

**North East Derbyshire District Council**

**Audit Committee**

**24 November 2025**

**Safeguarding Update**

**Report of the Managing Director**

Classification: This report is public

Report By: **Lee Hickin, Managing Director**

Contact Officer: **Diane Parker, Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer**

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**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**

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**Finance and Risk:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Details:**

There are no additional financial implications arising out of this report.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

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**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

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**Staffing:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Details:**

No direct issues outside already recognised budgets and resources.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

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## DECISION INFORMATION

<b>Decision Information</b>	
<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> 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:  <b>NEDDC:</b> <b>Revenue - £125,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £310,000 <input type="checkbox"/></b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
<b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
<b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b>	None
<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) details:</b>	
<b>Stage 1 screening undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed EIA stage 1 to be appended if not required to do a stage 2</li> </ul>	
<b>Stage 2 full assessment undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed EIA stage 2 needs to be appended to the report</li> </ul>	
<b>Consultation:</b> <b>Leader / Deputy Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cabinet <input type="checkbox"/></b> <b>SMT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/></b> <b>Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></b>	

### Links to Council Plan priorities;

- A great place that cares for the environment
- A great place to live well
- A great place to work
- A great place to access good public services

## 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 18 September 2024.

Year	Total Number of referrals	Split between adult / children		Department/Organisation Referring to Link Officer	Number of referrals
		Adult	Children		
<b>2016/17</b>	18	12	6	Housing Options	3
		(66%)	(33%)	Environmental Health	6
				*Contact Centre	8
				Leisure	1
<b>2017/18</b>	24	16	8	Housing Options	2
		(66%)	(33%)	Environmental Health	4
				*Contact Centre	17
				Leisure	1
<b>2018/19</b>	28	19	9	Housing Options	3
		(68%)	(32%)	Environmental Health	2
				*Contact Centre	13
				Leisure	1
				Revenues and Benefits	6

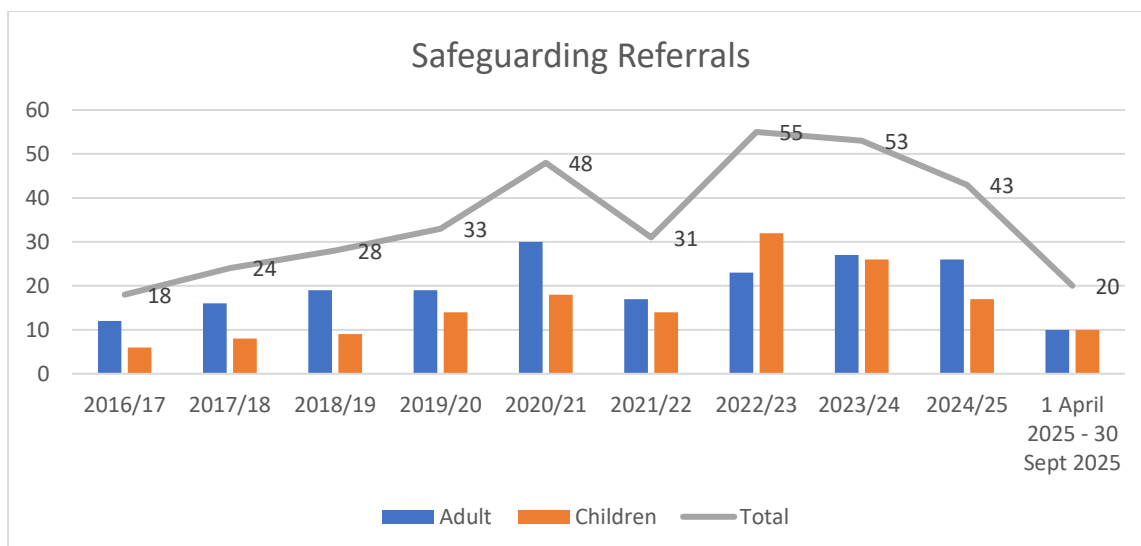
				Street Scene	1
				Community Development Worker	1
				Elections	1
<b>2019/20</b>	33	19 (58%)	14 (42%)	Housing Options	5
				Environmental Health	2
				*Contact Centre	14
				Leisure	2
				Revenues and Benefits	4
				Legal	2
				Councillor	1
				Partnership Team	1
				DCC's Tell us Once Scheme	1
				Planning	1
<b>2020/21</b>	48	30 (62%)	18 (38%)	Housing Options	7
				Environmental Health	2
				*Contact Centre	32
				Revenues and Benefits	4
				Home Start at Derby	1
				Partnership Team	1
				Dental Practice	1
<b>2021/22</b>	31	17 (55%)	14 (45%)	Housing Options	12
				Environmental Health	1
				*Contact Centre	17
				Covid Test Centre	1
<b>2022/23</b>	55	23	32	Housing Options	10

