

ADULT SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

AGENDA



Thursday 4 December 2025

10.00am

**in Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: ADULT SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Councillors Allen (C), Boddy, Cook, Doyle, Hall, Little, Roy (VCh)

PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE(S):

S Gaiety (Headland Parish Council)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To receive the Minutes and Decision Record in respect of the meeting held on 6 November 2025 (*previously published and circulated*).

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

- 4.1 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2029/30 – *Director of Finance, IT and Digital and Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health*

5. KEY DECISIONS

- 5.1 Development of a Domestic Abuse Strategy - *Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health*

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone.

The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

None.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 7.1 Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report and Strategic Business Plan
 – *Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health and Independent Chair of
 Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Thursday 22 January 2025 at 10.00am in the Civic Centre,
Hartlepool.



ADULT SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

4th December 2025



Subject: MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2026/27 TO 2029/30

Report of: Director of Finance, IT & Digital and Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health

Decision Type: Budget and Policy Framework

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
- that is connected, sustainable, clean and green. (Place)
- that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all. (Potential)
- a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the MTFP and to enable the Committee to scrutinise / comment on the savings proposals referred from the Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Comprehensive MTFP reports have been considered by Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee on 23rd June 2025 and the latest report on 24th November 2025, this is attached at **Annex A**. A number of key issues were highlighted within these reports, which are briefly summarised in the following paragraphs.

- 3.2 All councils continue to face significant financial challenges owing to the impact of inflation and demand on services, and historic inadequate increases in government funding over recent decades to meet these challenges. In addition, Hartlepool and other many other northern council's continue to face acute financial pressures within children's social care. These issues are the key drivers of the budget deficit facing the Council.
- 3.3 The government's Fair Funding reforms (Fair Funding 2.0) will update grant funding distribution methods and reset the business rates system for local authorities for the 2026/27 financial year. 2026/27 will be the first year of a 3 year funding settlement. A number of consultations with the sector have taken place during 2025, to inform the direction of these long awaited funding reforms.
- 3.4 In terms of funding movements from Fair Funding 2.0, indications are that based on the current interpretation of the changes Hartlepool would be a modest beneficiary, but not to the level a deprived northern town would have expected from a Fair Funding reform package. In part, the increase in funding in 2025/26, particularly through the provision of the recovery grant has resulted in a lower increase for 2026/27. Government are expected to release local authority level allocations, for the 3 year period, late in December.
- 3.5 As outlined in the MTFP report to Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee in November, the Council has a forecast budget deficit (before savings) of £8.572m for 2026/27 and £20.591m over the full MTFP period.
- 3.6 As in previous years addressing the deficit needs to be managed through budget saving actions and limited use of reserves where deemed necessary. As members will be aware the use of reserves to support the budget position is not sustainable, so must be done in a managed way where needed, to provide time for savings to be delivered or for service transformation to embed.
- 3.7 With regards savings, proposals totalling £4.117m have been proposed for 2026/27, with an additional £0.383m of savings reflected in the Council Tax Base position.
- 3.8 The acceptance of the proposals for 2026/27 would leave a remaining budget gap of £4.300m. At this stage based on the current position presented, it is unlikely that the budget can be signed off as robust, given the requirement to utilise significant reserves, cognisant of the risk around budget volatility and increasing cost pressures facing the council. The increase and sustained nature of social care pressures are a particular concern, including that no growth beyond current years pressures is allowed for in 2026/27, whilst additionally a challenging savings target has been set. To achieve a robust budget the following will be required:
- Significant increased government funding flows from Fair Funding 2.0 and the Local Government Finance Settlement beyond those already forecast; and/or
 - Further significant budget savings or cuts to budgets are agreed; and/or

- Council Tax is increased in 2026/27.

4. ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY POLICY COMMITTEES

- 4.1 Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee is seeking comments on the savings proposals, which are summarised by committee in the table below.
- 4.2 Details of the individual savings provided in **Appendix B**.

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	Total £m
Adult Services and Public Health	(0.664)	(0.214)	(0.878)
Childrens Services	(3.000)	0.000	(3.000)
Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services	(0.100)	TBC	(0.100)
Finance and Corporate Affairs *	(0.140)	0	(0.140)
All (linked to Fees and Charges Review)	(0.213)	(0.061)	(0.274)
TOTAL SAVINGS	(4.117)	(0.275)	(4.392)

* Transformation Savings total adjusted downwards by £0.383m given element achieved through council tax base improvements.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As requested by Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee, the Committee is requested to consider the recommended savings proposals detailed in **Appendix B** relating to the services within this Committees portfolio and provide any comments to be reported back to Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee on 19th January 2026, including suggesting alternative proposals if Members do not wish to implement these proposals.

6. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To fulfil the requirement of the Council's Constitution to seek Policy Committee input on proposed savings.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- Finance and Policy Committee – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2028/29 – 23rd June 2025.
- Finance and Policy Committee – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2028/29 - 24th November 2025.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

James Magog
Director of Finance, IT and Digital
Email: james.magog@hartlepool.gov.uk

Jill Harrison
Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health
Email: jill.harrison@hartlepool.gov.uk

Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 18.11.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 18.11.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 18.11.2025

FINANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

24th November 2025



Subject: MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)
2026/27 TO 2029/30

Report of: Director of Finance, IT and Digital

Decision Type: Budget and Policy Framework

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
- that is connected, sustainable, clean and green. (Place)
- that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all. (Potential)
- a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's financial position, the government's Fair Funding reforms and to approve the budget savings proposals to be referred to individual Policy Committees.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A comprehensive MTFP update report was presented to the Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee at its meeting in June 2025. The MTFP does not stand still and continuously evolves based on latest information, intelligence, government funding changes and changing circumstances, including the current financial year's forecast budget outturn.

- 3.2 The updated MTFP covers the four financial years 2026/27 to 2029/30. However, in consideration of the position over this period, it is important to recognise that the Council needs to be financially sustainable beyond this 4 year period. Decisions taken should also reflect the position beyond the medium term and into the longer term.
- 3.3 With regards the government's funding reforms, now referred to as 'Fair Funding 2.0', these are currently moving slower than initially indicated. Changes to the Secretary of State for the Ministry for Housing, Culture and Local Government (MHCLG) and the wider ministerial team, alongside significant lobbying on the proposed reforms has delayed the process timescales. Initial indications were that the Local Government Finance Policy Statement would be released in October and the full Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement by late November or early December. Current indications are that the Policy Statement will be released mid to late November and the Provisional settlement in week commencing 15th December. The delay in the release of information, on what will be a 3 year funding settlement, continues to hinder budget planning. Further details of the funding reforms consultation and the estimated impact for Hartlepool are included within section 5 of this report.
- 3.4 In addition to the specific local government announcements, the Chancellor will deliver her Autumn budget on the 26th November, which is later than in recent years. Speculation of a likely productivity forecast downgrade by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) is placing further pressure on government finances, with tax increases and spending cuts a possibility in the budget statement. In addition to general tax and spending plans, the Autumn Budget is likely to provide further announcements on areas that impact the Council's budget, for example increases to the National Living Wage from April 2026.
- 3.5 At short notice, the Chancellor delivered a pre-budget statement to the nation on the 4th November. In the address the chancellor emphasised the need to responsibly manage the public finances and noted the government's priorities as being: cutting NHS waiting lists, national debt and the cost of living, but not through a return to austerity. Tax increases remain the likely option for the Chancellor to improve the fiscal position, but in response to questions on this, she advised the details of the budget would be provided on the 26th November, but she will "do what is right, not popular".

4. BUDGET PRESSURES

- 4.1 The Council must plan for a range of spending pressures and commitments in setting its budget over the MTFP period. Following the comprehensive update provided to members in June, the forecasts in the table below have been updated where necessary, and commentary on the areas of change provided in the subsequent paragraphs. A number of these changes are in response to additional cost pressures arising during

2025/26, driving a significant forecast overspend, as well as additional pressures forecast from April 2026.

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	Total £m
Spending Pressures					
Pay and Price Inflation	6.868	4.118	5.270	4.392	20.649
Children's Social Care	6.000	3.120	2.182	1.726	13.028
Waste Disposal	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500	1.000
Capital Financing	0.000	0.500	0.500	0.500	1.500
Supported Accommodation	0.250	0.255	0.260	0.265	1.030
Total Spending Pressures	13.618	7.993	8.212	7.383	37.207

Pay and Price - Pay Award Inflation

- 4.2 The national pay award for 2025/26 was agreed during July. The agreed pay increase from April 2025 was 3.2% for all employees.
- 4.3 Given the persistence of pay growth in the wider economy, the MTFP continues to include a pay award assumption of 3% for each year. The inflation forecasts and associated pay assumptions in relation to 2026/27 and beyond will be kept under review throughout the budget setting process.

Pay and Price - General Price Inflation

- 4.4 The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation rose to 3.8% in July 2025 and has remained at this level in both August and September. This continued elevated inflation rate is nearly double the government's 2% target rate. The Bank of England continue to set their policy approach to support their objective of reducing inflation to their 2% target.
- 4.5 Inflation forecasts and general economic stability continues to be heavily caveated around the potentially volatile impacts of geopolitical factors, namely conflict in the Middle East, Ukraine/Russia conflict and the United States economic policy.
- 4.6 Given funding limitations and a focus on generating efficiencies, general inflation has been allowed for at 2% per year over the MTFP period. Bespoke inflation is included for contracts where specific inflation indices are used.

Pay and Price – Adult Social Care Contracts

- 4.7 The net budget for packages of care is approximately £35m and annual increases to care home fees and home care rates are determined using an established formula. The annual inflation uplift is based on a range of factors and recent increases have been driven predominantly by increases in the National Living Wage (NLW) and the level of non-pay inflation.

- 4.8 The NLW currently stands at £12.21 an hour (April 2025). The Chancellor is likely to confirm the rate from April 2026 in her Autumn budget at the end of November. The independent body who advises the government on the NLW, are the Low Pay Commission (LPC). The LPCs latest projections for 2026/27 were issued in August 2025 and set out an increase to £12.71 from April 2026 (with a range of £12.55 to £12.86).
- 4.9 A prudent, but reasonable assessment of fee uplifts has been included within this MTFP update, this is increased from prior planning assumptions. This remains an area of risk until uplifts are agreed based on confirmed data. Effectively every 1% increase or decrease in fees has a c£0.350m impact on the budget position.

Pay and Price - Income

- 4.10 Historically, for budget planning purposes it has been assumed that all discretionary fees and charges will increase in line with inflation each year. Given the council's financial position and the recent inflationary impact on the council's expenditure budgets, it is proposed to uplift discretionary fees and charges for 2026/27 by a minimum of 5%. Areas with existing income budget shortfalls will still action an increase in charges in April 2026 where appropriate, but prudently the overall income budget target will not be increased, allowing the price increase to address the existing gap.
- 4.11 Following a comprehensive review of fees and charges undertaken during the current year, increased fees and charges will be introduced in a number of areas, and further details are set out within the proposed savings later in the report.

Energy Inflation

- 4.12 Recent years have seen unprecedented market volatility, driven by Covid-19, the Russia-Ukraine war, extreme weather patterns and geopolitical tensions, as well as the UK and Europe's ambitions to move to better security of supply and alternative generation types. This has created a monumental shift in what typical market activity looks like. This movement from traditional market norms has created a market that is very reactive and has the potential to move far more substantially in very short windows of time.
- 4.13 In response to this turbulence, the Council progressed a twofold strategy of increasing the revenue budget for anticipated long term prices, coupled with use of an energy reserve for the shorter term spike. This approach has served the Council well since 2022/23.
- 4.14 The Council purchases its energy via the regional North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO), which has an agreed Risk and Purchasing Strategy in place to forward buy energy as deemed prudent.

- 4.15 Although energy community pricing is forecast to fall during 2026/27, non-energy costs are forecast to rise at a higher rate. These non-energy related cost rises are driven by the Transmission Network Use of System (TNUoS) tariff. The TNUoS tariff is supporting network upgrades to accommodate increased renewable generation assets and support greater national energy security.

Children's Social Care

- 4.16 The budget pressures in this area continue to be of significant concern for our Council, and many across the region and country. Many areas of expenditure relating to children in our care are experiencing significant and on-going demand and inflationary pressures, these include; increasing numbers of children requiring external placements, independent foster agency (IFA) placements, Connected Care and Special Guardianship allowance payments as well as the associated staffing demands.
- 4.17 As part of the 2025/26 budget setting process additional specific resources of £6.9m were provided into Children's Social Care, given their unprecedented budget pressures. This is in addition to normal inflationary budget increases. Notwithstanding this significant budget increase the 2025/26 projected outturn for Children's Social Care is estimating an overspend of £6.195m.
- 4.18 The main reasons for the overspend continue to be the increase in the numbers and costs of children requiring external residential placements and the associated impacts on social work staffing workloads and budgets. This reflects the increasing complexity of children's needs and the significant fees being charged by the external care market. Overall Hartlepool's Children in Care numbers per 10,000 children, continue to be above regional and national averages. This is because of a number of factors including high levels of poverty.
- 4.19 Between the end of quarters 1 and 2 of 2025/26 financial year there was an increase in the number of children in our care (CiOC), from 345 to 352, and inherent within this an increase in placements required to be made with external providers in order to meet the individual needs of the young people coming into care.
- 4.20 With regard to external provider placement pressures, the current top 25 highest cost external placements are costing in the region of £230,000 per week, which equates to c£12m per year. The average cost of the current 49 external placements is £7,010 per week, with a range of £3,900 to £23,290 per week. There are currently 6 placements in excess of £10,000 per week which is as a result of the complexities of their bespoke needs.
- 4.21 As noted above, CiOC numbers are beginning to increase overall, albeit at a relatively small percentage. Within the overall numbers quoted for CiOC it is important to note that this is not a fixed cohort of children. Some

children positively return home, and some children move into special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangement order (CAO) arrangements. These SGO and CAO arrangements, although no longer classified as within our care, still retain financial support payments from the Council. This is another area of budget pressure.

- 4.22 To mitigate these cost pressures, 6 key strands of activity are progressing and are being overseen by Senior Management. The activity strands are focused around: edge of care support, prevention and early help, fostering and placement planning, reunification, care leavers support and corporate parenting.
- 4.23 The Council is in the process of opening a new in-house children's home with the possibility of further new homes in the future. In addition, the council is working with a local charity in their development of a children's home in the town, providing more local, lower cost capacity. Both developments will help reduce our exposure to the significant fees being charged by the external care market.
- 4.24 The Council is considering its own local fostering drive and is also included in a large-scale regional recruitment initiative. In addition, increased staffing resources have been provided during 2025/26. The Edge of Care team are providing support to families who are at risk of having children enter the care system. Increased respite support provision has also commenced.
- 4.25 Local case reviews continue to be carried out to ensure care is being provided at the correct level, whilst also challenging costs. Further activity to maximise partner contributions to care costs where appropriate has commenced. Regionally, in the medium-term, partnership working is being considered to try and address care market failures. Following successful pilots elsewhere in the country supported by the Department for Education, a project to consider a North East Regional Care Cooperative has commenced. Further work and consideration of this partnership will be carried out over the coming months.
- 4.26 From national government's perspective 'The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme' was published earlier in the year. These changes centre around implementing: "Family Help and multi-agency child protection reforms' that make greater use of Family Group Decision Making. The roll-out of these reforms represents a significant step forward in delivering on the government's mission to provide children with the best start in life and break down barriers to opportunity." The approach to meeting the reform requirements, to commence during 2026/27, is currently being developed.
- 4.27 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) now provides for £6.0m of budget growth for Children's Services in 2026/27. This is a significant increase on the growth provided for in the June MTFP update (£1.5m) but reflects the current year forecast spending. The service has been tasked

with reducing the overspend, and a £3.0m savings proposal is outlined later in the report. However, it should be noted that the budget for 2026/27 does not allow for any growth in Children in our Care numbers or additional cost associated with complexity. As such this poses a real risk to the robustness of the estimate for 2026/27.

- 4.28 Reflecting the significant and sustained pressures, future years growth has been increased, but with a downward trajectory reflecting the anticipation that local, regional and national initiatives may gain positive traction over the MTFP period.

Waste Disposal

- 4.29 Hartlepool has entered into a partnership with six other Local Authorities in the region to procure a new Energy from Waste facility. The procurement process is on-going, with an anticipated go-live date during 2029. The Council has benefitted from very competitive gate fees with the current incumbent, however, these fees stepped up significantly for 2025/26 as part of the contract extension arrangement.
- 4.30 The financial due diligence work continues in relation to the above. A forecast further budget impact of £1m remains within the MTFP period, and the latest understanding of the phasing is incorporated in the latest budget plans.

Capital Financing

- 4.31 A recurring annual saving of £2m has previously been taken over a 12 year period (2017/18 to 2028/29) following a change to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy. This saving unwinds to £1m, with a reduction in 2029/30 of £0.6m and a further £0.4m in 2030/31. To avoid these cliff edge impacts on the MTFP and following a review on borrowing requirements, an increase of the capital financing pressure from £0.250m to £0.500m per annum was included in the MTFP June update.
- 4.32 A further review of borrowing profile and treasury management investment forecasts has indicated the opportunity to remove the £0.500m budget uplift in 2026/27. The council will continue to progress a Treasury Management Strategy that minimises borrowing costs and as such, this increase to the budget provision over the MTFP period will be kept under review.

