

**ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**10 June 2025**

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**SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXECUTIVE STRATEGY PROCESS**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report outlines Darlington Borough Council's safeguarding responsibilities and the executive strategy process, with a focus on protecting vulnerable adults. It aims to evaluate current performance, highlight strategic priorities, and provide recommendations for continuous improvement.

**Summary**

2. Darlington Borough Council operates under the statutory framework of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (DSP), which sets the strategic direction for safeguarding across the borough. The Council is responsible for ensuring that all agencies work collaboratively to protect individuals at risk of abuse or neglect, in line with the Care Act 2014.
3. The Executive Strategy Process is a multi-agency framework designed to address serious safeguarding concerns, including organisational abuse and complex cases. It ensures that safeguarding responses are coordinated, person-centered, and legally compliant.
4. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities in England have statutory safeguarding duties to protect adults who:
  - Have care and support needs,
  - Are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
  - Are unable to protect themselves because of those needs

**Key Safeguarding Duties of Local Authorities**

**Lead Role in Safeguarding**

5. Local authorities must take the lead in coordinating safeguarding efforts across agencies and ensure a multi-agency approach to protecting adults at risk

**Duty to Make Enquiries**

6. If a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult is at risk, it must make (or cause to be made) enquiries or delegate enquiries to partners where appropriate to do so to determine what action is needed to protect the individual

## **Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs)**

7. Every local authority must establish a Safeguarding Adults Board. The SAB includes representatives from the local authority, NHS, and police, and its role is to:
  - Develop safeguarding strategies,
  - Conduct Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs),
  - Promote inter-agency cooperation

## **Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)**

8. A SAR must be conducted when an adult dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, and there is concern about how agencies worked together.

## **Prevention Duty**

9. Local authorities must provide or arrange services that help prevent or delay the development of care and support needs, including safeguarding-related risks

## **Information and Advice**

10. They must ensure that people have access to clear information and advice about safeguarding, including how to report concerns

## **Advocacy**

11. If an adult has substantial difficulty being involved in safeguarding processes and has no one to support them, the local authority must arrange for an independent advocate

## **Performance Indicators**

12. There are a number of key **performance indicators (KPIs)** used to assess local authorities' safeguarding responsibilities under the **Care Act 2014**, based on guidance from the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** and the **Local Government Association (LGA)**.

### **Timeliness of Section 42 Enquiries**

- (a) Measures how quickly safeguarding concerns are converted into formal enquiries and how promptly those enquiries are completed.

### **Conversion Rate of Concerns to Enquiries**

- (b) Tracks the proportion of safeguarding concerns that meet the threshold for a Section 42 enquiry, helping assess consistency and appropriateness of decision-making.

### **Repeat Safeguarding Referrals**

- (c) Indicates whether previous interventions were effective or if individuals are being repeatedly exposed to risk.

### **Outcomes for Individuals**

- (d) Based on whether the individual's desired outcomes were fully or partially achieved through the safeguarding process (drawn from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework).

### **User Experience and Satisfaction**

- (e) Captures feedback from adults at risk and carers about their experience of the safeguarding process, including feeling safe and being involved in decisions.

### **Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)**

- (f) Number and quality of SARs conducted, and how learning from these reviews is implemented.

### **Training and Workforce Competency**

- (g) Percentage of staff and partners who have completed safeguarding training and demonstrate competency in safeguarding practice.

### **Multi-Agency Working**

- (h) Evidence of effective collaboration between local authority, NHS, police, and other partners in safeguarding cases.

### **Leadership and Governance**

- (i) Assesses the strategic leadership of safeguarding, including the role of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and the visibility of safeguarding in corporate governance.

### **Preventative Safeguarding Activity**

- (j) Measures efforts to prevent abuse and neglect, such as community engagement, early intervention, and awareness campaigns.

### **Conclusion**

13. Darlington Borough Council demonstrates a strong commitment to safeguarding through its structured executive strategy process and multi-agency collaboration.

### **Recommendations**

14. The Committee to note the contents of the report and the subsequent presentation.

## Climate Considerations

15. While safeguarding is not directly linked to climate policy, the Council will consider the impact of climate-related events (e.g. extreme weather, fuel poverty) on vulnerable populations. Emergency planning and safeguarding strategies are integrated to ensure resilience and protection during climate crises.

Joss Harbron  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

## Background Papers

No background papers were utilised in the preparation of this report,

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Council Plan	The report and the activity to support safeguarding adults is aligned to the Council Plan priorities.
Addressing inequalities	This activity has no specific impact on protected groups however all inequalities are considered as part of the process.
Tackling Climate Change	All consideration was undertaken with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources where possible.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Key aims with Adult Services is to deliver efficient, effective and person-centred care which supports a strength-based approach aligned to the requirements of the Care Act and includes effective use of resources.
Health and Wellbeing	This report continues the Council's drive to deliver services and support that enhance people's life chances and opportunities to thrive.
S17 Crime and Disorder	N/A
Wards Affected	All Darlington Wards.
Groups Affected	All adults with social care needs in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not impact on the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This report is an update.
Urgent Decision	N/A
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This has no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers however they are considered within the safeguarding duties of the Local Authority.