

**Teignbridge District Council**  
**Overview and Scrutiny**  
**16<sup>th</sup> June 2026**  
**Part i**

## **Safeguarding delivery**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present information on the Council's safeguarding arrangements and activity, including governance, partnership working and safeguarding case management. It provides an overview of safeguarding activity during the reporting period, outlines key themes arising from casework, and identifies areas for consideration in advance of the planned review of the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

### **Recommendation(s)**

The Committee RESOLVES to:

- (1) Review the safeguarding approach in advance of a review of the policy
- (2) Welcome the case management approach taken by the Council

### **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The safeguarding activity described is currently being managed within existing service budgets and staffing resources. However, the sustained level of case demand, ongoing multi-agency case management, planned policy review, and delivery of member training continue to create officer resource pressures, which will need to be managed within approved budgets.

Title of person giving advice: Matt Long, Senior Accountant  
Email: [matthew.long@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.long@teignbridge.gov.uk)

### **Legal or Governance Implications**

Olaseni Sobowale  
Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
[Olaseni.Sobowale@Teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:Olaseni.Sobowale@Teignbridge.gov.uk)

Safeguarding regulation is governed principally by the Care Act 2014 and Section 11 Children Act 2004, .  
Other enabling legislation includes the ones mentioned below;  
Data Protection Act 2018  
Equality Act 2010  
Housing Act 1996  
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017  
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)  
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

## **Risk Assessment**

Rebecca Hewitt – An EIA has not been completed as no decision is required

## **Environmental/ Climate Change Implications**

There are no significant environmental or climate change related implications associated with this report.

William Elliott, Climate Change Officer

[William.elliott@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:William.elliott@teignbridge.gov.uk)

## **Report Author**

Rebecca Hewitt, Strategy and Policy Manager

[Rebecca.hewitt@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.hewitt@teignbridge.gov.uk)

## **Executive Member**

Cllr Suzanne Sanders

Executive Member: Neighbourhoods

## **Appendices/Background Paper**

Appendix 1 – Teignbridge Council Safeguarding Policy

### **1. Introduction and background**

1.1. District councils play a vital supporting role in safeguarding, working alongside statutory agencies to help protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults. District councils are responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding policies, training, and reporting mechanisms are in place across all services, and for referring concerns promptly to the relevant safeguarding authorities. They also contribute to multi-agency partnerships, sharing information and local intelligence, and use their regulatory powers to reduce harm and promote safer communities. Through this combination of prevention, early intervention, and partnership working, district councils are an important part of the wider safeguarding system.

1.2. In the Teignbridge Safeguarding Policy approved in November 2024 the commitment states:

*Teignbridge District Council believes that all children, young people and adults have the right to be safe and deserve protection from harm and 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. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.***

- 1.3. Officer strategic responsibility for safeguarding falls within the remit of the Strategy and Policy Team with strong cross overs with the community safety specialisms. Rebecca Hewitt is the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for the authority. Operational case management is undertaken by the Neighbourhoods team and Laura Evans in the ASB and Safeguarding Officer role is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO).
- 1.4. Safeguarding activity requires extensive and ongoing multi-agency collaboration. The safeguarding records demonstrate regular engagement with a range of partner organisations to assess risk, coordinate responses and safeguard vulnerable individuals. Core safeguarding partners evidenced within the data include Devon & Cornwall Police, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, and health services, including General Practitioners and the Ambulance Service. These partners feature frequently across safeguarding cases and play a central role in information-sharing, risk assessment, escalation and ongoing case management. Effective partnership working remains critical to ensuring safeguarding concerns are managed proportionately and appropriately, particularly in complex cases where risk spans mental health, housing instability, care and support needs, and community safety considerations.
- 1.5. Teignbridge officers attend the Devon Safeguarding Officers meeting which is where best practice can be shared and there are regular discussions with the managers of both the Children and Adults partnership on key learning and guidance.
- 1.6. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations to ensure their functions have regard to the need to safeguard children and promote the welfare of Children. In 2025, Teignbridge was required to complete an audit tool and submit the responses to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership. An independent scrutineer reviewed the responses from Teignbridge and other organisations across the county and has responded with comments directly for Teignbridge, picking up on themes across all reviews. The response requested that we consider strengthening how we learn from reviews, ensure alignment with the Working Together 2023 document and how we share good practice across the Council. The Safeguarding Policy was last reviewed in September 2024 and a further review is scheduled to take place in early July. Proposed amendments will be discussed with the Executive Member and the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.7. On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 the Executive reviewed the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and it was resolved that the Policy be adopted and that a member working group be established to review the inclusion of Disclosure and