		(42%)	(58%)	Environmental Health	3
				*Contact Centre	24
				Revenues and Benefits	4
				Leisure	2
				Street Scene	1
				Housing Strategy	1
				Human Resources	1
				Learning Disability Centre	1
				North Derbyshire Newmedica Ltd	1
				NHS Ambulance	1
				Health Assured	1
				Ukrainian Host	1
				Probation Service	2
				Family Court	1
				Counselling Advice	1
<b>2023/24</b>	53	27 (51%)	26 (49%)	Housing Options	11
				Environmental Health	1
				*Contact Centre	34
				Revenues and Benefits	3
				Sheffield CAMHS	1
				P3	1
				Sheffield Teaching Hospital	1
				Sheffield Social Care Practitioner	1
<b>2024/25</b>	43	26 (60%)	17 (40%)	Housing Options	8
				Environmental Health	1

				*Contact Centre	24
				Revenues and Benefits	1
				South Yorkshire Housing	1
				Bank	1
				Guinness Partnership	1
				Adult Care Sheffield City	2
				Probation	2
				Street Scene	1
				Octopus Energy	1
<b>1st April 2025 to 30th Sept 2025</b>	20	10 (50%)	10 (50%)	*Contact Centre	13
				Housing Options	3
				South Yorkshire Police	1
				Reeds Partnership	1
				School Worker	1
				Guinness Partnership	1

\*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 up to 30th September 2025.



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. However, during 2024/25 there has been a decrease in Safeguarding referrals.

Factors that could have influenced the referral increases are:

- Covid 19 pandemic – “lockdowns” began 2020
- 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.

In 2023/24 less reports of Safeguarding concerns from external organisations have been sent to the Council in error, however from April 2024 up to September 2025 there has again been a noticeable increase.

During this reporting period 15 referrals was sent to the Council in error. To rectify this problem the Council's website is going to be amended to provide

clearer instructions to the public of who to contact to make a Safeguarding referral.

### **1.3 1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025**

There were 20 Safeguarding referrals during this 6 month reporting period, the majority were reported through the contact centre (13), however 5 (25%) were referrals from external organisation 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 the reporting period, in simple terms, are Domestic Violence, health issues, mental health problems and neglect. 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**

- 1 x Vulnerable Adult with Dementia
- 2 x House a state or repair
- 1 x Self neglect
- 1 x suicide threat
- 1 x High risk missing person
- 1 x Vulnerable adult with physical disability
- 1 x Mental Health
- 1 x Coerced out of money
- 1 x Not eating, sleeping mid conversation

#### **Children**

- 1 x Father concerned for child's Safety with mother
- 1 x Suspected DV from Mother
- 2 x DV
- 1 x Children drinking under age
- 1 x Mother leaving children with men met on snap chat
- 1 x Intentionally homeless
- 1 x Suicide threats
- 1 x Men coming and going and smoking Marijuana
- 1 x Neglect

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, MARM 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**

The Derbyshire wide "Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Protecting Children and Adults at Risk" has been adopted by the Council and is not due for a review until December 2025. The review will be conducted by the Derbyshire District Safeguarding Leads Sub Group with the involvement of the Council's representative.

#### **1.5 Learning and development**

##### **Internal Training Update**

Safeguarding training is compulsory for new starters and existing employees as a Safeguarding refresher course.

The training sessions can now be completed online.

##### **Training for Private Landlords**

A Private Sector Strategy has been implemented, within the strategy and it's Action Plan private landlords will have the opportunity to receive Safeguarding training, this may be implemented by the Council through the Landlord forum but 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 and fill in the gaps.

##### **Member Training**

Online training for members, developing procedures for face to face training sessions.

##### **DCC Training**

DCC provides free training sessions for more in depth Safeguarding procedures, including for their referral processes. This is aimed at Link

Officers or front facing employees. The attendance to these sessions have been well received by NEDDC employees.

## **1.6 Derbyshire District Safeguarding Leads Sub Group (DDSLSG) Update**

From September 2024, NEDDC's representative has Chaired this meeting and attends the Adult and Children's Board as a board member.

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.

