

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

### REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

#### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK OF ABUSE REPORT (OCTOBER 23- MARCH 24)

#### EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to provide a biannual safeguarding update to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Committee review the report and raise any questions in relation to the content with the Assistant Director Partnerships in collaboration with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and Community Partnerships, and thereafter endorse.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tamworth Borough Council has a legal responsibility to safeguard children and adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect. The safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect policy and procedure provides a framework for safeguarding and demonstrates the council's commitment to safeguard children and adults at risk.

Safeguarding is integrated into the day-to-day operations of the council. The council responds to all safeguarding concerns raised in line with the safeguarding procedure. Reporting of concerns is fundamental in ensuring that children and adults at risk receive the necessary support to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The following information provides an overview of the number of safeguarding referrals received and an update on the safeguarding work that has taken place since

the last update provided to the committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**Safeguarding Statistics**

The number of safeguarding concerns referred via the council’s safeguarding reporting procedure for the date period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 13th March 2024 are detailed in the table below:

Referral type	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Child referrals	2	3	3	0	8
Adult referrals	7	7	6	5	25
Total combined referrals	9	10	9	5	33

Table 1: Safeguarding concerns raised by staff 2023/ 2024 (Numbers as of time of report 13/03/24)

Miscellaneous	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
	1	4	1	4	10

Numbers of referrals for quarter 4 have dropped slightly this quarter, as awareness raising on referrals has moved into referrals to Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership (TVP) so the adult/ family will not always hit the threshold for a safeguarding enquiry, but professionals will meet to discuss a plan of action. Increased knowledge and awareness of what constitutes a referral through the delivery of up-to-date inhouse training and with outside agencies has supported this.

Referrals continue to be received from a wide range of council staff including, customer service officers, housing solutions officers, tenancy sustainment officers, sheltered housing managers, private sector housing officers, environmental health, street scene, members. We have also had received safeguarding referrals/ information from contractors and the fire service.

The miscellaneous table covers referrals that come through mainly the council enquires or maybe to gather further information to decipher if it hits the threshold for a referral to be made into safeguarding. We have also continued to work alongside our contracted agencies such as Wates and Engie to support their safeguarding referrals. Quarterly meetings take place for updates with the 2 contractors to make sure that we can offer support and advice and any new updates needed.

**Safeguarding Training**

We have continued to purchase the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) core slides for the delivery of level 1 safeguarding training. This helps to update staff/members in line with the updates for Staffordshire.

Staff can access a range of training modules through the SSCB [home page](#) .

Along with this there were opportunities to attend free training on a range of child exploitation awareness raising awareness on all aspects of child exploitation themes. The sessions were delivered by The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership Training Week - 26th Feb - 1st March.

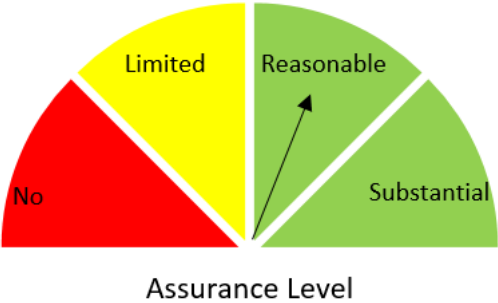
Safeguarding training has been delivered to all our street scene, cleaners, and operatives over the last 3 months. Staff within this sector have also updated knowledge on prevent signs and symbols delivered by our communities and cohesion officer.

**Safeguarding Audit**

This review was undertaken as part of the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee.

The audit covered the time period January 2023 to May 2023.

Taking account of the issues identified and the recommendations contained within the Action Plan in our opinion the Audit and Governance Committee can take **Reasonable Assurance** that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage risks material to the achievement of the organisation’s objectives are suitably designed and effective.



**ASSIGNMENT BRIEF**

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE:** There are suitable internal controls in place to effectively manage Safeguarding so that children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect and Tamworth Borough Council’s staff, elected members and volunteers are protected. Linking into the Corporate objectives Living in Tamworth, working with partners to ensure the fear of crime within Tamworth is reduced and community safety focus on neighbourhoods and place.

**Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse & Neglect Policy and Procedure**

Version: 19 of the Policy is now live on infozone and the astute training has been disseminated to all Staff/ Councillors.