Supported Accommodation

- 4.33 Supported, "exempt" accommodation provides invaluable support for a range of vulnerable people. Whilst we work with a number of supported accommodation providers, many of which make a positive contribution, there is a growing concern nationally regarding some of the less

scrupulous providers. In such accommodation, rental levels tend to be far in excess of private sector Local Housing Allowance Rates, merely by such providers meeting a loose regulatory requirement to provide a level of 'care, support or supervision' to claimants. The government is currently reviewing such provision and intends to implement a number of measures to address some of the wider concerns in this area.

- 4.34 Supported, exempt accommodation schemes place an increased burden on Councils as many are delivered by charities or voluntary CIC organisations and not Registered Providers. As such councils can only claim partial subsidy for the Housing Benefit that they pay out. This means that Councils can incur significant costs, and, at times, funding substandard schemes which they do not need or require.
- 4.35 The subsidy loss for the Council was £0.076m in 2021/22. This increased to £0.282m in 2024/25 and is forecast to increase substantially in 2025/26 and over the MTFP period. In order to address this pressure £0.250m is included in each year of the period, but will be kept under review, in conjunction with any legislative changes.

Cyber Security

- 4.36 The growing sophistication and frequency of cyberattacks pose a significant threat to public sector organisations, including councils. Whilst the council has robust arrangements in this regard, the increasing threat requires ever growing diligence amongst our employees, but also on-going and likely increased investment in counter measures. A review of our cyber security arrangements has been carried out and investment in further software and systems is recommended. Provision of £0.200m in 2026/27 and a further £0.200m from 2027/28 has been added to the budget planning.

Other Budget Pressure Adjustments

- 4.37 Other budget pressure changes provided for in 2026/27 include an increase in the concessionary travel budget given in year budget pressures (£0.100m) and the removal of the profit share income budget associated with the Middleton Grange shopping centre given current and forecast lettings performance (£0.196m). A further pressure of £1.0m has been included from 2028/29 for the impact of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). The scheme is a mechanism for managing the financial cost of reducing carbon emissions between different sectors of the economy. From January 2028, the ETS will be extended to include emissions from the incineration of waste.

5. GOVERNMENT FUNDING

- 5.1 The Local Government Finance Settlement 2025/26 continued the trend of one-year settlements for councils. It provided Hartlepool with a 8.4% increase in Spending Power, against a national average increase of 6.0%.
- 5.2 The above average increase for Hartlepool, and deprived areas like Hartlepool, was the first step of the new national government to begin to reverse the funding cuts of the former government, which disproportionately fell on deprived councils.
- 5.3 The Settlement Policy Statement for 2025/26 confirmed that the additional core national resource (c£1.3bn) into local government, was to be distributed via existing grants but also via the creation of new grants namely the 'Recovery Grant' and 'Children's Social Care Prevention Grant'. The Recovery Grant was noted as being highly targeted towards those authorities with the highest levels of deprivation.
- 5.4 Looking forward to 2026/27, the government has commenced a Local Authority funding reform process (Fair Funding 2.0) including a reset of the business rates system. In addition, a commitment has been made to 3-year settlements from 2026/27, which will aid medium term budget planning.
- 5.5 The first stage consultation on the Funding Reforms was issued by MHCLG in late December 2024 and closed in February 2025. This early stage consultation focused on the underlying principles of local government funding including; review of relative needs formulae which calculate the cost of delivering services, review of area cost adjustments which take into account cost variations across the country, views on council tax equalisation adjustments for those areas which have low council tax bases, views on introduction of deprivation indices and also the period of transition to increased or decreased funding allocations.
- 5.6 Subsequently, in early April 2025, MHCLG published a further consultation paper specifically on, 'Resetting the Business Rates Retention System'. This consultation closed on the 2nd June 2025. The processing of 'resetting' the business rates system results in the rates growth currently sitting with those councils able to grow their business rates receipts being redistributed nationally. The current system was introduced in 2013, and under original plans was due to be reset in 2018. The 2018 reset did not take place and continued to be stalled until now (2026/27). Hartlepool is currently a significant loser from this delay, as we are currently c£1m under our business rates base line position, in part due to the reduced valuation of the Nuclear Power Station, whilst other councils are significantly above the baseline. The consultation does confirm the system will be fully reset in April 2026, although transitional arrangements as part of the wider funding changes will be in place. Hartlepool is a net beneficiary of the resetting of the Business Rates system.

- 5.7 The second round of consultation on the Fair Funding 2.0 reforms was issued by government in June and closed on 15th August 2025. This second consultation moved on the 'principles' outlined in the first consultation to a greater level of detail on the direction of travel of the reforms, namely; Relative Need Formulae updates and weightings which drive funding allocations, approach to area cost adjustments which aim to reflect the differing costs of delivery across the country, council tax equalisation approach and lastly and importantly the transition period to the new updated allocations.
- 5.8 Through collaborative working with other local authorities and sector bodies, and engagement with local government funding specialists (Pixel), the information provided through the second round of consultation allowed local authority level, 3-year, funding estimates to begin to be calculated. These estimates continue to be heavily caveated given it is still the consultation stage of the process and MHCLG have not provided full details of the funding quantum available or illustrative examples of distribution, which are needed to provide more certain estimates.
- 5.9 In terms of funding movements, indications were that based on the current interpretation of the changes Hartlepool would be a modest beneficiary, but not to the level a deprived northern town would have expected from a Fair Funding reform package. In part, the increase in funding in 2025/26, particularly through the provision of the recovery grant has resulted in a lower increase for 2026/27.
- 5.10 Based on analysis undertaken by Pixel, the allocation changes currently estimated from Fair Funding 2.0 are particularly unfavourable to the North East, with four NE councils estimated to lose government funding (North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead). Middlesbrough Council are an outlier where fair funding appears to substantially increase their funding.
- 5.11 Following consultation feedback submissions, ministerial changes and significant and profound lobbying from both expected winners and losers, there are expected to be changes to the detail, but not to the fundamental principles and approach of the funding reforms.
- 5.12 The next step in the process is for MHCLG to issue the Local Government Finance Policy statement, which is expected mid to late November, followed by the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in week commencing 15th December 2025.
- 5.13 The current working funding assumption on what the Fair Funding 2.0, including a business rates reset, will deliver for Hartlepool is shown in the table below. It is important to note that the position estimated as at June 2025 already included an assumed general inflationary uplift on government grants and also a c£3.4m estimated benefit from the business rates reset.

Forecast total increases from Government Grant Funding reforms
including Business Rates reset benefit

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	TOTAL
MTFP Update – June 2025	(3.691)	(1.040)	(1.064)	(1.090)	(6.885)
Estimate – November 2025	(5.717)	(3.780)	(4.034)	(1.785)	(15.316)
Estimated Improvement	(2.026)	(2.740)	(2.970)	(0.695)	(8.431)

6. LOCAL FUNDING

Business Rates

- 6.1 Under the Business Rates Retention system, the Council retains locally 49% of Business Rate income. Inherent in the system is an annual uplift usually based on September CPI and this has been factored into the position, although this is yet to be confirmed by government. At present all other assumptions impacting Business Rates have remained unchanged i.e. provision for Appeals, uncollectable debt and discretionary reliefs will remain broadly consistent.
- 6.2 From 2026/27, new powers to set differing rates for particular sectors will likely allow permanently lower charges for those businesses in the Retail Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) sector. For 2025/26 the RHL sector has received relief of 40%, which is a reduction from the 75% relief provided in the 2024/25 financial year.
- 6.3 As noted in section 5, the business rates system will be reset and a new baseline rates position assessed for 2026/27. This provides a position from April 2026 whereby Hartlepool's funding from the government is predicated on an up-to-date view of actual business rates being received, which is welcomed.
- 6.4 As is always the case, the impact of inflationary cost pressures and reduced consumer demand in the wider economy may impact on the collectability of business rates.
- 6.5 The recent news that Venator Materials UK limited has entered administration, will result in a circa £0.250m loss to the council during 2025/26 and a full year loss of circa £0.500m in 2026/27. It should be noted that this has not been included in this MTFP position pending any positive news regarding future operation. This will be kept under review and the MTFP position updated in January should the need exist.

Council Tax

- 6.6 The Council has a track record of Council Tax base growth in recent years. Whilst new build growth continues to be positive, the position continues to be impacted by exemptions and discounts, including the Single Person Discount (SPD). Hartlepool is not unique in facing these pressures. Investment in fraud detection is providing reductions in the SPD claimants, which positively impacts the base position.
- 6.7 Whilst housing growth continues to be positive, there remains a risk that the wider economic environment i.e. interest rates and cost of living, may have a detrimental impact on growth as well as collectability of Council Tax should household incomes continue to be under strain. Growth in the council tax base of 520 per year is now allowed for in the budget model for 2026/27.
- 6.8 The formal Council Tax referendum limits for 2026/27 and beyond, are expected to be confirmed in the Local Government Finance Policy Statement. Consultation documents, briefings and national modelling are all based on the continued assumption of a total 5% increase referendum limit, in line with recent years.
- 6.9 Formal Council Tax decisions will be made in January and February 2026. The Leader of the Council, and the ruling Labour Group, have pledged to freeze Council tax for 2026/27. In doing so, this would limit the funding available for council services by £0.562m for every 1% foregone. Given the anticipated referendum, limit of 5%, this means foregoing £2.804m in 2026/27, equating to circa £30m cumulative impact available to the council budget over the next 10 years.

7. RESERVES

- 7.1 The Council holds reserves for a variety of purposes, including those allocated for known commitments and risks, including capital schemes, the MTFP budget position and our insurance fund. The reserve position has been volatile in recent years given the significant inflationary and demand pressures experienced. The only unallocated reserve is our general fund reserve, which serves as a reserve of last resort.
- 7.2 Reserves have fallen over recent years and are forecast to fall further over the short to medium term to concerning low levels. Details of reserves held and forecast reductions can be found at **Appendix C**.
- 7.3 The use of one-off reserves to balance the on-going revenue budget position is not a financially sustainable basis to set our budget. However, the volatility of local government finances over recent years, combined with local decisions on not to increase Council Tax by the amount allowable, has necessitated we do so. The Budget Support Fund is

available to smooth the budget deficits where possible but must be used in a planned and carefully managed way.

- 7.4 For 2025/26 £1.000m of the Budget Support Fund was used to support the overall budget position. The one-off nature of reserves means that the budget position is detrimentally hit in subsequent years as their use unwinds. Given the in-year (2025/26) forecast overspend the Budget Support Fund is now at a concerning low level.

8. STRATEGY FOR BALANCING THE BUDGET POSITION

- 8.1 Based on the position outlined in sections 3 to 7 above, which importantly includes the currently estimated impact of Fair Funding 2.0, the consolidated budget position to be addressed over the 4 year MTFP period is shown below. The gap to be addressed for 2026/27 is currently forecast to be £8.572m, with a four year gap to 2029/30 of £20.591m.

- 8.2 The position presented has both uncertainty and risk regarding spending pressures but also continued uncertainty linked to the government's funding allocations which won't be confirmed until the end of December. **Appendix A** provides greater detail of the main risks and associated sensitivities impacting on the position.

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	Total £m
Spending Pressures					
Pay and Price Inflation	6.868	4.118	5.270	4.392	20.649
Children's Social Care	6.000	3.120	2.182	1.726	13.028
Waste Disposal	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500	1.000
Capital Financing	0.000	0.500	0.500	0.500	1.500
Supported Accommodation	0.250	0.255	0.260	0.265	1.030
Total Spending Pressures	13.618	7.993	8.212	7.383	37.207
Government Grant Changes	(3.697)	(3.527)	(3.760)	(1.513)	(12.497)
Gap Before Local Funding	9.922	4.466	4.452	5.870	24.710
Business Rates	(2.020)	(0.253)	(0.274)	(0.272)	(2.819)
Council Tax - Base Increase	(1.083)	(0.625)	(0.656)	(0.689)	(3.054)
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	0.754	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.754
Gap Before Current Use of Reserves	7.572	3.588	3.522	4.909	19.591
Temporary Use of Budget Support Fund (reversal)	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
Bottom Line Gap to be addressed (before Council Tax increases and Savings)	8.572	3.588	3.522	4.909	20.591
Cumulative Gap (before Council Tax increases and Savings)	8.572	12.160	15.682	20.591	

Transformation and Efficiency Strategy

- 8.3 A strategic and transformational approach to addressing the MTFP funding shortfall and wider financial planning has been adopted. The Council's Transformation Plan which was approved by the Finance and Policy Committee in June 2024 outlined the approach and principles to achieve the Target Operating Model for the council.
- 8.4 Transformation activity is progressing in the following key areas;
- **Demand Management;**
 - Adult Social Care – Sustainability
 - Childrens Social Care – Sufficiency
 - Waste and Recycling
 - **Service Reviews;**
 - Leisure, Culture and Performance Venues Review
 - Schools Catering and Cleaning Review
 - **Land and Property Review**
 - **Fees and Charges Review**
 - **Digitalisation and Back Office;**
 - Customer Contact
 - Income and Cash Management
 - Revenues collection and maximisation
 - ICT Transformation
 - Digital Blue Print Reviews
- 8.5 Activity is progressing well on these schemes, to deliver service improvement and savings that will be realised over the MTFP period. The latest activity within the Transformation Programme, and target budget savings impacting the 2026/27 and future years budget planning is provided at **Appendix B**. The budget savings total £4.117m in 2026/27, with an additional £383,000 of savings reflected in the Council Tax Base position.
- 8.6 The forecast MTFP position, taking into account the savings associated with the Transformation Programme is shown in the table below. In order to prioritise and accelerate the delivery of transformation savings for future years, a Transformation and Efficiency Board will be established in December.

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	Total £m
Gap to be Addressed	8.572	3.588	3.522	4.909	20.591
Previously Approved Savings	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.155
Transformation Savings *	4.117	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.500
Bottom Line Gap to be Addressed (after Savings but before Council Tax increases and use of reserves)	4.300	3.588	3.522	4.909	16.319
Cumulative Gap	4.300	7.888	11.410	16.319	

* Transformation Savings total adjusted downwards by £0.383m given element achieved through council tax base improvements.

- 8.7 The transformation and savings proposals set out above will be referred to the next meeting of the relevant policy committee. Upon consideration and agreement by the Policy Committee, it is imperative that activity to progress the proposals, to deliver the identified saving, commences immediately. Where policy committees choose not to support a proposal an alternative proposal will need to be provided.

Council Tax

- 8.8 As noted above, the formal Council Tax referendum limits for 2026/27 and beyond, are expected to be confirmed in the Local Government Finance Policy Statement. Consultation documents, briefings and national modelling are all based on the continued assumption of a total 5% increase referendum limit, in line with recent years. Furthermore, there remains the expectation that the government will assume all councils maximise their Council Tax increases, given the national spending restraints and significant financial pressures all councils are under.
- 8.9 As formal Council Tax decisions for 2026/27 will be made later in the budget setting process, and given the current political direction, the position does not currently include any council tax increase for 2026/27. However, given the continued financial strain the council is facing, the MTFP does assume rises at 4.99% in future years.
- 8.10 The MTFP position after assumed council tax rises at 4.99% from 2027/28 is shown in the table below.

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	Total £m
Gap to be Addressed	4.300	3.588	3.522	4.909	16.319
Council Tax increase estimates	0.000	(2.836)	(3.010)	(3.194)	(9.040)
Bottom Line Gap to be Addressed (after Savings and assumed Council Tax increases)	4.300	0.753	0.512	1.715	7.279

Cumulative Gap	4.300	5.053	5.565	7.279	
Use of Reserves					

- 8.11 As previously set out, the use of one-off reserves to balance the on-going revenue budget position is not a sustainable approach to setting the budget. Whilst it shunts some of the budget gap back a year, it presents a danger that the Council simply utilises one-off money on delaying decisions. In addition, this approach reduces the scope for the Council to invest and innovate in order to generate recurring savings.
- 8.12 The aim of setting the Council's budget is that it should be sustainable over the medium term period, with recurring spend funded by recurring income. Decisions on use of reserves should be made consistent with that aim. As such it continues to be proposed that any use of reserves should be done on a prudent basis over the period so that within the current MTFP cycle the budget is fully sustainable.
- 8.13 The Council's Budget Support Fund (BSF) helps to smooth the budget position over the MTFP period as well as meeting any one off costs associated with budget reductions e.g. redundancies. The table below shows the current reserve balance at the end of 2024/25 and forecast, usage to balance the 2025/26 budget. It should be noted that the forecast balance is lower than the forecast gap in 2026/27 alone.

	BSF £m
Balance as at 31 March 2025	7.672
Less	
Use of reserve to support 2025/26 budget (approved)	(1.000)
Use of reserve to support 2025/26 forecast overspend	(3.260)
Forecast uncommitted balance over the period	3.412

- 8.14 As noted in section 7 and shown in detail in appendix C, the council's reserves levels are forecast to dramatically reduce over the short to medium term. There are instances where ringfenced reserves may temporarily improve the position, linked to advanced payment of government grant funding, but these funds are very much linked to specific projects or initiatives. They do temporality support cashflow. In quite contrary fashion the council is currently cash-flowing the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit, which due to temporary accounting regulations currently in place, can be classified as an unusable reserve. This temporary accounting arrangement is scheduled to end in March 2028, at which point, without government support, will be fully chargeable to the council's general fund. This is a real risk and concern to the council's financial position and most other councils across the country.

