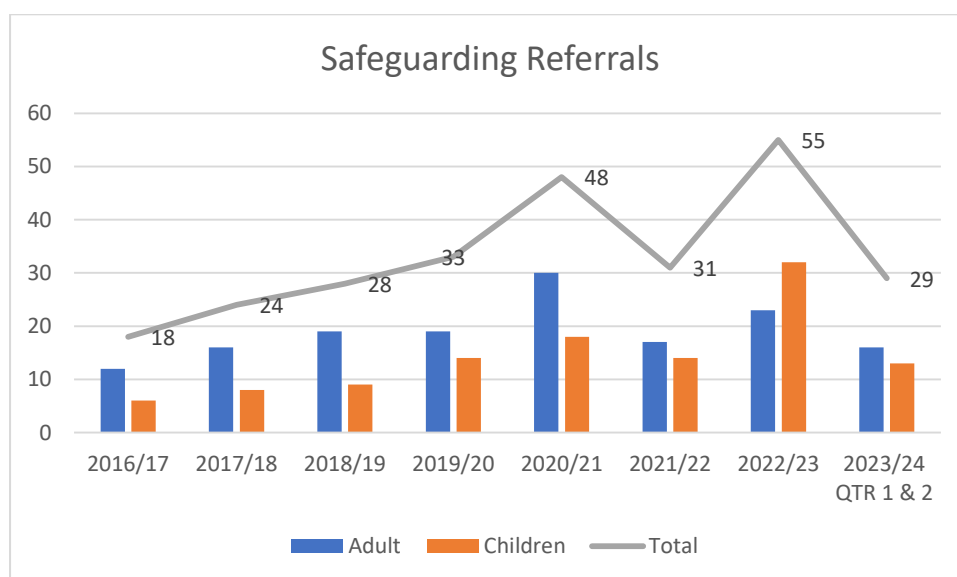
The table below shows trend information from the centrally recorded safeguarding referrals to DCC, from 2016/17 up to Quarter 2 2023/24.

Year	Total Number of referrals	Split between adult / children		Department/Organisation Referring to Link Officer	Number of referrals
		Adult	Children		
2016/17	18	12 (66%)	6 (33%)	Housing Options Environmental Health *Contact Centre Leisure	3 6 8 1
2017/18	24	16 (66%)	8 (33%)	Housing Options Environmental Health *Contact Centre Leisure	2 4 17 1
2018/19	28	19 (68%)	9 (32%)	Housing Options Environmental Health *Contact Centre Leisure Revenues and Benefits Street Scene Community Development Worker Elections	3 2 13 1 6 1 1 1
2019/20	33	19 (58%)	14 (42%)	Housing Options Environmental Health *Contact Centre Leisure Revenues and Benefits Legal Councillor Partnership Team DCC's Tell us Once Scheme Planning	5 2 14 2 4 2 1 1 1 1
2020/21	48	30 (62%)	18 (38%)	Housing Options Environmental Health *Contact Centre Revenues and Benefits Home Start at Derby Partnership Team Dental Practice	7 2 32 4 1 1 1
2021/22	31	17 (55%)	14 (45%)	Housing Options Environmental Health *Contact Centre Covid Test Centre	12 1 17 1
2022/23	55	23 (42%)	32 (58%)	Housing Options Environmental Health *Contact Centre Revenues and Benefits Leisure Street Scene Housing Strategy	10 3 24 4 2 1 1

				Human Resources	1
				Learning Disability Centre	1
				North Derbyshire	1
				Newmedica Ltd	
				NHS Ambulance	1
				Health Assured	1
				Ukrainian Host	1
				Probation Service	2
				Family Court	1
				Counselling Advice	1
2023/24	29	16	13	Housing Options	7
From 1		(55%)	(45%)	*Contact Centre	19
April to 30				Revenues and Benefits	2
September				Sheffield CAMHS	1
(Q1 and					
Q2)					

*NOTE: The Contact Centre receives the most cases for Safeguarding Referrals, this will be due to their role as the first point of contact for the Council. Referrals are identified from tenants and residents who mostly report concerns about their family, friends, and neighbours. On some occasions external organizations report Safeguarding Concerns to the Contact Centre, these are monitored and have been shown in the table.

The Chart shows the number of Safeguarding referrals over time for Adults, Children and overall total per year.