The DDSLSG works to an Action Plan which is based on current Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (DDSCP) and Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board (DSAB) Strategic Priorities. Specific actions include:

- Training, learning and development.
- Operational safeguarding issues/case studies.
- Policy and procedures.
- Learning from audits and reviews.
- Engagements with DDSCP and DSAB Boards.
- General Resilience to respond to safeguarding issues/concerns.
- S11 Audit – compliance, improvement discussions and consistent approach across all districts.
- Devolution Whitepaper

Key activities include:

- 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.
- Provide updates to the Adult and Childrens Safeguarding Boards

## **1.7 Key Board Developments 2025/26**

### **Safeguarding Adults Board**

A new strategic plan and priorities for 2025-2028 have been finalised and are now published on the website [Strategic plan and priorities - Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#). The Action plan for the DDSLSG has been updated to reflect the new

priorities: prevention, inclusion, and performance. All subgroups are working towards these three priorities

### **Derbyshire District Safeguarding Childrens Partnership**

The New Families First reform is coming into effect from April 2026 with an aim to strengthen family help, multi-agency child protection and family group decision making. The joint strategic governance for these delivery groups from a county perspective will sit with the Derbyshire District Safeguarding Childrens Partnership, however districts may be invited to support specific initiatives, especially around housing and early help.

### **Adult Safeguarding Annual Report**

It is a requirement of the Care Act 2014 that all safeguarding adults boards publish an annual report.

The annual report gives an insight as to how adult abuse and neglect is addressed in Derbyshire. This can be found on the Derbyshire SAB website [Annual reports - Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#) and will be available to view once published.

### **1.8 Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Meetings**

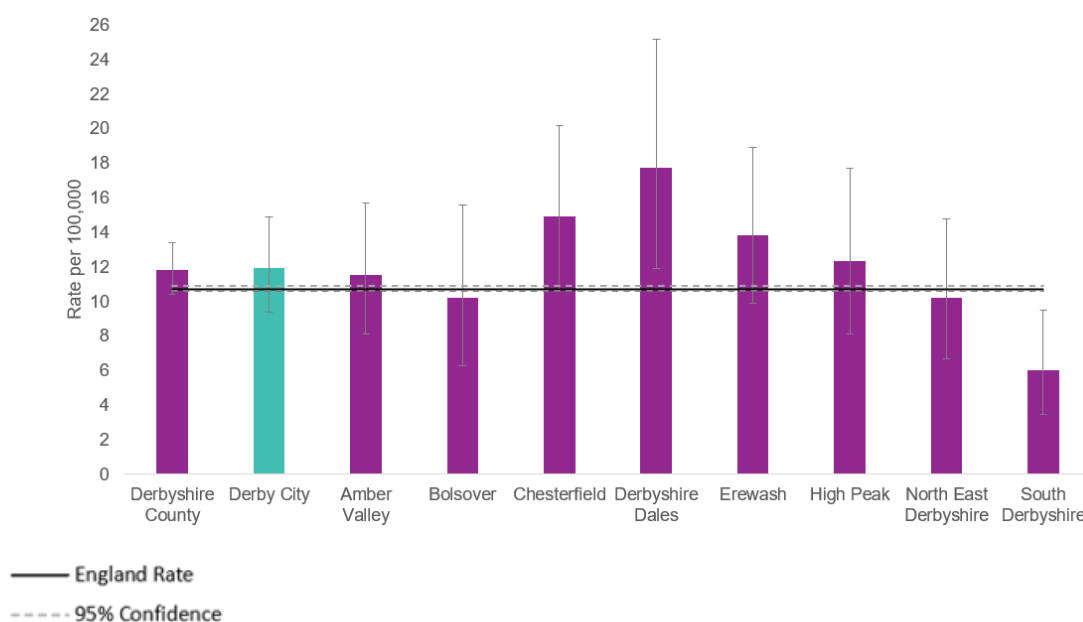
As part of their Safeguarding responsibilities, the Chair of the DDSLSG also attends the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention meetings, therefore this is now attended by a NEDDC Officer.

The Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention strategy is being refreshed and is currently out for consultation.

A recent report, [Deaths from suicide and injury of undetermined intent in Derby City and Derbyshire County](#) has been published, some key findings of the report are:

- Derbyshire's suicide rates are slightly above the national average, with 65% of cases occurring at home.
- NEDDC is below the national average (see table below)
- In 2023, there were 113 suicides in Derbyshire, including 26 in Derby City, with most victims being middle-aged males.
- Derbyshire Dales had the highest rate, while
- Belper recorded 7 cases that were investigated for possible links, though none were found.

## Age-standardised rates of registered deaths from suicide and injury of undetermined intent by Local Authority District or Unitary Authority (2021-2023)



### 1.9 Actions to be Addressed 2025/26

A couple of Link Officers have left the authority which has left gaps within some service areas, therefore recruitment for new Link Officers will be required to fill those gaps.

## 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
<b>Background Papers</b> (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)	