Overall Position

- 8.15 The updated MTFP position outlined in this report presents a significant MTFP gap, with a £4.300m gap in 2026/27 and £7.279m over the MTFP period (after assumed council tax rises from 2027/28)

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	Total £m
Gap to be Addressed	4.300	0.753	0.512	1.715	7.279
Cumulative Gap	4.300	5.053	5.565	7.279	

- 8.16 As previously reported, The Leader of the Council and the Labour Group, have pledged a Council Tax freeze for 2026/27. Statutory Section 25 advice will be provided as part of the MTFP report to the Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee in January 2026, and will be based on the latest information available, including the outcome of Fair Funding 2.0 and the Local Government Finance Settlement.
- 8.17 At this stage, based on the current position presented, it is unlikely that the budget can be signed off as robust, given the requirement to utilise significant reserves, cognisant of the risk around budget volatility and increasing cost pressures facing the council. The increase and sustained nature of social care pressures are a particular concern, including that no growth beyond current years pressures is allowed for in 2026/27, whilst additionally a challenging savings target has been set. To achieve a robust budget the following will be required:
- Significant increased government funding flows from Fair Funding 2.0 and the Local Government Finance Settlement beyond those already forecast; and/or
 - Further significant budget savings or cuts to budgets are agreed; and/or
 - Council Tax is increased in 2026/27.
- 8.18 Based on the current position, unless significant additional government funding is received, setting a budget for 2026/27 without an increase in Council Tax is not recommended.
- 8.19 For information - the additional income which could be generated from an increase in council tax at 2%, 3% and 5%, is shown in the table below:

Increase	2026/27
	£m
2%	1.124
3%	1.686
5%	2.804

9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 The following issues are relevant in relation to this report:

- the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires local authorities to set a balanced budget – further reports will enable budget proposals to be approved and then referred to Council to meet this requirement;
- the Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to consider the advice of their Section 151 Chief Finance Officer (the Director of Finance, IT and Digital) when making budget decisions. This advice must include details of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. This requirement will be addressed in the January report.

10. SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The savings proposals put forward may impact on the delivery of frontline services or service users to varying degrees. There are some proposals which simply by the nature of the service area that they cover will impact on those with protected characteristics e.g. children's social care relating to children who are in the Council's care. However, owing to the financial challenges facing the Council we have no choice but to change, redesign and potentially close services to reduce costs. Where we need to change, redesign and close services we are working to minimise the impact on those with protected characteristics and will focus on securing services for those who are the most vulnerable within those protected characteristics.
- 10.2 Members are aware from previous MTFP reports that in making financial decisions the Council is required to demonstrate that those decisions are made in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and the rights of different members of the community. This is achieved through assessing the impact that changes to policies, procedures and practices could have on different equality groups.
- 10.3 An initial analysis has been undertaken to determine the potential impact of the proposals put forward and these are detailed in the table in **Appendix B**.
- 10.4 Further consideration will be undertaken through policy committees and a cumulative assessment will be included in the MTFP report presented to Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee in January.

11. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	These are outlined in Appendix A .
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	As set out in the main body of the report.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	No subsidy control issues are expected to arise from the proposals within this report.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	As set out in the main body of the report
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	As set out in the main body of the report
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	Asset Management implications of the proposed savings are included, where appropriate, within the Savings detailed in Appendix B .
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change considerations of the proposed savings are included, where appropriate, within the Savings detailed in Appendix B .
CONSULTATION	Consultation with local business representatives and Trades Unions will be carried out during January.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i) Note the report;
- ii) Note the initial assessment of the forecast budget gap and proposed approach to address this gap in Section 8;
- iii) Note the advice provided at paragraph 8.17 regarding the robustness of the budget.
- iv) Agree the proposals that relate to Finance and Corporate Affairs committee contained within **Appendix B**;
- v) Refer the savings proposals to individual policy committees and instructs them to identify replacement savings if these proposals are not supported;

- vi) Note the risks and scenarios outlined in the report which may impact upon the financial position presented as part of future MTFP updates; and
- vii) Agree that the previously agreed budget timetable may need to be flexed dependent on the position post settlement, but that final approval of the budget must be made by council on the 19th February 2026 to ensure annual council tax billing commences promptly.

13. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 To enable the Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee to approve the proposals to progress the development of the MTFP.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30 – 23rd June 2025.

15. CONTACT OFFICER

James Magog
 Director of Finance, IT and Digital
 Email: james.magog@hartlepool.gov.uk
 Telephone: 01429 523093

Paul Dixon
 Assistant Director - Finance
 Email: paul.dixon@hartlepool.gov.uk
 Telephone: 01429 523188

Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 12/11/2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 12/11/2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 12/11/2025

Appendix A

MTFP 2026/27 to 2029/30 - Risk Assessment

Key risks or issues that may impact on assumptions made and impact 2026/27.

Issue and Risk	Potential Impact			
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Pay Awards - Provision included in the MTFP based on 3% per annum. No contingency is built in for a higher award should inflation and wage growth remain elevated. Each 1% of pay award in excess of the MTFS provision costs c£675k.	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Level of Reserves - the MTFP is currently based on using £1.0m of one-off reserves to set the 2025/26 budget and a further £3.260m to fund the forecast overspend. This in effect utilises a significant proportion of the Budget Support Fund. Revenue reserves overall are forecast to drop from £56m to £13m over the coming four years. This would just leave the emergency unallocated general fund, the insurance fund and a small number of earmarked reserves. There would be very limited reserves available should an in year overspend occur. The above position is not inclusive of the significant Dedicated Schools Grant deficit risk.	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative
Childrens Social Care Pressures The updated MTFP includes for £11.5m of budget growth over the period. It is assumed that the Childrens Social care transformation plans will stabilise and contain pressures and deliver £3m of cost reductions. At present there is no guarantee that this will be achieved. Cost volatility in this area is extreme with a single child potentially adding £0.500m+ to the budget pressure. This is considered a significant risk and will be kept under constant review as part of the budget setting process.	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative

<p>Government Funding – The delayed release of information to inform 2026/27 to 2027/28 government funding understanding is hampering financial planning.</p> <p>Estimates derived from for the 3 year settlement Fair Funding consultation indicate funding increases at lower levels than were anticipated from the reforms.</p> <p>To compound this shortfall, the move to updated allocation levels will be phased over a likely 3 year transition period.</p>	Positive	Positive	Neutral	Neutral
<p>Inflationary Pressures - the risk around inflationary pressures remain, with current CPI inflation of 3.8% being nearly double the government's 2% target. Specific risks remain around the likes of energy prices and certain goods, given the geopolitical environment.</p>	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative
<p>One-off Grants - the council relies on a number of one off specific grants to support initiatives and day to day spend on key service areas. A number of these grants are currently scheduled to end at March 2026, with no confirmation of continuation. Should this situation occur a number of preventative schemes will end, capacity across the council will be reduced and potential redundancy costs incurred.</p>	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative
<p>Borrowing Costs - interest rates and borrowing costs remain stubbornly high. Whilst this is having a short term positive impact on the budget position, over the medium to long term we will need to borrow to fund the capital programme and as such we will require a reduction in these rates to prevent a shortfall in our debt charge budget. This will need to be kept under close review and may require some additional or temporary funding to smooth this budget.</p>	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative

Council Tax Base - the base position has seen a significant increase in 2026/27 due to a positive year of housebuilding, new premiums for empty, furnished properties and anti-fraud work. A more prudent estimate has been assumed for the remaining years but increased housebuilding could lead to an improved position.	Neutral	Positive	Positive	Positive
Waste pressures - there is current uncertainty regarding a number of waste initiatives, including food waste collection, producer responsibility and the suggestion of increased taxation on Energy for Waste facilities. This area will require close monitoring.	Neutral	Negative	Negative	Negative
DSG High Needs Statutory Override - the council held a negative overspend reserve of £1.589m at the end of 2023/24. A further overspend of £3.343m was recorded in 2024/25 leading to an overall deficit of £4.932 at the end of 2024/25. At this point the statutory override is scheduled to end on 31 st March 2028. The forecast position at this point is an overspend in the region of £14m. Should the override end as planned, the council would need to fund the deficit position at that point. Current forecasts we would unlikely have the useable resources to do so and as such may be required to use the council's general revenue reserve or seek Exceptional Financial Support.	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative

Service	Committee	Transformation Theme	Overall Description	MTFS Savings 2026/27 £	MTFS Savings 2027/28 £	Single Impact Assessment (Positive / Neutral / Negative)	Impact Assessment Notes
Adult Social Care	Adult Services and Public Health	Demand Management - Adult Social Care Sustainability	<p>Financial Assessment reviews</p> <p>To ensure income for the council is appropriately collected by reviewing financial assessments, introducing online financial assessment, accelerating financial contribution and increasing debt recovery.</p> <p>a. Financial Assessment Review - update budgets to reflect the full year impact of the work undertaken during 2025/26 to review financial assessments.</p> <p>b. On-line financial assessments – implement a system module and further review processes to enable quicker indicative assessments, reducing waiting times and thus enabling income collection to commence earlier.</p> <p>c. Debt collection – embed the new strengthened debt collection arrangements via the councils central income and debt management team to sensitively maximise income collection and recovery.</p> <p>This is the full year impact of the proposal introduced in 2025/26 and already approved as part of 2025/26 budget setting.</p>	250,000	0	N/A	<p>There is no anticipated impact as there is no proposed change to the delivery of the existing service. The proposed change relates to back office processing activities.</p> <p>There is a potential positive impact identified for poverty and disadvantage due to the promotion of welfare benefit maximisation. This should increase the amount of previously unclaimed benefits being accessed by people with social care needs.</p>
Adult Social Care	Adult Services and Public Health	Demand Management - Adult Social Care Sustainability	<p>Use of technology to reduce ASC costs</p> <p>This project seeks to introduce integrated digital solutions for people with social care needs which will help to manage increasing demand for services and increased costs for people with high levels of need.</p> <p>Using in home digital solutions will allow adult social care teams to better understand the person's behaviours and needs, assess the effectiveness of commissioned support plans and, where appropriate, safely reduce in-person care hours through digital prompts, remote engagement and continuous monitoring.</p> <p>The digital approach will be implemented on a phased approach with the following cohorts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Working-age adults with high-cost support packages- Older people in the Discharge to Assess service- People requiring unscheduled reviews due to a change in need <p>The project is supported through transformation funding.</p>	250,000	150,000	Positive	<p>The anticipated impact is positive as people with social care needs (primarily working age adults with disabilities and older people) will have another option available that allows them to be supported to live independently in their own homes. This will be based on a comprehensive assessment of needs and remote monitoring. The technology can be adapted to meet the particular communication needs of the person and the support that's offered can be less intrusive than more traditional ways of meeting needs.</p>
Adult Social Care	Adult Services and Public Health	Council Wide Fees and Charges Review	<p>Fees and Charges</p> <p>This project aims to generate additional charging opportunities for the council and will look to develop and embed a more strategic and policy lead approach to charging. Following an externally commissioned review, utilising national and regional benchmarking information, the following amendments are proposed in relation to financial assessment for Adult Social Care contributions.</p> <p>- Implementing an automatic inflationary uplift in line with published pension and benefit rises and CPI for private income. This means that all contributions will be increased automatically from April each year rather than the current approach which applies an increase at the point of a person's annual review. This is a more equitable approach and will reduce transactions once implemented.</p> <p>- Remove the disregard for the overnight element of higher rate Attendance Allowance / Personal Independence Payment. This element of benefit is currently disregarded in the financial assessment process in Hartlepool, but other Councils have implemented a different approach which increases income. The fees and charges work estimated that 559 Hartlepool residents would be affected and that their contribution would increase by up to £36.50 per week.</p> <p>- Introduce fees for people for whom the Council acts as appointee to offset the costs of providing this service, which is very labour intensive. It is proposed that there will be two levels of fee based on light touch assessment (£55 per month) and comprehensive assessment (£85 per month). These fees are in line with the major national provider of appointeeship support Money Care, a social enterprise working with over 100 Local Authorities and a national partner of the Department of Work and Pensions. Aligning fees in this way ensures a fair and equitable approach and avoids a two-tier fee structure. The proposed future model is that Money Care will support the majority of Hartlepool residents who require an appointee, with the Council maintaining an offer for some existing people and those who have particularly complex needs. A pilot directing new referrals to Money Care will commence in January 2026 prior to the changes being implemented from April 2026 to test the approach and ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>Introducing these changes will require the Adult Social Care Contribution Policy 'Determining Your Financial Contribution' to be updated and published following the budget consultation.</p>	164,000	64,000	Negative	<p>The proposals will potentially have a negative impact on people with assessed needs for care and support, particularly older people and working age adults with disabilities some of whom will have to contribute more to the cost of their support. The impact will be mitigated by ensuring that the updated Contribution Policy is compliant with the Care Act 2014 and Charging Regulations, the continued use of means testing to assess contributions and adherence to the Minimum Income Guarantee which ensures individuals are left with a minimum income after charges.</p> <p>There is a potential positive impact identified for poverty and disadvantage due to the promotion of welfare benefit maximisation. This should increase the amount of previously unclaimed benefits being accessed by people with social care needs.</p>
Waste Services	Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services	Demand Management - Waste and Recycling	<p>Recycling increase and contamination reduction</p> <p>Continue the existing project to review options with the aim of increasing recycling rates and associated income and reducing residual waste costs and associated costs. This project will dovetail with the new food waste collection requirements. The project will progress in 2026/27 to more targeted marketing campaigns and on the ground interventions.</p>	100,000	TBC	N/A	<p>The proposals focus on compliance arrangements to reduce contamination. They are not a change in policy or recycling requirement.</p>

Service	Committee	Transformation Theme	Overall Description	MTFS Savings 2026/27 £	MTFS Savings 2027/28 £	Single Impact Assessment (Positive / Neutral / Negative)	Impact Assessment Notes
Childrens Social Care	Childrens Services	Demand Management - Childrens Social Care Sufficiency	<p>Service wide demand and cost mitigations</p> <p>A comprehensive strategy is being implemented to reduce the number of children entering care, whilst ensuring that those already in care continue to receive the support they need to return home where it is safe to do so. Several key initiatives are being progressed across the service, each designed to address different aspects of the care system, the implementation of social care reforms, and importantly continue to improve outcomes for children and families. Each activity will report into the recently established Children's Services Transformation Board.</p> <p>As an initial priority, the service will conduct a review of the most costly placements to evaluate their effectiveness, ensure best value, and explore alternatives where appropriate. Other activities are listed below.</p> <p>a.Early Help for Families – Review and strengthen our early help offer to families to identify needs early and offer help before issues become more serious and escalate to statutory intervention. The early help team will co-ordinate support across different multi-agency partners to ensure joined-up, consistent support, ensuring children and families get the right support at the right time rather than having less handover points across the system.</p> <p>b.Edge of Care – Provision of an edge of care team to support young people (including those with additional needs) who are at risk of family breakdown, leading to a reduction in the number of children coming into care. The council is also working with Tees Valley councils and the ICB (NHS) to support edge of care for children and young people with complex needs.</p> <p>c. Fostering and Placement Planning – Development of a refreshed model for in-house foster carers that increases capacity of foster placements, including those with higher level of need/complexity. This will be accompanied with a local fostering drive. We will also ensure we fairly maximise Health Funding where appropriate and where the child has a defined health need.</p> <p>d. Reunification – Children have a fundamental right to live with, and be cared for, by their parents so long as this is in a safe environment. Reunification pathways help families to come back together safely and sustainably giving children a chance to grow up with their parents, while making sure that the issues then led to separation do not reoccur. Reunification supports a child’s sense of belonging, identity and continuity. Children’s services will form a dedicated reunification team to support parents in developing the skills and stability necessary to safely care for their children. This initiative aims to facilitate the return of children from external and foster care placements to their family homes, ensuring reunification is both safe and sustainable.</p> <p>e. Updated Education Strategy and SEND Reforms – Having a clear education strategy that covers SEND reforms within children’s services is essential for ensuring that every child, including those with additional needs, receives the right support, at the right time, in the right setting. The Government’s SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) reforms require local authorities to continue to: improve consistency, quality and accountability in SEND support; develop local inclusion plans; strengthen early identification and intervention; and ensure better outcomes in preparation for adulthood. An updated education strategy that aligns with these reforms will enable HBC children’s services to be fully prepared for any changes reforms may bring, compliant with our statutory duties and strategically align with national policy.</p> <p>To this end, the service will update our education strategy which ensures our local offer is well co-ordinated, transparent and accessible to families, emphasising joint working between education, health, social care and families. Our strategy will promote: inclusive practice in mainstream schools; early help and graduated response models; alternative provision supporting reintegration; and one which champions the wider early intervention and prevention ethos.</p> <p>The updated strategy will be included as part of a suite of documents, including our SEND sufficiency strategy; SEND and alternative provision capital strategy, to improve planning and ensure sufficient local provision for those with SEND and those who are looked after.</p> <p>f. Care leavers support – The care leavers pathway is being refreshed to ensure young people transitioning out of care are supported to become confident and independent adults. The Transitions Operational Group (TOG) has been established to review and enhance our approach to pathway planning. This includes preparing care leavers for adulthood by promoting stable relationships, health and wellbeing, raising aspirations, and providing tailored support to access housing, employment, education and training opportunities. A review of a housing pathway for care leavers will be undertaken.</p> <p>g. Workforce demand and capacity mapping</p> <p>h. Corporate Parenting – Enhance understanding and accountability amongst all corporate parents regarding their roles and statutory responsibilities, to ensure the effective implementation of the seven corporate parenting principles (Children and Social Work Act 2017).</p> <p>The target of £3m is based on the current pressures identified at Quarter 1 of the financial year 2025/26, and the growth allowed within the MTFP. The proposals should be viewed as an all-encompassing package, rather than individual proposals with individual targets.</p> <p>The project will be supported by transformation funding. In order to ensure progress prior to April 2026, some financial commitments have already been entered into.</p>	3,000,000	0	Positive	The proposals focus on prevention, placement breakdown and reunification to best support the needs of children within Hartlepool. It is therefore anticipated that implementation of these strands will, on balance, have a greater positive impact than any potential negative impact which may occur in a minority of individual cases.