Since 2016/17 the number of referrals has increased over the reporting period, with a noticeable spike during the years 2020/21 and 2022/23. This is especially true for Child referrals which significantly increased during 2022/23.

Factors that could have influenced the referral increases are:

- Covid 19 pandemic – “lockdowns” began 2020, meaning;
 - More people were at home to witness, identify and report adults/children at risk
 - Contact Centre Welfare Checks were identifying adults/children at risk
 - Housing Options team were identifying people that were homeless and at risk of harm to themselves or others
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - framework designed to support organisations to identify and respond to domestic abuse and promote best practice. It also recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right which may have led to more referrals.
- Cost of Living Crises – people struggling to pay bills and buy groceries, which can lead to homelessness, mental health illness, neglect and could create hostile environments in the home; this list is not exhaustive.

1.2 Referral Issues Identified

During the year 2022/23 the Council received a number of Safeguarding referrals from external organisations which should have been reported directly to DCC.

This raised a question as to why this was happening. After further investigation, we became aware that DCC’s website could have been misinterpreted. DCC was notified of this and subsequently amended their website.

During the first 2 quarters of 2023/24 less reports of Safeguarding concerns from external organisations have been sent to the Council in error, however we will continue monitoring this situation to ensure the correct procedures are being followed.

1.3 Quarter 1 and 2 2023/24

There were 29 Safeguarding referrals during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, 2023/24, the majority were reported through the contact centre (19), followed by the Housing Options team (7), Revenues and Benefits (2) and one external organisation, Sheffield CAMHS (Children and Adults Mental Health Services), reporting to NEDDC in error.

There are many reasons why a person is at risk and will require a safeguarding referral. The top reasons for Safeguarding Referrals during Quarter 1 and 2 2023/24, in simple terms, are, threats/thoughts of suicide, Domestic Abuse including child abuse, mental health problems, including drug and alcohol misuse. Most cases are complex and cannot fit into one category, therefore to give an idea of complexity the reasons for the referrals are as follows:

Adults

- 2 cases vulnerable adult requiring help from DCC services
- 5 cases suicidal thoughts
- 1 case Ukrainian refugee with multiple health needs
- 2 cases vulnerable adult being taken advantage of in multiple ways
- 1 case upset thinking social worker was taking money
- 1 case vulnerable adult asked to leave the family home
- 1 case vulnerable adult suffering verbal abuse
- 1 case vulnerable adult who's accommodation is in disrepair
- 1 case vulnerable adult who is suffering financial abuse
- 1 case mental health problems and potential abuse

Children

- 1 case request from the family to implement multi-agency support (sent to NEDDC instead of DCC)
- 2 cases mother suffering Domestic Abuse
- 1 case alleged sexual assault to the child
- 1 case groomed by gang in another Local Authority area when staying with a parent (County Lines)
- 1 case neglect and financial abuse to mother
- 1 case reported that mother stated child was inconvenient to her social life
- 1 case abuse of children suffering mental and physical abuse
- 1 case at risk due to mother using drugs and partying with neighbours
- 1 case child abuse by mother
- 1 case Anti-Social Behaviour including drugs and parties
- 1 case verbal abuse to a baby by parent
- 1 case drug use and domestic violence

Each case is considered on an individual basis with a variety of actions taken which as well as a referral to social care, can include Police, co-operation with social care / Police investigations, safe and well checks, VARM plans (Vulnerable person risk management), monitoring, etc.

When a referral is made to DCC, where relevant and appropriate, council departments may be informed, for example, the Council's Environmental Health, Housing Options and Community Safety teams. Rykneld Homes Limited will also be informed if the vulnerable person at risk is living in a Council property. This is to ensure a joined-up approach to Safeguarding and the person at risk gets the help required. Any information shared will have due regard to the Safeguarding data protection legislation.

Cases may be brought to the NEDDC safeguarding group to establish lessons learned, key themes and where appropriate discussion. Feedback

and escalation via the Derbyshire Districts Safeguarding Lead Sub Group is also an option.

1.4 Safeguarding Policy Update

It was agreed at the Derbyshire District Safeguarding Leads Sub Group that a Safeguarding Policy would be developed by all District / Borough Councils across Derbyshire together; this will ensure consistency of service and a partnership approach to Safeguarding in Derbyshire.