The main update within the policy is the change within the Partnerships team to include the role of the Safer Communities and Homes Manager to the role of Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

**Tenant Consultative Group Meetings - 9 July 2024**

The purpose of the Tenant Consultative Group is to provide a united voice, representing the views and interests of Tamworth Borough Council’s tenants and leaseholders. The group is a non-political consultative group that works closely with

Neighbourhood services to discuss and resolve issues and make recommendations for service improvements. This group is consulted on a wide range of tenant related policies, practices and procedures and current issues affecting Tamworth Borough Council and its tenants.

The partnerships and Vulnerability Officer will be attending to give a safeguarding briefing to tenants and leaseholders.

### **Adult Safeguarding Board**

The council is still an active member with information received regarding updates, training, and events.

Stafford Borough Council have taken the main lead to represent all the districts and boroughs at the quarterly meetings. The districts then attend quarterly catch ups.

### **Hate Crime Presentation**

#### Free Hate Crime Training

What is hate crime?

A hate crime is when someone has a crime committed against them or their property because of either their Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual orientation, or Transgender identity.

Uniting Staffordshire Against Hate have been commissioned by Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Partners to deliver awareness sessions on Hate Crime.

Training offer includes:

1.5hrs awareness raising session with time (15mins) for questions at the end.

It is suitable for anyone looking for a general overview of hate crime, with objectives including:

- Legal definitions and the difference between hate crimes and hate incidents.
- The prevalence of hate crimes, locally and nationally
- Barriers that prevent people reporting hate crimes
- The impact hate crimes have on victims.
- How to access support and what victims can expect.

For those wishing for more intensive presentation, we offer a full morning or afternoon 3.5hrs session for a 'deeper dive' available separately.

This 3.5 hr presentation awareness session, with time for a break (15mins), is suitable for anyone looking for a more in-depth overview of hate crime, with objectives including:

- Legal definitions and the difference between hate crimes and hate incidents.
- The prevalence of hate crimes, locally and nationally
- Barriers that prevent people reporting hate crimes
- The impact hate crimes have on victims.
- Unconscious Bias, Stereotyping, Discrimination and Prejudice

- How to support a Victim of Hate Crime
- Hate Crime the Vulnerabilities and Partnership Working
- How to access support and what victims can expect.

USAH is now in the third year of contract and the latest figures for Tamworth is referrals to June 2023:

REFERRALS by area	VICTIMS - Support Service				TOTAL
	Q3 2022-23	Q4 2022-23	Q1 2023-24	Q2 2023-24	
Tamworth	13	13	12	25	63

### Domestic Abuse (inc Stalking and Harassment)

Domestic abuse remains a priority for the Community Safety Partnership. The support service through New Era has been commissioned for a further 3 years for the County by the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Crime.

Training is ongoing for relevant staff to refer victims of domestic abuse to services.

The Assistant Director Partnership remains on the County Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board.

### Proposed Membership of Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

As part of the commitment to the Social Housing Regulation Act, the Council will explore accreditation by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA). The mission of DAHA is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process and was established in 2014 as a partnership between **Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse** (STADA), **Gentoo** and **Peabody** housing associations.

It is leading specialist domestic abuse organisation supporting housing providers to improve their response to domestic abuse, through our membership model, accreditation framework and training packages.

Our model for a housing response to domestic abuse is nationally recognised as best practice, through the Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance 2022, and is endorsed by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England & Wales, Nicole Jacobs.

The Partnership Vulnerability Officer along with the new Partnerships Officer will explore options and benefits for the Council to be accredited.

### Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery refers to the offences of human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. This can then be considered as five sub threats:

- sexual exploitation of adults.
- trafficking of adults into conditions of labour exploitation.
- trafficking of adults into conditions of criminal exploitation.
- trafficking of minors into conditions of sexual, criminal, or labour exploitation; and other forms of exploitation.

As a Council we support the work of the Staffordshire Police Modern Slavery tactical group and information provided by our partner agencies and publish an annual Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, required under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The annual statement 2022/23 was endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee on [27<sup>th</sup> September 2023](#) .

A multi-agency approach and data sharing is required to target offenders for disruption which will assist with safeguarding victims and preventing further exploitation.

## **Community Safety**

The Community Safety Forum continues to update partners on issues around Antisocial Behaviour within the community and presentation from Tamworth Street Angels who are a group of volunteers working together to ensure that those who come into our town to have fun do so safely.