Service	Committee	Transformation Theme	Overall Description	MTFS Savings 2026/27 £	MTFS Savings 2027/28 £	Single Impact Assessment (Positive / Neutral / Negative)	Impact Assessment Notes
Cross Cutting	All	Council Wide Fees and Charges Review	Fees and Charges This project aims to generate additional charging opportunities for the council and will look to develop and embed a more strategic and policy lead approach to charging. Following an externally commissioned review, utilising national and regional benchmarking information, amendments are proposed in a number of areas to bring the council more into line with charges elsewhere, or to more closely recover costs. In order to limit the impact, some of these proposals cover a number of years. All proposals are individually less than £100,000 in impact and as such are progressing through normal officer delegations. Where service area have operated at a shortfall on existing income targets, savings will be retained by the service to mitigate the existing shortfalls. Furthermore, fees and charges generally will increase at 5% for the 2026/27 financial year.	213,000	61,000	Neutral	The bulk of the changes to fees and charges relate to charges for third party organisations rather than individual residents. Where changes do relate to individual residents, they are predominantly discretionary services.
ICT / Council Wide	Finance and Corporate Affairs	Digital Reviews	Application Insight and Rationalisation A review of all software applications in operation within the councils IT estate and their usage to reduce unnecessary applications, avoid future costs, improve procurement and ensure we fully utilise the data held on these systems to inform decision making. The project will be supported by transformation funding. In order to ensure progress prior to April 2026, some financial commitments have already been entered into.	63,000	0	N/A	There is no anticipated impact, since this is a review of internal software applications.
Accounts Payable / Council Wide	Finance and Corporate Affairs	Digital Reviews	Invoice Payment Processing This project will improve the efficiency of invoice processing for the Council and generate a new income stream associated with amendments to supplier invoice payment terms. This will be achieved through: a) E-invoicing - introduction of e-invoicing software to capture information direct from suppliers e-invoices. The software is integrated direct to Integra, the Council's Financial Management System (FMS) and will improve the speed and accuracy of this current manual process and generate staff time savings. b) Early Payment Solution (EPS) – introduction of an EPS into the current payments process. The EPS allows suppliers to be paid more quickly in return for a discount on the invoice value being paid. This discount generates an income stream into the Council. Both solutions are widely used by public bodies across the country and councils in the Tees Valley and wider North east region. The project will be supported by transformation funding. In order to ensure progress prior to April 2026, some financial commitments have already been entered into.	77,000	0	N/A	There is no anticipated impact. The saving arises from more efficient processes and a discount on invoices paid early.
				4,117,000	275,000		

Savings Proposals shown as an Increase in the Council Tax Base

Revenues and Benefits	Finance and Corporate Affairs	Revenues Collection and Maximisation	Council Tax Support accuracy reviews The Council has the highest proportion of working age Council Tax support claimants in the country. 14.4% of the working age population receive support, compared to the Tees Valley average of 11.0% and the England average of 5.8%. We have the 16th highest claimant count for pensioners with 22.6% receiving support compared to the Tees Valley average of 17.8% and the England average of 12.2%. The cost of the scheme is £13.5m a year for the council. The reasons for the high numbers include deprivation, but also our approach to promoting the scheme to those eligible. The rest fraud prevention work on Single Person discount has seen the reduction of over 1,000 claimants (circa 5%). During this work, a number of cases where identified that pointed to fraud or out of date eligibility for council tax support. As such it is proposed to undertake ongoing accuracy and eligibility review of our council tax support caseload. It is envisaged that this could achieve a 3% reduction in costs of the scheme, equally to £400,000 of annual on-going savings. To do so, two additional benefit officers will be employed and data intelligence will be utilised to prioritise and reviews, thus reducing the net target to £325,000. It should be noted that those residents remaining on Housing Benefit within Hartlepool, are subject to similar checks instigated by the DWP on Housing Benefit eligibility. Anti-fraud work on our Single Person discount caseload will continue, and this will support an increase in the target to £375,000. In order to secure progress prior to April 2026, recruitment has commenced for the two additional posts.	383,000	0	N/A	Accuracy reviews are intended to ensure the right support is provided to those eligible to receive it. Whilst the exercise will result in a reduction in the number of people receiving Council Tax support and/or a reduction in the value of support, it will ensure the appropriate amount of support is provided, and that fraud and error is reduced.
				4,500,000	275,000		

Service	Committee	Transformation Theme	Overall Description	MTFS Savings 2026/27 £	MTFS Savings 2027/28 £	Single Impact Assessment (Positive / Neutral / Negative)	Impact Assessment Notes
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- A - Age

B - Disability

C - Gender Reassignment

D - Marriage and Civil Partnership

E - Pregnancy and Maternity

F - Race
- G - Religion and Belief

H - Sex

I - Sexual Orientation

J - Poverty and Disadvantage

K - Care Leavers

L - Armed Forces Community

RESERVES FORECASTS (EXCLUDING SCHOOL BALANCES, HRA AND UNUSABLE RESERVES)

APPENDIX C

	Balance as at 31st March 2025	Forecast Use of Reserves				Forecast Balance as at 31st March 2029
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Reserve	5,500	0	0	0	0	5,500
Budget Support Fund (BSF)	7,672	(4,260)	0	0	0	3,412
BSF - Transformation Costs	2,000	0	(500)	(750)	(750)	0
BSF - Invest to Save	1,400	(700)	(350)	0	0	350
Revenue Grants Unapplied	9,107	(6,266)	(1,257)	(1,003)	(125)	456
Business Rates Risk Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance Fund	2,902	(65)	(65)	(65)	0	2,707
Children in our Care Reserve	1,230	(200)	(1,030)	0	0	0
BSF - Treasury Management Income	650	(650)	0	0	0	0
Asset Management Reserve	840	(840)	0	0	0	0
Earmarked Revenue Reserves under £1m	7,038	(3,028)	(2,401)	(846)	0	763
Revenue Reserves Total	38,339	(16,009)	(5,603)	(2,664)	(875)	13,188
Earmarked Capital Reserves	6,303	(5,940)	(363)	0	0	0
Capital Grants Unapplied	11,680	(11,680)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	56,322	(33,629)	(5,966)	(2,664)	(875)	13,188
Cumulative Balance		22,693	16,727	14,063	13,188	
DSG Reserve	(4,932)	(4,670)	(3,596)	(5,214)	(6,773)	(25,185)
DSG Reserve Cumulative Balance		(9,602)	(13,198)	(18,412)	(25,185)	

ADULT SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

4 December 2025



Subject: DEVELOPMENT OF A DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY

Report of: Executive Director of Adult Services & Public Health

Decision Type: Key Decision (ii) – ACBS 110/26

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:

- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide members of the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy and to seek approval to consult on the draft strategy prior to it being adopted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It is estimated that 2.3 million people aged 16 years and over in the UK experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024, 1.6 million women and 0.7 million men.
- 3.2 Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires each local authority to –
- assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area,
 - prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area, and
 - monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- 3.3 The current strategy for Hartlepool 'Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System on Lived Experience 2022-2025' comes to an end this year and a needs assessment for 2024/25 has been carried out to inform the development of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026-2029.

- 3.4 The needs assessment for 2024/25 is attached as **Appendix 1** and the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026-2029 is attached as **Appendix 2**.

4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2024/25 reviewed the level of need for domestic abuse services, including:

- safe accommodation;
- the extent of unmet need and gaps in provision; and
- the effectiveness of current service provision.

- 4.2 Three key strategic themes have been identified through the needs assessment process:

1. There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.
2. Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).
3. There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

- 4.3 The needs assessment sets out what needs to be done to address these strategic themes, and this information has been used to inform the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy priorities.

- 4.4 The draft Domestic Abuse Strategy provides an update on what has been achieved to date, what has been learned and areas that continue to be challenging, as well as setting out priorities and what success would look like.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	<p>The Council is required to update the needs assessment and strategy for domestic abuse to fulfill its statutory duties.</p> <p>It is important for partners to work together to reduce the risk of domestic abuse. The development of the strategy based on the local needs assessment will support a reduction in risk.</p>
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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	The local authority receives grant funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to carry out its statutory duties in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	There are no subsidy control implications.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	The Domestic Abuse Act places a statutory duty on local authorities to have a strategy.
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	A Single Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 3 . This identifies a positive impact for people with protected characteristics as domestic abuse affects everyone and the Domestic Abuse Strategy will ensure services are accessible for all.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no staffing considerations.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are no environment, sustainability and climate change considerations.
CONSULTATION	<p>Consultation on the draft strategy will include: –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board • All stakeholders including Members • Public consultation via an online survey which will include victims of domestic abuse via commissioned support services • Safer Hartlepool Partnership <p>The consultation will run from 5 December 2025 to 30 January 2026. The final strategy incorporating feedback from the consultation will be presented to Adult Services and Public Health Committee in March 2026 for approval.</p>

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that members consider the draft strategy, provide feedback and approve the proposed consultation process, noting that the final Domestic Abuse Strategy will be presented to Committee in March 2026 for approval.

7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The council has a statutory duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to have a strategy and provide domestic abuse support services.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022-2025.

9. CONTACT OFFICER

Claire Robinson
Public Health Principal
Claire.robinson@hartlepool.gov.uk

Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 18.11.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 18.11.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 18.11.2025



Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2024/2025

1. Summary
2. Introduction
3. Data and Intelligence
4. Which population groups are most at risk?
5. Consultation and engagement
6. Strategic issues
7. Evidence base
8. What is being done and why?
9. What needs are unmet?
10. What needs to be done?
11. What additional needs assessment is required?
12. Key contacts and references
13. Appendices

1. Summary

The most recent needs assessment in Hartlepool was published in 2021, followed by Hartlepool's Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022-2025. The purpose of this document is to refresh and review the level of need for domestic abuse services, including –

- safe accommodation
- the extent of unmet need and gaps in provision
- the effectiveness of current service provision

It will also make recommendations of meeting need and using resources effectively and efficiently.

It will build on progress already made since 2021, combining national data and research with the local context of Hartlepool to continue conversations with stakeholders, commissioners and partner agencies about the future of domestic abuse services in Hartlepool and inform the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026 and inform the commissioning of domestic abuse services.

The below strategic issues are a summary of the needs that have been identified throughout this needs assessment.

Issue number	Strategic issue?	What needs to be done?
1	There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention and prevention. Awareness raising and promotion of services, especially with hidden victims (such as those with disabilities, from ethnic minority groups or different cultural backgrounds and male victims) and those with complex needs • Utilise existing service user forums to ensure that victim and survivor voice informs the commissioning and delivery of services • Ensure services are accessible, trauma-informed and use professional curiosity when individuals decline their service or do not engage • Provide training to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of

		<p>the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of 'personally connected' covering intimate partners and family members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure pathways and information sharing is robust, including MARAC, MATAC and HRAP • Consider alternative safe accommodation options including specialist, by and for and move-on. • Review the proportion of out of area referrals both in and out of Hartlepool. • Consider a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse • Understand the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law). • Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response victims receive
2	<p>Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on early intervention and prevention to ensure all children understand healthy relationships • Ensure all services are recognising children as victims in their own right • Ensure therapeutic support services are available for children • Review the prevalence of CAPVA, the demand on services and ensure that the offer in place can meet the need of children and their parents. • Understand the effectiveness of Operation Encompass • Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners

		to standardise the response children as victims receive
3	There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the OPCC Perpetration Strategy • Review the criminal justice response to perpetrators within Hartlepool • Monitor the effectiveness and engagement of perpetrator provision • Reduce repeat offending and the number of repeat high risk MARAC cases • Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response perpetrators receive

2. Introduction

Domestic Abuse is a global, national and local issue. The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 2.3 million people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024. This is estimated at 1.6 million women and 712,000 men.ⁱ

Domestic abuse is a hidden crime due to underreporting but also that one domestic abuse incident can have multiple impacts on victims, their families, communities and services. Domestic abuse impacts everyone and can be devastating for all.

The economic and social costs of domestic violence and abuse are immense. The Home Office estimated in 2017 the cost to be £66 billion in England and Wales.

It is widely known that domestic abuse is recognised as a gendered crime and predominantly perpetrated by men towards women, in intimate partner relationships as a form of violence against women and girls. However, it is now widely recognised that anyone of any gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, race, or religion can be a victim of domestic abuse, and the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) introduced a recognised definition to encompass those who are personally connected. See Appendix 1 for the definition.

It is critical to provide life-saving safe accommodation and support for those victims and their children that need it following domestic abuse and as they rebuild their lives after the trauma of domestic abuse.

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act requires local authorities to undertake a needs assessment and strategy every 3 years. See Appendix 2 for further detail on the statutory guidance of the Domestic Abuse Act, including Part 4 and other relevant legislation.

The following needs assessment has used published statistics including both national and local datasets from a range of organisations and held locally in-house at Hartlepool.

The way data is collected and the level of detail held varies considerably between organisations as does the time periods that data is available for. The timeframe for each dataset is given each time within the report.

The data in this needs assessment covers the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024. Where possible, data from the previous needs assessment has been used as a comparison to review trends and progress.

The term victim and survivor will be used interchangeably throughout this document; however, it is important to recognise that not everyone who has been impacted by domestic abuse will identify as either. Those who cause harm will be referred to as perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Other JSNA topics this topic closely linked to:	
Housing	Sexual Health
Violent Crime	Substance Misuse
Mental Health	Youth Offending
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults	

3. Data and Intelligence

National Prevalence and Trends

The prevalence of domestic abuse nationally is difficult to estimate as it is very often a hidden crime, which means that under-reporting of offences is an issue when looking at data.

Nationally data is available from ONS and from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

The latest annual results for the Crime Survey for England and Wales were published in July 2024.ⁱⁱ

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) self-completion module provides a more reliable measure of long-term trends for domestic abuse than police recorded crime data. Estimates from the CSEW showed that 4.8% of people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in year ending (YE) March 2024, no statistically significant change compared with YE March 2023.

There has been a gradual decrease in domestic abuse over the last 10 years. The CSEW for YE March 2024 estimated that 5.4% of people aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year compared with 6.5% in YE March 2014.ⁱⁱⁱ

Within national police data there are differences in the way that different police forces categorise and record domestic abuse offences. The CSEW does include data from victims who have not reported to the police but even so the estimated prevalence should be considered an under-estimation.

The Home Office developed a calculation in 2017 to estimate the economic and social costs of domestic abuse. This had the following findings –

- The economic and social costs of domestic violence are immense: £66 billion in England and Wales in 2017.
- The average cost per victim in England and Wales is £34,015.
- The cost of domestic abuse in Hartlepool in 2019/20 was around £50 million.
- The calculation includes direct costs, indirect costs and hidden costs.

These costs are likely to be an underestimate due to under reporting of abuse and are likely to be significantly higher due to inflation since 2019. The calculation has not been updated by the Home Office since 2019.^{iv}

Hartlepool Characteristics

It is difficult to understand an individual's journey of domestic abuse and their access to services due to the way data is recorded. There is currently no standardisation of what data is collected, how this is recorded and shared on a local level between services. This means that some services are unable to provide quality, meaningful data to truly understand need.

According to 2021 Census data, in Hartlepool, the population size is 92,338, with a gender split of 51.6% female and 48.4% male and made up of 40,930 households. 5.4% of households in Hartlepool have dependent children aged 0-4, while 23.4% of households have dependent children of all ages. The predominant band in Hartlepool is 50-64 years with 20,007 people (21.7%).^v

The Census data also shows that the largest ethnic group in Hartlepool is White at 96.5%, compared to 86.1% for England and Wales. The second largest ethnic group is Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh at 1.7%, compared to 9.3% for England and Wales.

Census data also shows that most households are owner occupiers (31.2% own outright, and 27.6% own with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership). Compared to the previous needs assessment, social rented has increased to 23.4% from 14% and private rented has increased from 14% to 17.7%.

In terms of education, the 2021 Census shows that 24.8% of residents have achieved level 4 qualifications and above which is an increase from 2011 which was 18%. 23.1% have no qualifications which has decreased from the previous needs assessment which was 31%.

For health, Hartlepool has 5,625 (6.1%) residents that report being in bad health and 1,732 (1.9%) of residents that reporting being in very bad health which has remained consistent.

In relation to employment, 50.5% of residents are employed, with the majority (15.5%) working in professional occupations, 11.9% working in associate professional and technical occupations and 11.6% working in caring, leisure and other service occupations which has shown an increase from the previous Census in 2011.

In summary, Hartlepool has an ageing population, with the majority reporting good health however there is still a high proportion reporting bad or very bad health. There has been an increase in the number of people seeking social rented tenure, with a higher proportion of people owning their own home, lending to cheaper house prices in the Northeast of England. There has been an increase of educational attainment and employment however Hartlepool still has high levels of deprivation and poverty due to the recent cost of living crisis and residents working low skilled jobs with lower rates of pay.

How Hartlepool Compares to the National Trends

A comparison was carried out between local Hartlepool domestic abuse police data and the national ONS police and CSEW data to see how Hartlepool compares to the national picture.