The Policy has now been drafted and was approved for adoption by the Council at Cabinet on the 26th October 2023.

The “Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Protecting Children and Adults at Risk”, will replace the current Adult and Child Safeguarding policies.

The Safeguarding Policy has been adapted in line with the Council’s reporting procedures, therefore the current reporting procedures in place will not be amended.

Included in the policy are information sheets giving contact details and advice on;

- Children at risk of Exploitation (CRE)
- Domestic Abuse
- Hate Crime
- Modern Slavery
- PREVENT
- Guidelines for Photography and Filming

1.5 Learning and development

Internal Training Update

Diane Parker (Housing Strategy), Joanne Richardson (Housing Options) and Emma Tonking (Housing Options) have taken over the corporate internal training sessions to give an overview of Safeguarding and the reporting procedures within the Council. The training is compulsory for new starters and existing employees as a Safeguarding refresher course.

To date 1 session has been completed with 15 attendees. The training received good feedback.

Training for Private Landlords

A Private Sector Strategy has been commissioned and is currently being developed. Within the strategy and the Action Plan it is envisioned that Private Landlords receive Safeguarding training, this may be implemented by the Council through the Landlord forum but it is yet to be decided how the training will take place.

The training session will help landlords identify vulnerable people at risk in the Private Rented Sector.

1.6 Derbyshire District Safeguarding Leads Sub Group Training

A Safeguarding Adults and Neurodiversity Webinar was held on 6 July 23 and a further Teams session had been arranged for 12 December 23. Currently 35 people are booked onto the December training session. NEDDC have requested a session specifically for elected members. Elected members were welcome to join the meeting on 12 December 23.

Safeguarding Adults training delivered by Josie Hill, DCC Adult Social Care. Face to face sessions were held between February and April 23 attended by 50 people. A virtual session had been held on 7 September, attended by 86 people.

'Train the trainer' training with regard to social care to be arranged to enable districts and boroughs to continue to deliver key information to staff and teams.

Introduction to Safeguarding – Keeping Children Safe – Level 1 (used to be Everybody's Business) training, + recommended all staff undertake as a minimum.

DCC were considering NEDDC's current training package with a view to advising whether any additional information should be included e.g. case studies.

1.7 Derbyshire District Safeguarding Leads Sub Group Update

The Derbyshire Districts Safeguarding Leads Sub-Group meets on a quarterly basis and all district and borough safeguarding leads are invited. The Group has had a significant impact in improving safeguarding by providing a safe space to discuss safeguarding concerns and enable Derbyshire Districts to have a united, stronger voice at the safeguarding boards. Key activities include:

- Section 11 Audit – improvement discussions.
- Improved access to joint briefings, training and a range of different safeguarding topics.
- Promotion of wider safeguarding activity.
- Provided opportunities for discussion on shared challenges, concerns and opportunities to escalate issues to statutory partner agencies.
- Discussion and dissemination of learning from local and serious case reviews.
- Development of joint policies and resources.
- National supply and world-wide shortage of medication to support people with ADHA which means we may see some erratic behaviour in schools and communities, this may lead to more safeguarding referrals.

1.8 Key progress year end 2022/23

- Review of Terms of Reference
- Communications Contact Information collated and shared.
- Section 11 Audit (Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, Arrangements for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young People – Strategic and Organisational Self-Assessment) completed.
- Adoption of Generic Safeguarding Policy template. (Approved at Cabinet on 26 October 23)
- DDSLSG Chair attended DSAB and DDSLP Board meetings to provide an update.

1.9 Key activities for 2023/24

- Landlord Safeguarding Training procedure for implementation.
- Derbyshire wide Safeguarding Policy implemented.
- Safeguarding training to continue.
- Training, learning and development assurance exercise. To understand what safeguarding training each authority is accessing and delivering in order to develop consistency where possible and identify gaps.
- Annual review of Safeguarding Policy template.
- Section 11 Audit completion.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 To update Members of the Audit Committee on safeguarding arrangements.

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To keep members of the Audit Committee updated and sighted on all arrangements relating to safeguarding as a key element of the overarching risk management framework.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 This report could be shared and reviewed by a Scrutiny Committee or Council directly. However, it is felt that the Audit Committee is the right place to report back on safeguarding issues as it is a key feature of the overarching framework.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title

Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet you must provide copies of the background papers)	