Tamworth Street Angels is all about ensuring that people can feel safe on the streets of our town. Who offer support, care, and assistance to anyone who needs it and to those who become vulnerable during a night out.

[About Us | Tamworthstreetangels \(tamworthsa.co.uk\)](https://tamworthsa.co.uk)

## **Contextual Safeguarding <sup>1</sup>**

The Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE) is the forum for safeguarding children at risk of exploitation within a partnership arena. MACE meetings take place bi-monthly, the Partnership Vulnerability Officer attends and contributes to this meeting.

Children who are discussed at MACE can be subject to ASB interventions so this information will link in with the work we do within the ASB Coordination group.

The ASB Engagement officer, commissioned until March 2025 continues to work with schools, Staffordshire County Council safeguarding teams and police for early intervention.

## **Prevent**

Prevent is part of the government's overall counter-terrorism strategy which is called [CONTEST](#).

The Prevent duty requires all borough and district Councils (as specified authorities) to have a due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and is priority under the Community Cohesion element of the Tamworth Community

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<sup>1</sup> Contextual safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding that recognises that young people may be at risk of significant harm not only within their home environment, but also outside it. The traditional safeguarding approach does not consider extra-familial contexts, which has led to cases of abuse and exploitation falling under the radar.

## Safety Partnership Plan.

The Prevent strategy has three specific objectives:

1. Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
2. Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
3. Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

The Assistant Director Partnerships is the district council representative on the County Prevent Board.

A Prevent Duty compliance assessment has recently been completed by working through the Home Office Prevent Toolkit in conjunction with the Board which informs the Tamworth plan. The Assistant Director Partnerships along with the Vulnerability Officer and Community Cohesion Officer will monitor the work plan regularly to ensure that there continues to be a proportionate response to any risks outlined and ensure the council is compliant with the Duty.

A full report was presented to Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to provide reassurance and endorse compliance. Hereafter update reports will be presented to the Infrastructure Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee on annual review of the Community Safety Partnership Plan.

Prevent Training above and beyond what is offered on Astute.

We are utilising the Home Office online Prevent training and requested that the Courses 1, 2 and 3 via this link were completed before then end of February 2024 **For staff who had completed training then a Refresher course was available to complete.**

Prevent duty training: <https://www.support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal>

Two referrals were made to Prevent in Tamworth for the period October 2023-March 2024

### **Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership (TVP)**

The Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership meetings continue to take place on a weekly basis with the Partnership Vulnerability Officer, Safer Communities and Homes Manager and Police supporting the overseeing of the referrals and updates.

The weekly partnership meeting continues to be well attended by representatives from statutory organisations. The partnership provides a joined-up response to vulnerability within the community and endeavours to provide help at the earliest opportunity to improve outcomes for vulnerable people.

This is also linked into meetings to support Anti -Social case reviews previously known as Community Triggers and youth ASB.

As of January 2024 17, cases have been discussed at the TVP meeting.

5 Housing  
2 Anti-Social Behaviour issues

4 Domestic  
2 Mental health  
2 Vulnerability  
2 Community Safety

As of 13/03/24

### **Anti-social behaviour coordination group**

The ASB Coordination group is a weekly TEAMS meeting that links all our partner agencies within and outside the borough to discuss all concerns relating to anti-social behaviour. It also helps support the links established with other partnership meetings and helps the mechanisms in place for actions that have and can be taken.

The meeting is chaired by our Safer Communities and Homes Manager and extended to all agencies within the public and private sectors to share information and to support intervention and signposting of services.

### **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. The cost of training and materials will be met from existing budgets.

### **LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND**

The Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy has been risk assessed and no significant risks exist. From a legal perspective the authority is meeting its expectations and requirements in relation to vulnerable children and adults at risk.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The policy and staff in this important service will continue to operate locally and in conjunction with partners to sustain the levels of support, training and guidance required.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Tamworth Borough Council has both a legal and moral duty to protect children and adults at risk from harm and abuse. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 along with the associated government statutory guidance sets out our legal responsibilities for protecting children. The Care Act 2014 along with associated statutory guidance recognises and reinforces that organisations make a significant contribution to adult safeguarding.

### **REPORT AUTHOR**

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Partnership Vulnerability Officer



## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)

[Care Act Statutory Guidance](#)

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