The table below shows this comparison –

Metric	National data 2019/2020	Hartlepool data 2019/2020	National data 2023/2024 ^{vi}	Hartlepool data 2023/2024
Proportion of adults aged 16-74 who experienced domestic abuse in the past 12 months	5.5% (2.3m)	2.1% (1,392)	4.8% (2.3 million)	2.6% (1,793)
Proportion of females aged 16-74 who experienced domestic abuse in the past 12	4.7% (1.6m)	3.1% (1,050)	6.6% (1.6 million)	3.6% (1,262)

Hartlepool JSNA

months as a percentage of female population aged 16-74					
Proportion of males aged 16-74 who experienced domestic abuse in the past 12 months as a percentage of male population aged 16-74	2.3% (757,000)	1.0% (342)	3% (712,000)	1.6% (531)	
Violence against the person (VAP) offences					
Proportion of VAP offences flagged as domestic abuse-related	35%	32%	33.3%	35%	
Proportion of VAP offences with a female victim which were flagged as domestic abuse-related	53%	48%	46.7%	71%	
Proportion of VAP offences with a male victim which were flagged as domestic abuse-related	23%	21%	22.9%	28%	
Sexual offences					
Proportion of sexual offences flagged as domestic abuse-related	16%	16%	18.9%	20%	
Coercive control offences		1st April 2020 to 19th March 2021			
Number of coercive control offences	2019/20 – 28,856 2018/19 – 16,679	2020/2021* - 77 2019/20 – 0 2018/19 – 0	45,310	89	
Domestic abuse crimes					
Total number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes	1,288,018	3,370	1,350,428	3,146	

Hartlepool JSNA

Proportion of domestic abuse incidents not subsequently recorded as a crime	41%	38%	37%	33%
Proportion of domestic abuse incidents recorded as a crime	59%	62%	63%	67%
Proportion of domestic abuse incidents recorded as a crime – percentage change from 2019/20 to 2023/2024			+4%	+8%

The table above shows that locally, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of adults aged 16-74 who are experiencing domestic abuse and is around half of the proportion nationally. This can be attributed to the fact that the national data is taken from the CSEW which includes crimes which are not reported to the police, whereas the local data is purely based on police reports.

The proportion of domestic abuse offences recorded as sexual offence has increased by 4% in Hartlepool which mirrors the increase nationally of 3%. The proportion of domestic abuse incidents recorded as a crime has increased both nationally and locally.

Rates of domestic abuse per head of population remains difficult to calculate due to factors such as under-reporting and frequent changes in how this data is recorded and classified over time.

Public Health England have produced a crude rate based on the number of recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes per 1,000 population.

This gives Hartlepool a rate of 43.2 domestic abuse incidents and crimes per 1,000 population in 2023/24. This is an increase of 3.2 since 2019/2020. However, it is worth noting this is based on the Cleveland Police force area. Nationally, the rate has decreased by 0.9.^{vii}

Safer Hartlepool Partnership

Domestic violence and abuse is a strategic priority of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and the strategic assessment for the period October 2022 to September 2023 highlighted an increase by 3% of police recorded incidents of domestic violence and a 12% increase of domestic related violent crimes compared to the previous year October 2021 to September 2022. Domestic violence crimes are 21% of all recorded victim-based crime in Hartlepool, 76% of which are violence offences.

Women and girls in Hartlepool continue to be at the greatest risk of domestic violence and abuse with 70% of all victims being female. 62% of female victims of domestic violence and abuse are aged between 21 and 42 years. Repeat victimisation is evident, with 34% of female victims and 22% of males suffering two or more incidents during the reporting period.

In relation to the perpetrators charged with domestic abuse offences during the assessment period, 84% were males with more than two thirds aged between 27 and 45 years. Repeat offending is evident with 41 males charged with 2 or more offences during the reporting period.^{viii}

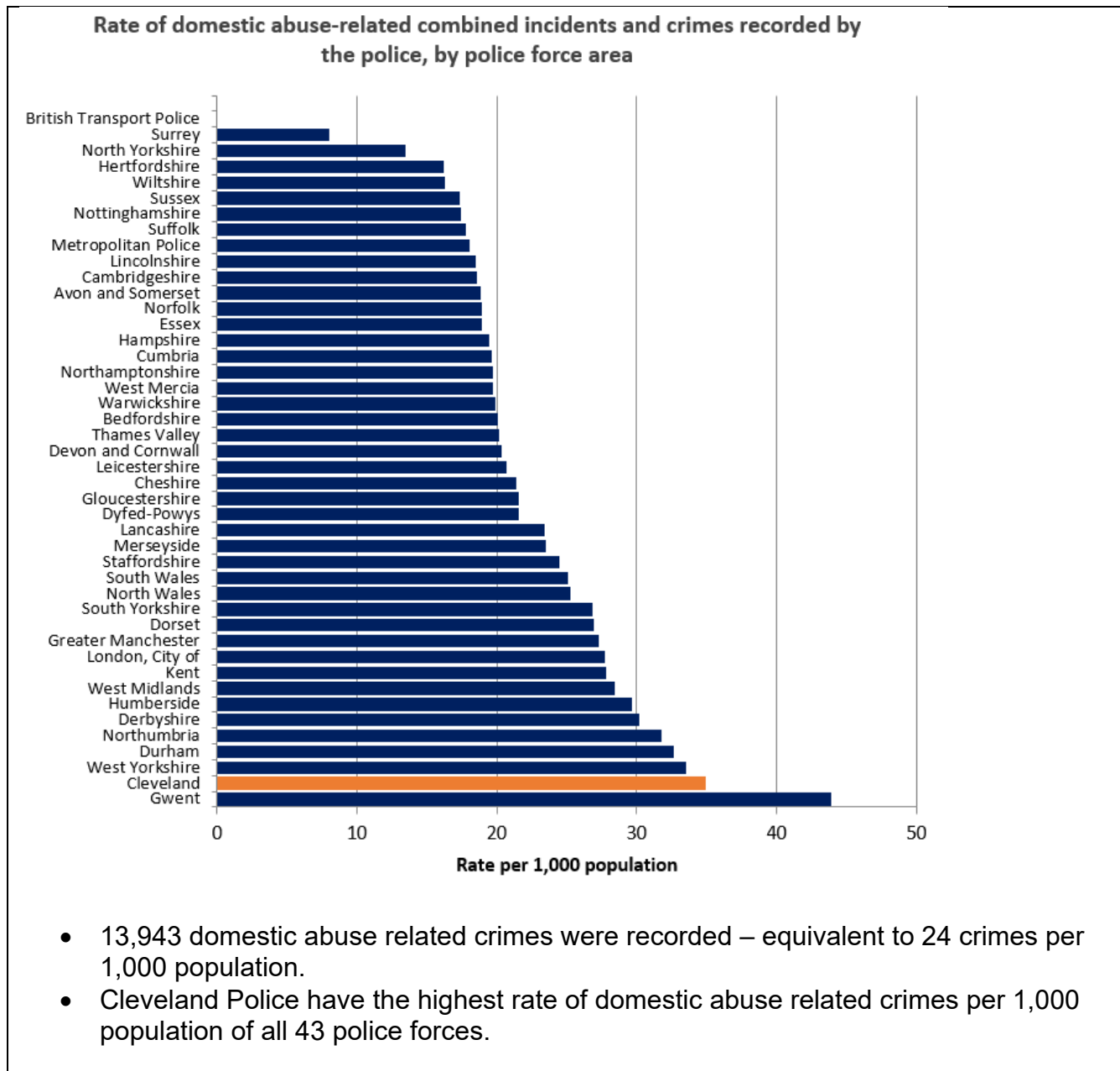
Cleveland Police Data (ONS)

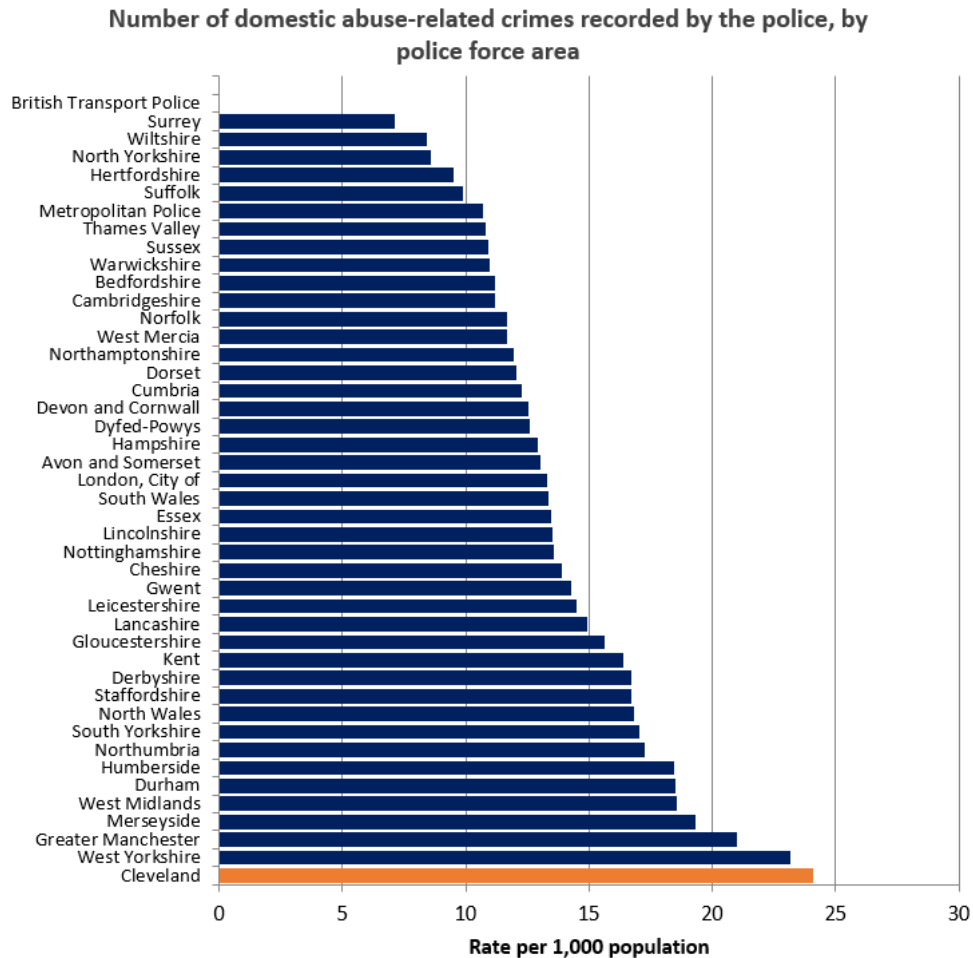
Hartlepool, along with Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland are part of the Cleveland Police force area. Data provided by the ONS for the Cleveland Force for the year ending March 2024.^{ix}

Domestic Abuse-Related Crimes

- 20,218 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes were recorded – equivalent to 35 incidents per 1,000 population. This is a 10.64% increase from 2024.
- Cleveland Police have the second highest rate of domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population of all 43 police forces.

Hartlepool JSNA





18% of all recorded crimes were classified as domestic abuse-related compared to 16% for England and Wales which is a 1% increase for both, since 2020.

4,058 domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences were recorded, which is a 44.67% increase from 2020. 39% of all stalking and harassment offences were domestic abuse-related in 2024, up from 33% in 2020. (Note: in May 2023, changes were made to the Home Office Counting Rules for conduct crimes (stalking, harassment and coercive and controlling behaviour). The requirement to record two crimes, reported at the same time by a victim involving the same perpetrator, when one of them was a conduct crime was removed. However, the police continue to investigate all offences. This has led to a reduction in offences often associated with conduct crimes, such as malicious communications, and an increase in offences such as stalking and harassment. The impact of these changes on statistics is difficult to measure as compliance in crime recording in this area has been inconsistent across policing. Therefore, caution should be taken when comparing domestic abuse-related police recorded data with previous years.)

Arrests, Charge Rate and Prosecutions

- In 2024, there were 35 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes in Cleveland; lower than the England and Wales rate of 42 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes.

- The charge rate for domestic abuse-related offences was 73% in Cleveland (equating to 910 domestic abuse-related charges). This is lower than the charge rate for England and Wales which was 79%. *Note: CPS amended the method for reporting the charging rate in 2019 to exclude non-legal decisions. Data on the charging rate included in previous publications may not be comparable to data in this publication.*
- 981 domestic abuse-related prosecutions took place – equivalent to 15% of all prosecutions in Cleveland, and up from 13% in 2020. The England and Wales rate fell from 14% in 2020 to 12% in 2024.
- 747 domestic abuse-related convictions were recorded in Cleveland – this means that 76% of domestic abuse-prosecutions resulted in conviction (a fall of 3% since 2020); this is the same as the rate of prosecution in England and Wales.

Use of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)

- No data is available for the number of DVPNs applied for in Cleveland but 223 DVPNs were granted (a 266% increase from 61 granted in 2020).
- 223 DVPOs were applied for in Cleveland and 198 DVPOs were granted (equivalent to 89% - up from 67% in 2020); compared to 90% in England and Wales.

Clare's Law

- Right to Know Clare's Law applications made in Cleveland increased from 467 in 2020 to 1,286 in 2024 (175% increase). The number of Right to Know applications given disclosure increased from 296 to 382. However, the proportion of applications given disclosure fell from 63% in 2020 to 30% in 2024. The proportion of applications granted disclosure in England and Wales also fell from 52% in 2020 to 45% in 2024.
- Right to Ask applications made in Cleveland increased from 307 in 2020 to 828 in 2024 (170% increase). The number of Right to Ask applications given disclosure increased from 150 to 279. However, similarly to Right to Know, the proportion of Right to Ask applications granted disclosure fell from 54% in 2020 to 37% in 2024. The proportion of applications under Right to Ask for England and Wales increased from 37% in 2020 to 40% in 2024.
- Note: disclosures cannot be directly compared against applications made as there are many reasons why an application may not meet the threshold for disclosure so a low percentage of disclosures may not necessarily suggest a problem. Also, the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) was put onto a statutory footing in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act, which could have contributed towards the increase in applications received.

Additional local data provided by Cleveland Police for Hartlepool shows that there has been an increase in the number of Clare's Law application, both right to ask and right to know. However, there has been a decrease in the percentage resulting in a disclosure.

Applications	2022/2023	2023/2024
Right to Ask applications	133	170

Right to know applications	225	272
Total	358	442

Disclosures	2022/2023	2023/2024
Right to Ask disclosures	61	61
Right to know disclosures	100	77
% resulting in a disclosure	45%	31%

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.^x

Cleveland Police provide Operation Encompass disclosures to schools but are unable to break this down into district area and were unable to provide any data relating to this. This continues to be a gap as highlighted in 2021.

MARAC

MARAC is the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meeting where the highest risk cases are heard. Risk is determined via a DASH risk assessment checklist or by using professional judgement that a victim is at serious risk of harm or death and all agencies have a responsibility to refer cases to MARAC where they believe the case is high risk.^{xi}

Local data has been sourced from Cleveland MARAC for the periods April 2021 to March 2024. The table below shows the number of MARAC referrals submitted and the total number of referrals declined for Hartlepool as well as the total number of cases heard and the number of cases that were repeat. A case is listed as a repeat when there is another incident within a 12-month period.

As of March 2025, the screening process for declining referrals has ceased and all cases referred into MARAC will be heard.

	Apr 21 – Mar 22	Apr 22 – Mar 23	Apr 23 – Mar 24
Referrals	205	188	205
Declined	71	65	41*
Total cases heard	134	123	164
Repeats	40 (30%)	47 (38%)	60 (37%)

*Police introduced gatekeeper process, so no referrals declined.

MATAC

Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) is a multi-agency approach to:

- Reduce re-offending of domestic abuse perpetrators
- Safeguarding adults and children at risk of domestic abuse

The RFG(V) is a matrix tool used to identify the most serial and prolific DA offenders based on police data. A formula is used to interrogate police data to gain a “score” out of 100

The matrix looks at:

R – recency of offending

F – frequency of offending

G – gravity of offences

V – number of victims

MATAC looks at a 2 year rolling data set to establish the RFG score. It measures how many times the perpetrator has offended, when the most recent offence was, the number of victims impacted and the gravity of the listed offences.

As the data is monitored, the score can go up or down, the longer the period of no offending the more rapidly the score will reduce, at other times we may see the score increase as there may be increases of offending through the period of time. The rolling data set provides a more dynamic scoring system than the previous static 2-year period.

When an individual is identified as repeat and prolific perpetrator, they will be listed to be heard at the next available MATAC meeting.

When risk is reduced, they will be discharged with police monitoring for 12 months to ensure they are brought back to MATAC if the risk increases.

Local data for Hartlepool is as follows -

	Apr 21 – Mar 22	Apr 22 – Mar 23	Apr 23 – Mar 24
Nominals	9 (1 repeat)	<5	10
Discharged	5	<5	11

Since inception in June 2018, 33 nominals have been heard in MATAC. The average score of a perpetrator on entry into MATAC is 64 with the average score on exit being 43, showing a reduction in offending when using the MATAC approach.

MARAC

The CHUB provide a single point of contact to the MARAC process to information share and record any actions or outcomes. The following table shows the number of cases heard in Hartlepool and the number of children who have been impacted by domestic abuse.

Date	Number of Cases	Number of Children
2023 – 2024	204	443

2022 – 2023	132	268
2021 – 2022	145	345
2020 – 2021	150	321

This shows an increase in the number of cases identified as high-risk year on year as well as an increase of the number of children. On average, there are at least 2 children linked to each MARAC case.