Barring Service (DBS) checks for members within the Council Safeguarding Policy and DBS policy. Members on the Governance Committee raised DBS Checks at their meeting on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025. Due to resourcing challenges this has not been progressed, a paper was put to the Senior Leadership Team on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and due to LGR and the time it would take to implement a scheme it was agreed that a pragmatic approach would be to run further safeguarding training. This is being delivered for members at 3pm and 6pm on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July.

## 2. Case management delivery

- 2.1. Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, a total of **184** safeguarding cases were recorded. These cases comprised referrals, reported concerns and safeguarding related case management activity involving internal staff, external individuals, businesses and specific locations. Referrals were received through a variety of pathways, including housing related matters, customer services referrals, police notifications, reports from elected members, and environmental services or community-based concerns. Overall, the data indicates a sustained and consistently high level of safeguarding demand throughout the reporting period, rather than isolated or short-term increases.
- 2.2. In addition to cases relating to the Councils customers, 3% of cases impact directly on the Councils staff or elected members. In these cases, there is an essential role for HR and where appropriate, democratic services.
- 2.3. The Teignbridge Housing Team manages a caseload that is complex and often includes safeguarding concerns. The officers in that team are trained in safeguarding and manage day to day cases bringing more complex cases where additional support is required to DDSO or DSO.
- 2.4. Analysis of the cases highlights several recurring safeguarding themes.
- 2.5. **Housing vulnerability:** emerged as the most prevalent theme during the reporting period. This includes cases involving the risk of tenancy breakdown, unsuitable or unsafe living conditions, rough sleeping or the risk of homelessness, and concerns raised by housing providers or housing associations. Housing related issues feature in a significant proportion of safeguarding cases and frequently act as the initial trigger for safeguarding intervention.
- 2.6. **Mental health and wellbeing concerns:** concerns feature prominently across the safeguarding cases recorded during the reporting period. A significant number of cases involve individuals experiencing deteriorating mental health, crisis presentations, inconsistent or disengaged interaction with support services, and repeated contact with council services that indicates escalating or unmanaged vulnerability.
- 2.7. These cases are often complex and require a coordinated, multi-agency response involving health services, social care, housing providers and other partners.
- 2.8. **Adult safeguarding (Care and Support needs):** is a recurring theme within

the data. The safeguarding records show regular involvement in cases where adults present with identified or suspected care and support needs, and where consideration is given to whether Adult Social Care thresholds are met. Concerns commonly relate to neglect, self-neglect, and an individual's ability to manage daily living tasks safely and independently. In many instances, these cases require careful assessment, information sharing and joint working with Adult Social Care and other partner agencies to ensure risks are appropriately managed.

- 2.9. **Children and family-related safeguarding:** represents a smaller but nonetheless significant proportion of cases recorded during the period. These cases involve engagement with Children's Social Care, education services, and family households where the behaviour or circumstances of adults create actual or potential safeguarding risks to children. Such cases are often complex and require careful assessment, information-sharing and coordinated intervention across agencies to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded. Children and family related safeguarding concerns frequently intersect with wider housing and community safety issues, reinforcing the need for a joined-up, whole-family approach to risk management and early intervention.
- 2.10 **Repeat and complex vulnerability:** is a significant theme emerging from the safeguarding data. The data highlights a pattern of repeat individuals and repeat addresses, alongside ongoing and long-term vulnerability rather than isolated or single-incident concerns. These cases often involve individuals or households experiencing sustained and interconnected challenges over extended periods, with repeated contact across council services and partner agencies. The recurrence of safeguarding concerns indicates that risk can accumulate over time, particularly where vulnerabilities remain unresolved or engagement with services is inconsistent. This pattern demonstrates the cumulative nature of safeguarding risk and underscores the importance of consistent professional oversight, robust case management, and coordinated multi-agency involvement to effectively manage risk and prevent further escalation.

