

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Meeting 11 July 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



East Devon Safeguarding Annual review 2023/24

Report summary:

The report outlines the key deliverables that have been achieved during 2023/24 as part of East Devon District Council's Safeguarding responsibilities.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Scrutiny Committee note the activity that has been taken with regards to Safeguarding delivery for 2023/24

Reason for recommendation:

No decisions are required and the report is for informational purposes.

Officer: David Whelan, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact. However this is only because the report is an update. Safeguarding going forwards would be high impact.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; However the this is only because the report is an update. Safeguarding going forwards would be higher risk, although the measures implemented during 23/24 reduce this risk to an acceptable level.

Links to background information Care Act, Childrens Act, EDDC Safeguarding Policy

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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Introduction

East Devon District Council believe that all children, young people and adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse. The council is committed to safeguarding from harm all children, young people and adults with care and support needs using any council services and involved in any of their activities, and to treat them with respect during their dealings with the council, our partners, and contractors.

The Council also has a number of statutory obligations with regards to safeguarding. It has a Safeguarding policy which was updated and approved by Cabinet in January 2024 and published in March 2024.

This report outlines the safeguarding work that the Council has undertaken in 2023/24.

General Safeguarding Submissions 2023/24

As a District Council we come across more adults at risk who require safeguarding than children and this is reflected in our safeguarding data. Our main areas of safeguarding submission come from our Housing Colleagues (75%), followed by Revenue & Benefits including customer services (20%).

In 2023 East Devon District Council submitted 65 adult safeguarding referrals to Devon County Council (DCC). Of the 65 submitted 18 directly met the threshold for raising a Section 42 Care Act 2014 concern with DCC Adult Social Care, with a further being 8 forwarded onto other health authority agencies for actioning.

In order to check that the Council's Safeguarding submissions were appropriate, a DCC colleague and the operational safeguarding lead undertook a review of a number of referrals. They 'dip sampled' (i.e. dipped into the records and randomly selected referrals) six of the submissions which had not been taken on as a S.42 concern. They found all of these to be relevant for submission even though they did not progress to a S.42 enquiry being raised.

The reasons for not proceeding were varied:

- Closed because the risk had been mitigated before assessment or as a result of the assessment process.
- DCC were able to pass onto another agency/department to take forward or raise this awareness with another already engaged agency which mitigated the safeguarding risk.
- Concerns were mitigated as a result of the initial submission and the subsequent social care enquiries being made.

Some Forms were submitted in order to raise a concern for welfare or other assessment with DCC Adult Social Care and we always ask staff to go with their gut feeling and err on the side of caution in relation to raising a safeguarding concern. Self-neglect is the predominant type of concern raised by EDDC with 40 out of the 65 submissions having a self-neglect element.

For Child Safeguarding referrals the process is slightly different as submit to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), which is administered by DCC but with a wider partnership approach. We submitted 3 MASH referrals in 2022, 1 in 2023 and now 2 in 2024, with the type of engagements we undertake across the council, these low figures are expected. But even though are submission numbers are low we continually keep aware of the processes and remit for Devon's Safeguarding Children Partnership via MASH who currently use an automated system via their website to capture all their safeguarding submissions.

Safeguarding Policy

In March 2024 we adopted our reviewed Safeguarding Policy which drew on learning from the Section 11 Childrens Act 2004 self-assessment audit we undertook in 2022, linked with recommendations from the Verita Report as well as learning taken from debriefs notes of our Safeguarding training.

This was a wholesale review with key changes being:

- Aims of the Policy, to include voice of the vulnerable & Corporate Parenting
- Volunteer policy & Councillor Code of Conduct included.
- Councillor Safeguarding Lead role introduced.
- Councillor Safeguarding Champion role introduced.
- Councillor responsibilities including mandatory training attendance.
- Councillors to ensure they have an up-to-date DBS disclosure.
- Councillor Safeguarding Champion or Lead support in a safeguarding concern.
- Accompanied LADO meeting attendance consultation with safeguarding lead and reference to EDDC Safeguarding Forum.
- Designation of Assistant Director/Director as Champions.
- Line manager responsibility.
- Contractor safeguarding delivery.
- Officer Safeguarding Champion responsibility and Director Lead responsibility.
- LADO liaison role.
- Monitoring Officer responsibility for councillor DBS disclosure.
- Officer mandatory training requirement.
- Inclusion of process flowchart.

Safeguarding Forum

In November 2022 we set up the Internal Safeguarding Forum which meets bi-monthly under the guidance of the Corporate Safeguarding Lead and includes managers and officers from the main services where safeguarding is a live issue (e.g. Housing, revenue and benefit, Environmental Health). The Forum looks at safeguarding policy, processes, training opportunities, external safeguarding trends, case reviews and looks at the submitted EDDC safeguarding concerns which make up the data above, these activities in turn further raises our awareness of safeguarding within the most relevant areas to safeguarding.

Safeguarding Training

Since 2022 we have delivered level 3 Safeguarding and Mental Capacity Assessment training for our front-line staff across the council to improve their knowledge base in these areas. We have also provided specific training for our Officer Champions (2023) and Members in (2022). Online Safeguarding awareness training is now a mandatory requirement for staff upon induction and subsequently every three years.

Partnership Work

We continue to be active members of the Devon Districts Safeguarding Network which meets quarterly and has meeting inputs from representatives of the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adult Partnership as well as links into the TDSAP Learning and Informing subgroup to ensure we are aware of national and county wide developments. This meeting allows the Districts to be sighted on relevant safeguarding information, sharing good practice, as well as the ability to provide a shared response on issues which impact the Districts Devon wide.

Internal Processes

In 2023 we developed a Firmstep process for submission of our adult safeguarding forms to Devon County Council to maximise the capture and understanding of our corporate adult safeguarding risks, this can't be done for Children submissions due to their external process.

Going Forwards

The focus for safeguarding work in 2024/25 will be to embed the new policy and ensure that officer and member champions are fully engaged with the safeguarding work through the new bi-annual meeting. We are also working to ensure that we have full oversight of the referrals being made, so that we can monitor effectiveness and take any learning points.

Conclusion

2023/24 was a significant year for how the Council delivers safeguarding work. The new policy and associated responsibilities and structures should ensure that safeguarding is a high priority in all of the Council's work.

Financial implications:

There are no financial implication arising from the report

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues to be added to this report