High Risk Adult Panel (HRAP)

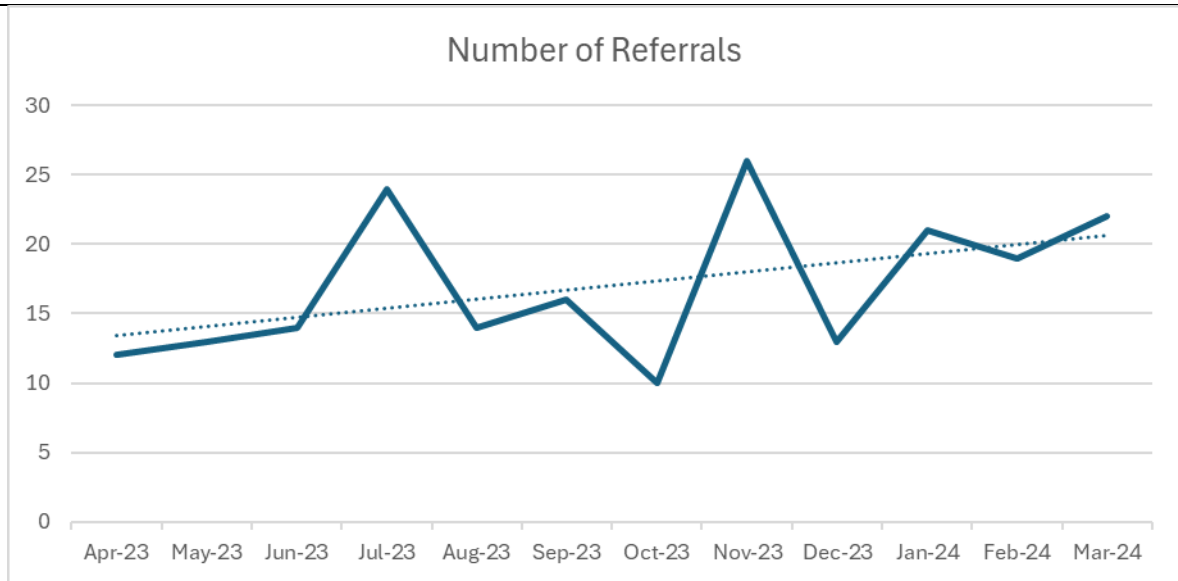
The purpose of the High Risk Adults Panel is to work in collaboration with a core group of multi-agency professionals and extended members to reduce/remove or manage the risk of our most vulnerable individuals who are identified as being complex and at high risk of harm. This includes both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.^{xii} Hartlepool are currently piloting a new process where HRAP cases will be cross-referenced with MARAC and MATAC. In 2023/2024, 20% of cases identified domestic abuse as a risk factor.

Sanctuary Scheme and Target Hardening

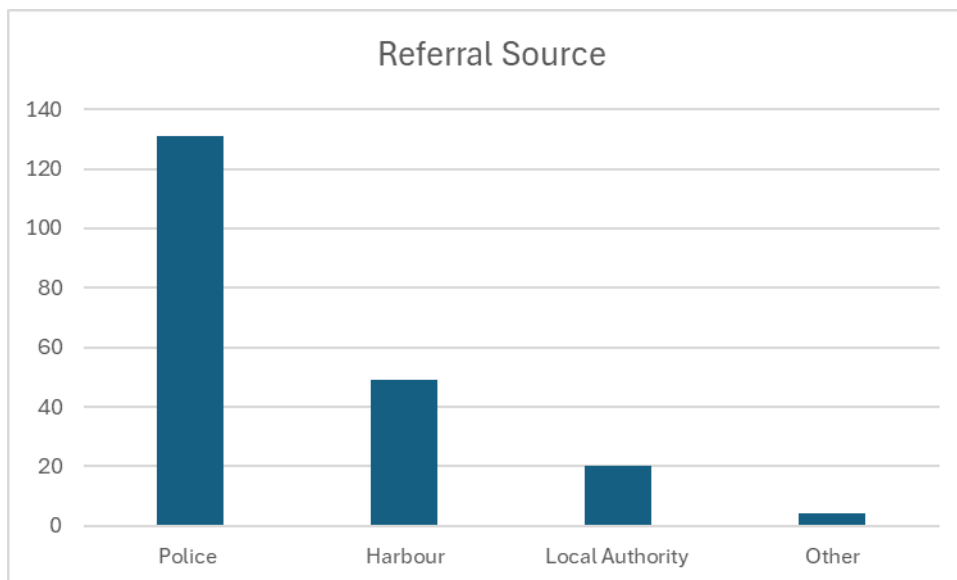
A victim of domestic abuse can access a target hardening service on offer by the Crime Prevention Service in Cleveland Police, in partnership with the Community Safety Team. A crime prevention officer will receive a referral, either by police, Harbour or the local authorities' social services and will book an assessment to consider any additional safety measures on the property. Harbour will also offer support to complete the Sanctuary Scheme, and any additional target hardening measures will be installed. Data was provided by the Crime Prevention Service for the period April 2023 – March 2024. This is the first year that data is available however can be used as a baseline for future needs assessments.

The below table shows the number of referrals between April 2023 – March 2024. This shows an increasing trend over the reporting period.

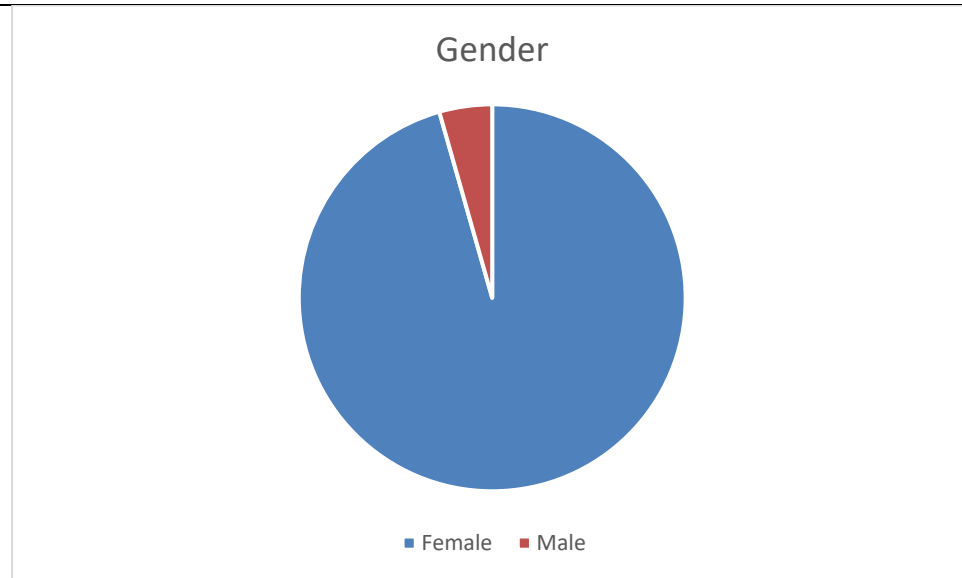
Hartlepool JSNA



The below table shows the police are the highest referring agency in 2023/2024.



The majority (96%) of individuals referred to the service were female.



Of those referred into the service (204), there was a 55% (113) positive outcome of which 54% (61) received full target hardening and the remaining 46% (52) received advice and alarms.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review commissioned by Community Safety Partnerships to establish what lessons are to be learnt from deaths that have, or appears to have, resulted from domestic abuse. Following consultation, Domestic Homicide Reviews will be renamed Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews which will reflect all deaths, including suicide.

The Local Government Association and the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) completed a review survey in 2024.^{xiii} They received 103 responses, covering 182 authorities (57%) which had the following key findings –

- Respondents reported a total of 370 ongoing DHRs currently in their area, as well as 144 open DHRs and 109 pending DHRs.
- Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 the number of DHRs undertaken by respondents increased by 76 per cent from 94 to 165.
- Respondent authorities spent a total of £1.0 million on DHRs in 2022/23, 45 per cent more than the 2021/22 figure. Around three-quarters of expenditure was on DHR chairs.
- On top of expenditure, staff time spent on undertaking and implementing DHRs was equivalent to 82 full-time staff in respondents.

In addition to this, the DAC reviewed all deaths identified by police as domestic abuse related between April 2022 to March 2023.^{xiv} A total of 242 domestic abuse related deaths were recorded including:

- 93 suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse (SVSDA)
- 80 intimate partner homicides (IPH)

- 31 adult family homicides (AFH)
- 23 unexpected deaths
- 11 child deaths
- 4 'other' deaths (individuals living together who are not family members or intimate partners)

The most recent published DHR in Hartlepool is in 2019. Three reviews are currently ongoing.

Themes and lessons learned will be considered in future needs assessments once reviews are concluded, quality assured by the Home Office and published. An action plan accompanies each review from the highlighted learning and recommendations which are monitored via the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.

Harbour Client Data

Harbour is the only commissioned support service within Hartlepool and were re-commissioned in October 2022 to provide an integrated service for both victims and survivors, children and perpetrators of domestic abuse. This includes providing safe accommodation, outreach and targeted support programmes.

Harbour data shows that both overall referrals and individuals referred for support have decreased by 4-5% from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as shown in the table below. Repeat referrals also declined in both number and proportion in 2023/24, down from 13.1% to 10.5%.

Origin of referral	2022/23	2023/24
Referrals	3296	3165
Individuals referred	2372	2266
Repeat	310	239

The table below shows that in 2023/24, less than 50% of referrals to Harbour services came from the police, down from 52.3% in the previous year. Self-referrals, referrals from social services (both child safeguarding and early help) and MARAC all increased their proportion of referrals in 2023/24 and accounted for 35.2% of referrals in 2023/24. In contrast, 4% of referrals were made by health services (GPs, community midwives, hospital, health visitors and mental health services). More than half of the health service referrals came from mental health services, and no referrals came from community midwives or health visitors.

Hartlepool JSNA

Origin of referral	% 2022/23	% 2023/24
Police	52.3	47.9
Self-referral	16.0	16.4
Social Services - Child Safeguarding	7.4	8.7
MARAC	4.1	6.8
Health Visitors	0.2	0.0
Other	3.5	2.8
Mental Health Service	2.3	2.7
Social Services - Adult Safeguarding	1.9	1.0
Social Services - Early Help	2.2	3.3
Court	2.2	1.6
Housing Provider	1.8	2.0
Hospital	1.3	1.0
Other DV Service	1.2	1.9
School/ college	0.8	0.6
Other LA	0.5	0.3
Probation	0.5	0.5
Community Midwives	0.3	0.0
SARC	0.3	0.0
Drug/ Alcohol Service	0.2	0.5
Family / Friend	0.3	0.3
Homeless Team (other area)	0.5	0.6
GP Practice	0.1	0.3
Homeless Team (local)	0.0	0.4
Victim Support	0.0	0.1
IOM	0.0	0.0
Unknown	0.0	0.0

Demographic Breakdown of Harbour Referral Data

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2022/23		2023/24		% Hartlepool Population (2021 Census)
	Count	%	Count	%	
White	1233	97.1	1070	95.2	96.5
Black, Caribbean or Black British	<5	suppressed	13	1.2	0.5
Asian or Asian British	24	1.9	21	1.9	1.7
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicities	5	0.4	12	1.1	0.7
Other Ethnic Group - Other	6	0.5	8	0.7	0.6
Undisclosed	129	N/A	135	N/A	N/A
Unrecorded	973	N/A	1007	N/A	N/A

The table above shows the proportion of referrals from each of the main ethnic groups adjusted to remove undisclosed and unrecorded from the calculation. The Harbour categories have been grouped to fit against the ethnic group list used in the 2021 Census question on ethnicity to enable comparison.

The data shows that the proportion of referrals to Harbour support services that were white has reduced by 13% compared to 2022/23. This is due to a proportional increase in all other categories except Asian or Asian British. This probably reflects the changing population of Hartlepool, which is becoming more diverse in recent years.

Sex

Sex	2022/23		2023/24	
	Count	%	Count	%
Male	436	18.6	451	20.0
Female	1910	81.3	1799	79.8
Transgender	<5	<1	<5	<1
Unrecorded	24	N/A	13	N/A

The table above shows that the proportion of referrals for male victims of domestic abuse increased by 3% compared to 2022/23.

Of these, the data provided to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) shows that in 2023/2024, 88 women accessed safe accommodation in Hartlepool which is the same as 2022/2023. No men accessed safe accommodation during this time. One trans person accessed safe accommodation in 2023/2024. The number of children decreased to 36 in 2023/2024 from 63 in 2022/2023. This could be attributed to changes in the recording of data.

Sexual Orientation

	2022/23		2023/24		
Sexual Orientation	Count	%	Count	%	% Hartlepool Population (2021 Census)
Heterosexual	710	89.2	649	90.1	91.1
Lesbian / gay	7	0.9	10	1.4	1.5
Bi-sexual	11	1.4	13	1.8	1.1
Other	68	8.5	48	6.7	0.2
Undisclosed	102	N/A	123	N/A	N/A
No data	1456	N/A	1423	N/A	N/A

The table above shows a 9% reduction in the number of clients that disclosed their sexual orientation as heterosexual. However, because there was a smaller cohort in 2023/24 this has resulted in heterosexual making up a slightly larger proportion of the total referrals.

Whilst there were small increases in the proportion of referrals for lesbian/gay and bisexual clients, there was a 29% reduction in those selecting the “other” option. However, due to the low numbers involved, these changes should not be considered significant.

Age

	2022/23		2023/24		
Age	Count	%	Count	%	% Hartlepool Population (2023 MYE)
Under 16	238	10.4	255	11.6	18.9
16-18	61	2.7	56	2.5	3.7
19-25	363	15.9	329	14.9	7.6
26-35	723	31.6	665	30.2	12.5
36-44	497	21.7	481	21.8	10.8
45-54	232	10.1	232	10.5	11.8
55-64	113	4.9	115	5.2	14.6
65+	59	2.6	69	3.1	19.9
Unrecorded	86	N/A	64	N/A	N/A

The table above shows referral data broken down by age bracket. As the age brackets cover different ranges, caution should be used when comparing different brackets that are not the same size. To find the comparable local population data, single year figures from the 2023 mid-year estimates have been compiled into matching brackets.

The table shows a 7% increase in referrals for under 16s compared to 2022/23. However, there was a reduction in the proportion of referrals for clients aged 19-25 (-9%), 26-35 (-8%)

and 36-44 (-3%). However, these three age bands continue to be the largest categories of referrals and are considerably over-represented compared to the local Hartlepool population.

Disability

	2022/23		2023/24		
Disability	Count	%	Count	%	% Hartlepool Population (2021 Census)
Yes	138	20.0	131	16.0	22.9*
No	551	80.0	688	84.0	77.1
Unrecorded	1683	N/A	1447	N/A	N/A

* This figure is a combination of the “limited a little” and “limited a lot” answer options to the question “If you have a long-term illness or condition, does this limit your day-to-day activities?”

The table shows that the proportion of those who said their daily activities were limited by a health condition or disability reduced slightly compared to 2022/23 and remains lower than the general population of Hartlepool. More detailed disability data would be useful to understand the types of disabilities experienced by people being referred. This would enable better understanding of what barriers exist for people with disabilities in accessing support services.

Tenure

	2022/23		2023/24	
Tenure	Count	%	Count	%
Local RSL	211	32.7	200	32.3
Other RSL	26	4.0	14	2.3
Private rented	177	27.4	198	31.9
Owner occupier	49	7.6	35	5.6
Family / friends	104	16.1	99	16.0
Other	79	12.2	74	11.9
Unrecorded	1726	N/A	1646	N/A

The categories recorded for tenure in the 2021 Census are not a direct match for the categories used in the client data so comparison against the local population is not possible for this characteristic.

The table above shows that living in registered social housing or private rented accommodation continues to be the most common tenure of people referred to Harbour support services. The number of clients living in private rented accommodation increased by 12% compared to 2022/23, whilst the number of owner occupiers reduced by 29%. This probably reflects changes in the local housing market over the period.

Safe Accommodation

Referrals

Harbour data shows that the number of overall referrals for safe accommodation has decreased by 12% from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as shown in the table below. However, for the number of individuals referred, this is only a 0.9% decrease. This shows that whilst the number of referrals is decreasing, roughly the same number of people are being referred to the service. There are very few repeat referrals across both years.

Origin of referral	2022/23	2023/24
Referrals	372	326
Individuals referred	323	320
Repeat	8	3

The data also shows that the average stay in refuge accommodation increased by one third from 76 days to 100 days over the same period. If clients are staying in refuge longer this reduces the overall availability of accommodation at a time when demand is increasing.

% of referrals unable to accommodate	2022/23	2023/24
No Space	86.7	81.9
Room not big enough	0.6	0.8
Complex Needs	4.2	9.8
No recourse	0.0	0.0
Other	8.5	7.5
Total	100	100

Complex Needs

The data also shows that the proportion of referrals to refuge which were turned down due to the victims having complex needs that could not be accommodated more than doubled from 4.2% in 2022/23 to 9.8% in 2023/24, almost 1 in 10 of referrals in 2023/24. However, some clients with complex needs were accepted into refuge. A lack of space fell from 86.7% in 2022/23 to 81.9 in 2023/24, which is still 4 in 5 occasions when a referral was unable to be accommodated.

The following table shows that in 2023/24 the proportion of clients accommodated with some degree of mental health or substance issues increased across the board on their 2022/23 levels. The proportion of clients with drug misuse issues increased more than fourfold, from 9% to 40%, and alcohol misuse issues increased sevenfold, from 3% to 21%. Almost half of new clients accommodated in 2023/24 had mental health issues and 2 in 5 had co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues.