### 3. Case studies

- 3.1. This safeguarding case study relates to an adult resident who was referred following concerns raised by a housing provider regarding deteriorating living conditions and repeated tenancy related issues. The individual was reported to be struggling to manage daily living tasks, with property conditions raising concerns about self-neglect and personal safety. Previous contact with council services indicated ongoing mental health difficulties and inconsistent engagement with support services. As concerns escalated, referrals were made to Adult Social Care and Devon & Cornwall Police to assess risk and determine whether statutory safeguarding thresholds were met. A multi-agency approach was adopted, involving housing services, Adult Social Care and health partners, to ensure risks were managed appropriately. Safeguarding activity focused on early intervention, support planning and coordinated case management rather than enforcement action, recognising

the resident's vulnerability and need for ongoing support.

- 3.2. This case highlights the strong link between housing instability, mental health deterioration and adult safeguarding concerns, and demonstrates the importance of partnership working in managing cumulative risk.
- 3.3. This safeguarding case study relates to concerns raised relating to a family household where adult behaviour was reported to be impacting on the safety and wellbeing of children. The case involved multiple agencies, including Children's Social Care, housing services and Devon & Cornwall Police, following reports of ongoing issues within the household and the surrounding community. The safeguarding concern intersected with wider housing and community safety issues, requiring information sharing and coordinated intervention to assess risk to the children and wider household members. Education and Children's Social Care services were engaged to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures were considered and implemented.
- 3.4. The case required careful multi-agency coordination to balance safeguarding responsibilities, manage risk and support the family, emphasising a preventative, whole family approach rather than isolated service responses.
- 3.5. This case demonstrates how safeguarding concerns involving children often overlap with housing and community safety pressures, reinforcing the need for joined up working across services.
- 3.6. A customer made contact with the Council reporting significant emotional distress and expressing thoughts of suicide. The customer was known to services due to ongoing housing related issues and previous engagement with Council teams. The disclosure was treated as a safeguarding concern and referred immediately to the Safeguarding Team in line with Council procedures. Upon receipt of the referral, the Safeguarding Team undertook a timely risk assessment to determine the immediacy and level of risk. This considered the disclosure of suicide ideation, current stressors, and the customer's presentation to staff. Due to the nature of the disclosure, the case was prioritised as high risk. The Safeguarding Team made prompt contact with the customer to: Acknowledge and validate the concern raised, establish immediate safety and risk factors and encourage engagement with appropriate crisis and mental health support. A coordinated multi-agency response was initiated to manage risk and support the customer effectively. This included liaison with relevant partners such as: Adult Social Care, housing services, health and mental health services and police, where appropriate, to support welfare and safety. The customer was supported to access appropriate crisis and mental health services. In parallel, practical issues contributing to distress, including housing related concerns, were addressed through partnership working. Early identification, timely intervention and effective partnership working enabled risks to be managed and appropriate support to be put in place. Cases involving suicide ideation continue to represent a significant proportion of safeguarding demand, reinforcing the importance of clear pathways, staff awareness and robust

partnership arrangements.

#### **4. Conclusion**

4.1. Safeguarding remains a core responsibility for the Council, with a consistently high level of demand and increasingly complex cases requiring coordinated, multiagency responses. The evidence highlights the critical links between housing vulnerability, mental health, and wider safeguarding risks, alongside the importance of early intervention, strong partnership working, and effective case management. While robust processes are in place, there are opportunities to further strengthen learning, policy alignment, and member engagement through ongoing training and planned policy review. Continued focus on these areas will support the Council in maintaining a proactive and proportionate approach to safeguarding, ensuring that vulnerable residents are effectively protected and supported.