New Clients Accommodated	2022/23	2023/24
% clients who have drug misuse issues	9%	40%
% clients who have alcohol misuse issues	3%	21%
% clients who have mental health (MH) issues	33%	47%
% clients who have substance misuse and MH issues	23%	40%

Abuse from Partner / Ex Partner

The overwhelming majority of clients accepted into refuge were experiencing abuse from an intimate partner or ex-partner rather than from a family member. However, in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 the proportion of clients experiencing abuse from a previous partner was higher than from a current partner, though in 2023/24 the proportion experiencing abuse from a current partner was around 1 in 3, compared with 1 in 4 in 2022/23.

New Clients Accommodated	2022/23	2023/24
% clients who are subject to abuse by an intimate partner	27%	39%
% clients who are subject to abuse by an ex-intimate partner	67%	56%
% clients who are subject to abuse by a family member (minor)	0%	0%
% clients who are subject to abuse by a family member (adult)	4%	6%

Clients' Children

Harbour's refuge client data also shows that the number of clients accepted into refuge with children has almost halved in 2023/24, from 60% to 33%, largely because of this there has also been a sharp decline in the proportion of children with early help, child protection, or looked after care, though child in need increased fivefold, from 2% to 10%. Pregnant clients increased by 50% in 2023/24 compared with 2022/23, from 8% to 12%.

New Clients Accommodated	2022/23	2023/24
% clients with children in Refuge	60%	33%
% clients who are pregnant	8%	12%
% clients with children engaged with Early Help	2%	0%
% clients with children subject to Child Protection	47%	14%
% clients with children subject to Child in Need	2%	10%
% clients with children in Looked After Care	16%	19%

In comparison, Harbour's client data for those who accessed dispersed property shows that the percentage of clients with children increased. In 2022/2023, none of the children residing in a dispersed property had intervention from children's social care however in 2023/2024 21% of the children were open on a Child Protection basis.

	2022/23	2023/24
Safe Accommodation Measures - Dispersed Property	Total	Total
% clients with children	33%	44%
Number of children linked to the client	<5	15
% clients who are pregnant	0%	25%
% children engaged with Early Help	0%	0%
% children subject to Child Protection	0%	21%
% children subject to Child in Need	0%	0%
% children in Looked After Care	0%	0%

Clients with a Disability

In terms of those clients accommodated in refuge who have a disability, in 2023/24 there were almost three times as many clients with a physical disability than the previous year (15% and 4% respectively). At the same time, the proportion of clients with a learning disability increased by 50%, from 4% to 6%.

In 2023/24 more than twice as many new clients had a physical disability than a learning disability, while in 2022/23 they were at the same level. In both 2022/23 and 2023/24 there were no clients who were providing care of a friend or relative.

New Clients Accommodated	2022/23	2023/24
% clients who have a physical disability	4%	15%
% clients who have a learning disability	4%	6%
% clients who have a sensory impairment	0%	1%
% clients who care for a friend or relative	0%	0%

The data provided to the MHCLG shows that the number of individuals from an ethnic minority has doubled to 16 in 2023/2024. The number of individuals from the LGBTQ+ community has remained the same at 2 in 2023/2024.

The data provided to the MHCLG shows that in 2023/2024 the number of individuals supported from out of area was 64 which is 51.2% of all individuals who have accessed safe accommodation. This is an increase from 21.2% in the previous year.

Domestic Abuse Prevention Service (DAPS)

Referrals

Harbour data shows that in 2023/24 14% of referrals to the Domestic Abuse Prevention Service (DAPS), which works with perpetrators, were repeat referrals, compared to only 9% in 2022/23, an increase of more than 50%.

Origin of referral	2022/23	2023/24
Social Services - Child Safeguarding	33.3	52.3
Self-referral	28.0	25.7
Police	17.2	8.3
Social Services - Early Help	6.5	6.4
Other	5.4	1.8
Probation	4.3	4.6
Drug / alcohol service	1.1	0.0
Mental Health Service	1.1	0.0
SARC	1.1	0.0
Social Services - Adult Safeguarding	1.1	0.0
MARAC	0.0	0.0
Court	0.0	0.0
School/ College	0.0	0.0
Hospital	1.1	0.0
Other DV service	0.0	0.9

The table above also shows that referrals to DAPS in 2023/24 continue to be predominantly made by social services (child safeguarding) (52.3%) and self-referrals (25.7%). If all forms of social services are included, then referrals from self or social services account for 84.4% of referral in 2023/24, compared with only 68.9% in 2022/23. Referrals from the criminal justice system (i.e. police, probation and court) only make up 12.9% of referrals in 2023/24, this is down from 21.5% in 2022/23. In both years the courts did not make any referrals at all. Police referrals fell from 17.2% in 2022/23 to 8.3% in 2023/24, a fall of more than 50%. As most abuse meted out by perpetrators forms a criminal offence of one kind or another it is surprising that so few perpetrator referrals are being made by the criminal justice system.

In both 2022/23 and 2023/24 roughly half of referrals were assessed, but the proportion of those who were assessed and deemed not appropriate for the service fell from 17% in 2022/23 to 9% in 2023/24. In both years the majority of those deemed not appropriate were due to denying the abuse.

Clients with Children

Of those who were accepted onto the DAPS program in 2023/24 roughly four in five have children, compared with 2 in 3 in 2022/23. In both years roughly a third had child protection needs, but in 2023/24 a third had child in need, compared with only 1 in 10 in 2022/23.

Clients Assessed	2022/23	2023/24
% clients with children	66%	82%
% clients with children engaged with Early Help	0%	5%
% clients with children subject to Child Protection	34%	29%
% clients with children subject to Child in Need	11%	31%
% clients with children in Looked After Care	10%	9%

Children and Young People's Service

Harbour offers a therapeutic service for children and young people impacted by domestic abuse. The number of referrals has increased by 9% from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024. However, there has been a slight decrease in the number of individuals referred meaning that the average number of referrals per individual has increased.

The below table shows that of those children referred, there has been a decrease in the number of children assessed with 53% of referrals completing an assessment in 2023/2024, compared to 64% in the previous year. Although the safe accommodation data shows a decrease in the levels of involvement from children's social care, there is an increase overall in children receiving support from Early Help or subject to Child in Need and Child Protection at assessment stage.

	2022/23	2023/24
Children and Young People Measures	Total	Total
Number of Referrals into the service	275	301
Number of CYP referred	265	255
Repeat	18	22
New Clients Assessed		
Number of new clients assessed	177	160
% clients engaged with Early Help	2%	8%
% clients subject to Child Protection	12%	21%
% clients subject to Child in Need	15%	23%
% clients in Looked After Care	3%	1%
% clients who have a physical disability	2%	1%
% clients who have a learning disability	7%	3%
% clients who have a sensory impairment	3%	0%
% clients who care for a friend or relative	1%	0%
Number of cases closed in a planned way	96	69
Number of cases closed in an unplanned way	32	32

Children and Young People's Services Outcomes

For those case closed in 2023/2024, 68% were planned, compared to 75% in 2022/2023. The most common reason is the client disengaging from the service (81%).

In terms of outcomes for those exit surveys completed with planned closures, there has been an increase in the percentage of the number of children and young people feeling safer and happier following their support from Harbour.

	2022/23	2023/24
Safe Lives Insights Report CYP	Total	Total
Number of CYP feeling safer at exit (planned closures)	77%	79%
Number of CYP feeling happier at exit (planned closures)	77%	80%

The Halo Project

The Halo Project provides safeguarding and on-going confidential advice, help and support to black and minoritised women, girls and children who are at risk of and/or are survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, including forced marriage, honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation. They are based in Middlesbrough but offer support to individuals who reside in all four local authority areas within Cleveland. Halo were unable to provide local data however have stated the organisation have seen a 13% increase in cases for Hartlepool year on year. Local data for 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 can be viewed in the 2021 needs assessment.

Children's Social Care

Hartlepool Children's Hub (CHUB) is a multi-agency team based within Hartlepool Borough Council which provides information, advice and guidance on services and support for children, young people and families. The CHUB also acts as a triage service for

professionals and members of the public to report child safeguarding concerns. Hartlepool Council also commissions an emergency out of hours response to emergency situations involving child protection, childcare, mental health and other adult care service matters.

Referrals to the CHUB are generally made using a SAFER referral form and the process for how these referrals are processed is shown below:

1. SAFER referral received by CHUB – have 24 hours to decide on a course of action and inform the referrer, unless it is a Child Protection issue where the referral must be processed within 4 hours
2. Referral triaged, RAG rated and allocated to social worker
3. Four possible options:
 - a. No further action (does not meet the threshold for intervention)
 - b. Refer the child to Early Help
 - c. Refer to another agency (in a domestic abuse context this would be Harbour or Halo)
 - d. Make a formal statutory social care referral:
 - i. Child in Need (CIN) – consent-based intervention
 - ii. Child Protection (CP) – child in imminent danger of harm, consent not needed (though still try to obtain consent where appropriate)

In terms of domestic abuse-related child safeguarding referrals to the CHUB, most referrals are made by the police at 73%. This is an increase compared to the previous needs assessment in which 48% of referrals were made by police.

Between 1st March 2021 and 31st March 2024, local data shows there was a total of 1875 contacts to the CHUB. This equates to:

- 1330 individual children
- 492 of the contacts related to only 1 child (some have had more than 1 contact)
- 517 contacts related to sibling groups.
- 1022 children had only 1 contact with 308 children having 2 or more contacts.
- Of the 556 referrals, 539 had an outcome of C & F Assessment, 2 were NFA, 11 had an outcome of Strategy and 4 had no outcome recorded.

Source of Referrals

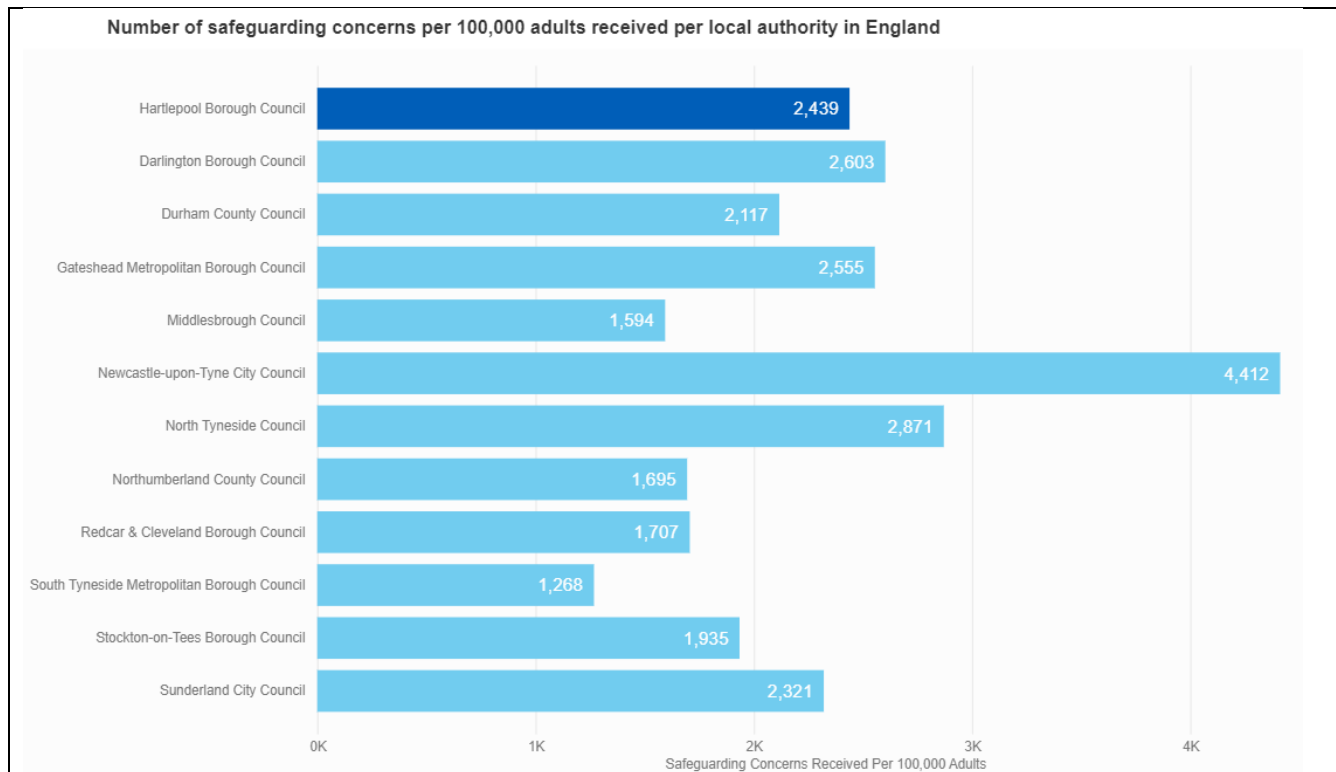
- 73% of referrals come from police
- 3.9% of referrals come from probation
- 3.41% of referrals come from a relative
- 2.13% of referrals come from HBC children's social workers

The remaining referrals are made by healthcare providers, adult social care, education settings or anonymous referrals.

Adult Social Care

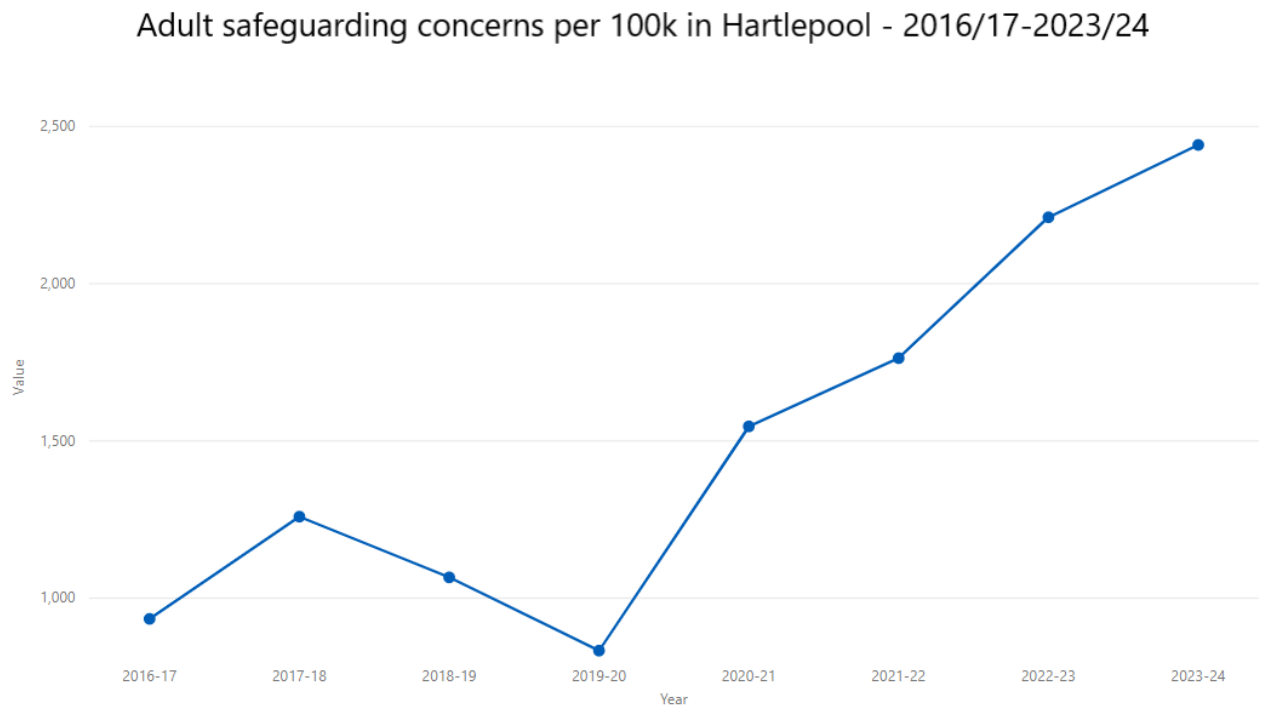
The rate of enquiries in Hartlepool for adult safeguarding in 2023/24 is almost 80% larger than the England rate of 1,361 per 100k.

Hartlepool JSNA



Source: NHS England, 2024^{xv}

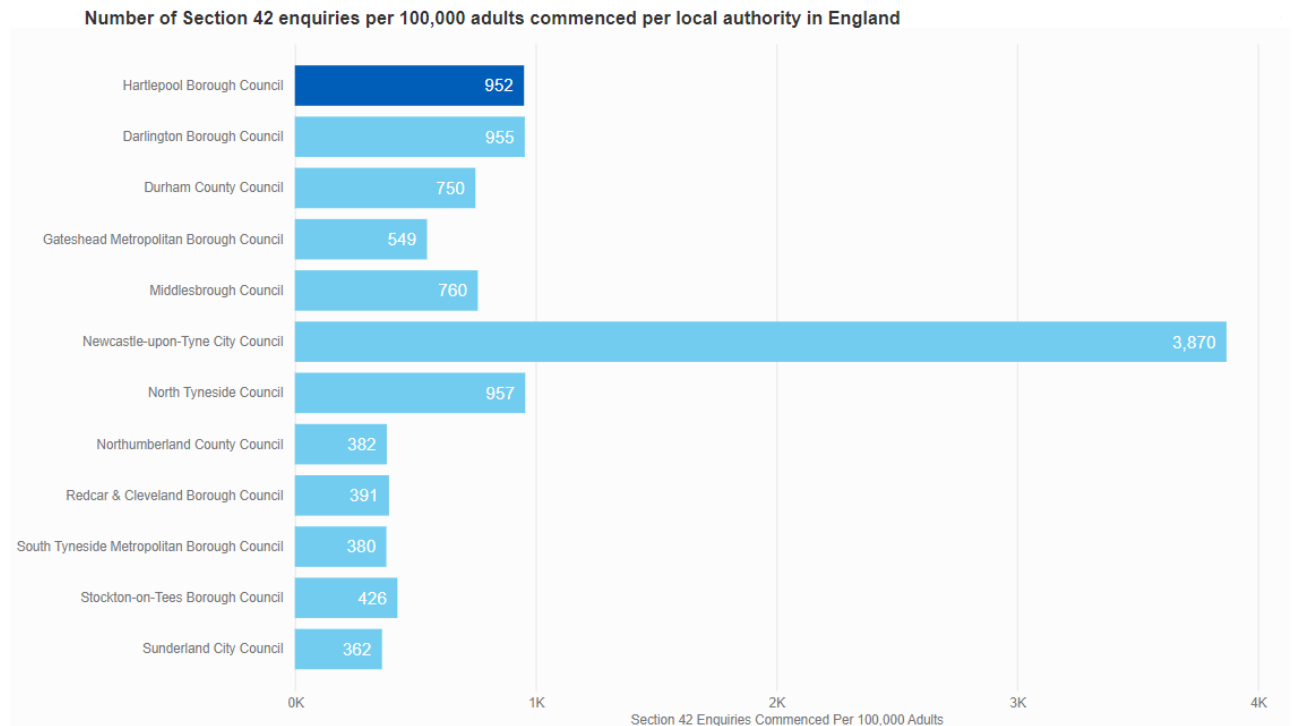
Hartlepool's rate of 2,439 per 100k is the 5th highest in the North East, comparable with the rates for Darlington, Gateshead and Sunderland. Hartlepool's 2023/24 rate is the 4th consecutive year of increase, from 841 per 100k in 2019/20, almost a threefold increase in four years.



Source: NHS England, 2024

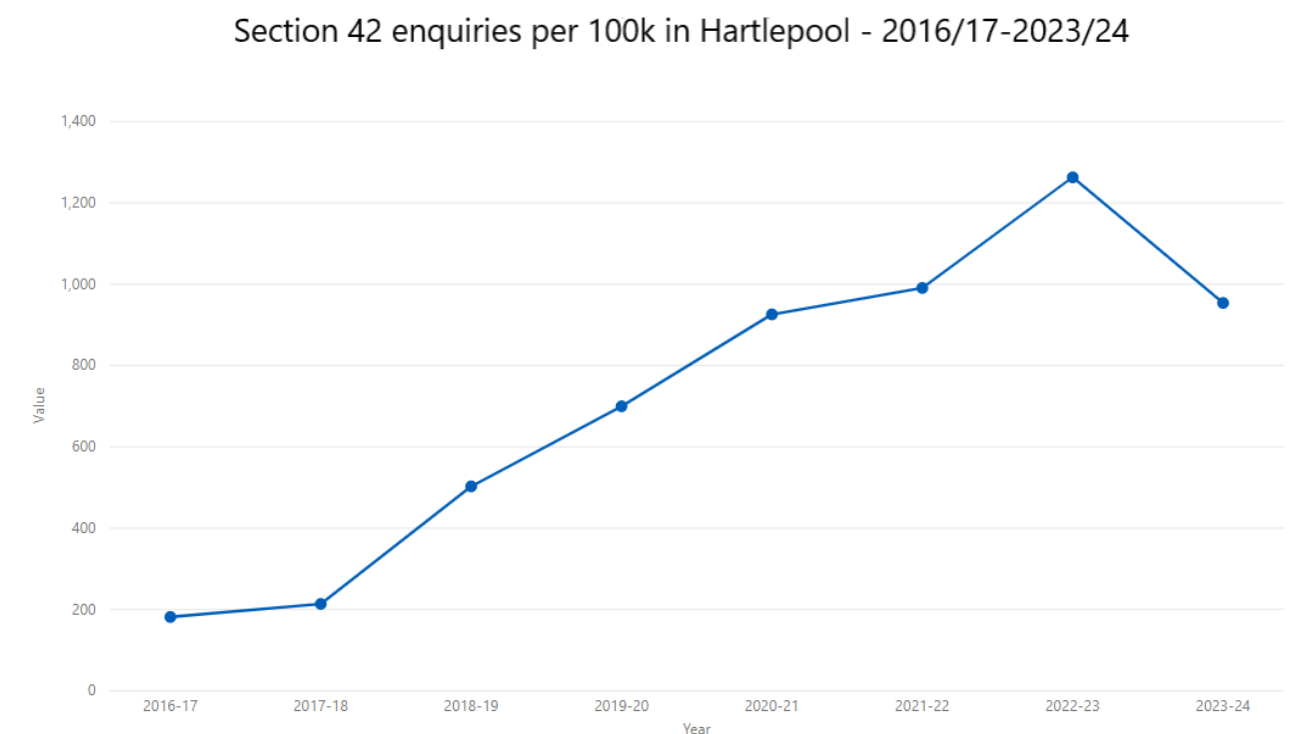
Hartlepool JSNA

Within those safeguarding enquiries, the rate of Section 42 enquiries in Hartlepool is almost 2.5 times the size of the England rate of 390 per 100k.



Source: NHS England, 2024

Hartlepool's rate of 952 per 100k is the 4th highest in the north east, and is comparable to Darlington and North Tyneside. Hartlepool's 2023/24 rate is lower than the 2022/23 rate, and ends a run of five consecutive years of increase. The 2023/24 rate is almost 25% lower than the previous year.

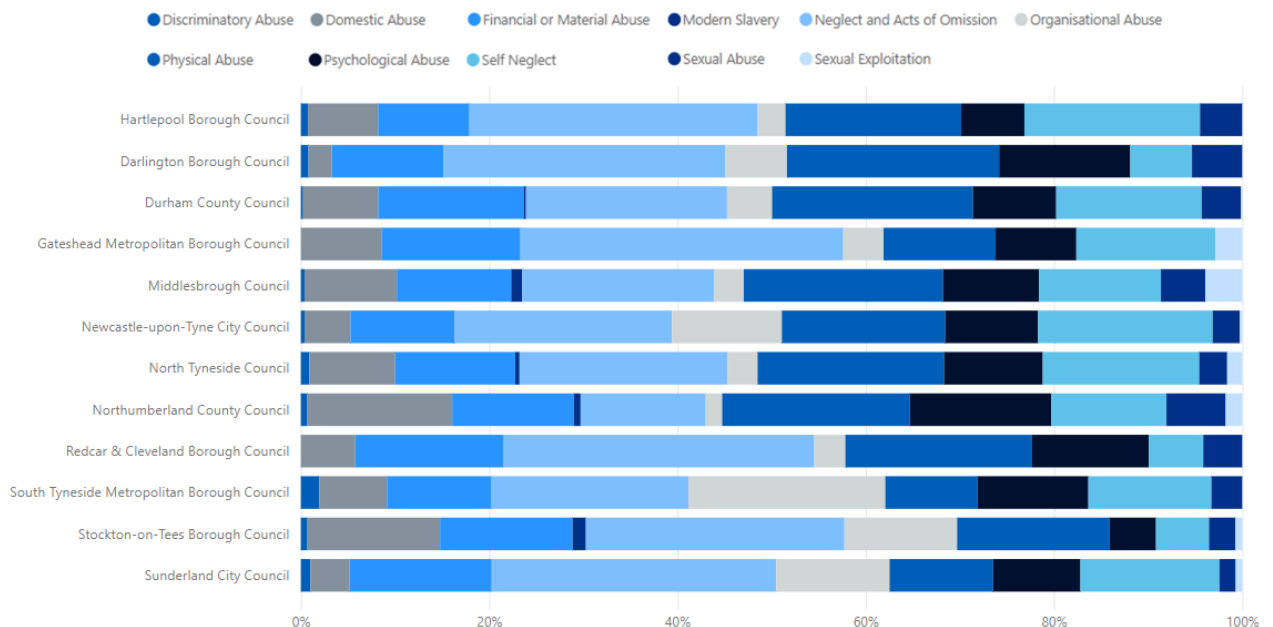


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Source: NHS England, 2024

Within Hartlepool's 2023/24 Section 42 enquiries domestic abuse was recorded as a risk 7.5% of the time.

Proportions of type of risk for Section 42 enquiries that concluded in England

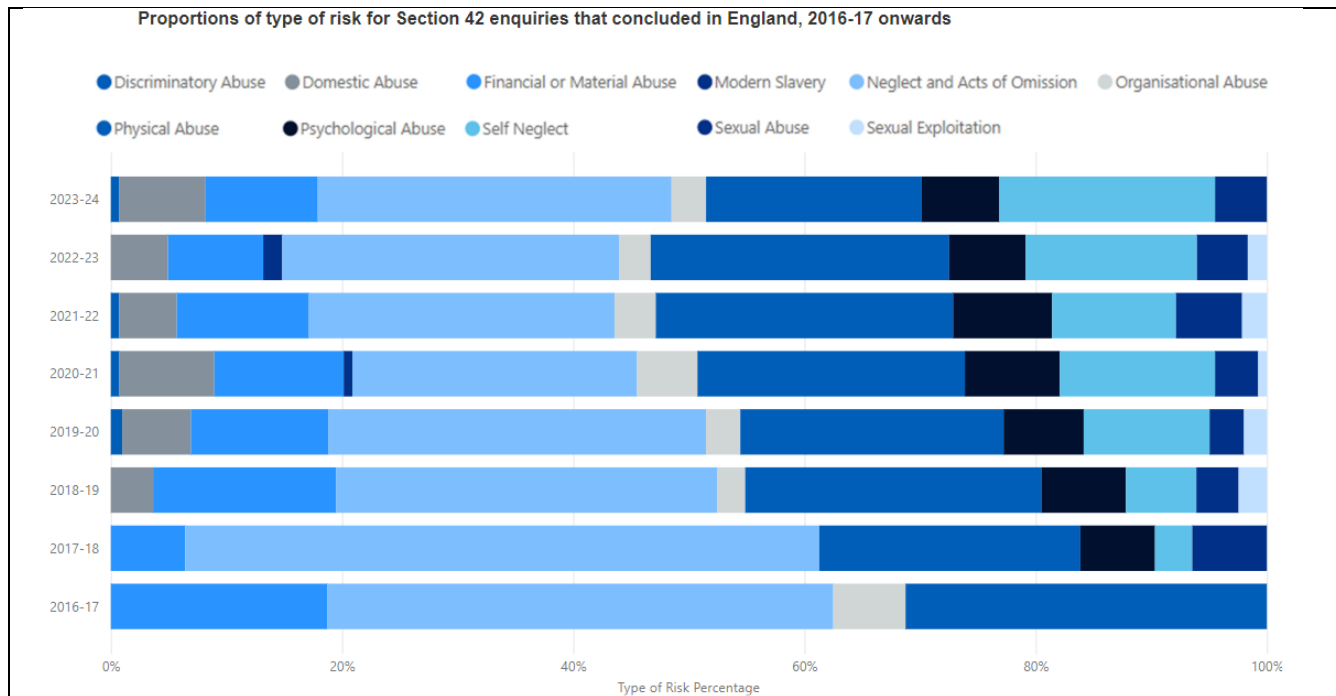


Source: NHS England, 2024

Hartlepool's proportion of 7.5% of section 42 enquiries relating to domestic abuse is the 7th highest in the north east, comparable to the rates for Durham and South Tyneside. The proportion of section 42 enquires relating to domestic abuse is the 5th largest risk group in Hartlepool.

The proportion of Hartlepool's section 42 enquiries relating to domestic abuse is at its highest level since 2020/21.

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Source: NHS England, 2024

The rate in 2020/21 of 8.21% is the only year in the eight-year reporting period where it is higher than the 2023/24 rate. 2023/24 ended a two-year reduction in the proportion relating to domestic abuse.

It is recognised that the type of abuse recorded from an adult safeguarding referral, is that which the referring agency deems the most suitable. This means that domestic abuse is likely to be under-recorded where there is more than one type of abuse being perpetrated towards an individual, or a professional is recording based on the type of abuse eg) physical or financial. As of April 2025, sub-categories have been introduced for domestic abuse.

The below table shows the number of adult safeguarding concerns and section 42 enquiries during the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.

Quarter & Year (Fiscal)	Concerns	S42 Enquiries
Q1 2023/24	450	196
Q2 2023/24	503	218
Q3 2023/24	451	159
Q4 2023/24	457	166
Total	1861	739

Of these, referrals, 105 concerns were identified by the referrer as domestic abuse, 11 of which were a repeat referral within the previous 12 month period.

Hartlepool JSNA

Quarter & Year (Fiscal)	Concerns	S42 Enquiries
Q1 2023/24	24	13
Q2 2023/24	22	12
Q3 2023/24	30	16
Q4 2023/24	29	11
Total	105	52

Of the 105 referrals, 81 were female and 24 were male.

The age breakdown of the referrals is shown below -

Age Group	Female No Safeguarding	Male No Safeguarding
18-64	57	16
65+	24	8

In terms of the outcomes following a Section 42 safeguarding referral, over half were recorded as either “Managing own risk” (19.2%) or “Inappropriate concern” (17.5%).

Outcome	Number of Cases
Action by provider	1
Advice and Guidance	3
Further concerns Raised	6
Inappropriate Concern	9
Managing own Risk	10
Moved	1
Non engagement	1
Other	7
Police Action	6
Referral for assessment required	3
Referred to other services including Harbour etc	3
Review required via Care Management	2

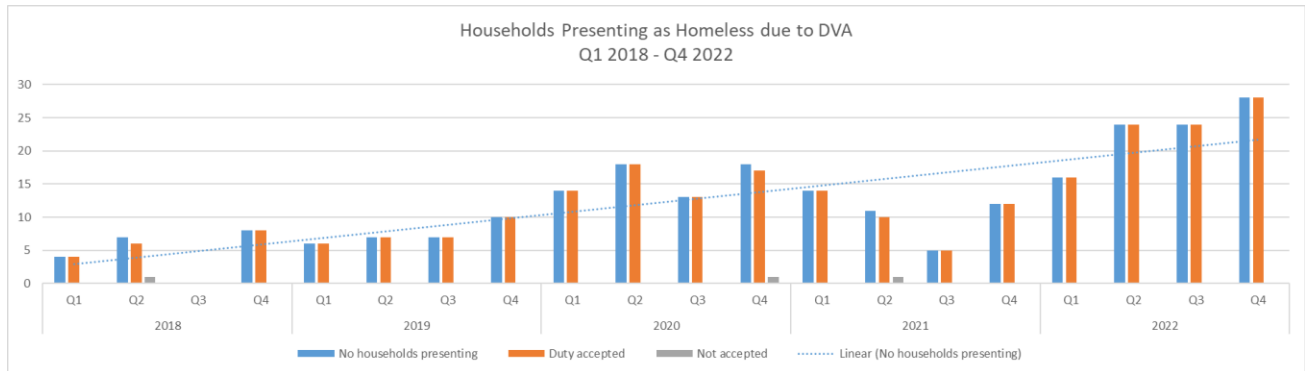
Homelessness Data

The housing advice team have provided data around homeless relating to domestic violence and abuse in Hartlepool. They have adopted a new system as of June 2023; therefore, data has only been included up to March 2023. Going forward, trends will continue to be monitored on a yearly basis.

Presentations

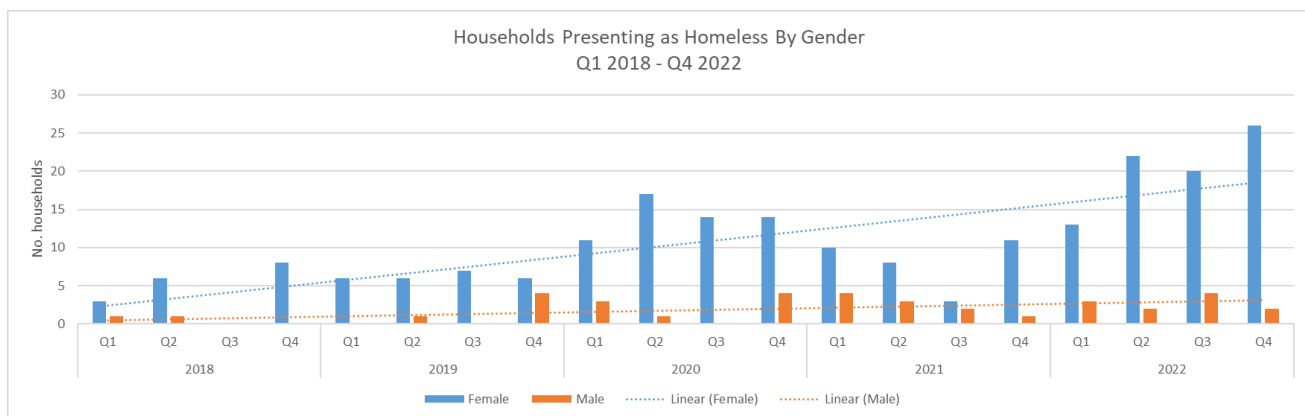
Data provided by the council’s housing advice team shows that from the period April 2018 to September 2020 that was previously provided, the number of households presenting due to domestic violence and abuse is increasing as shown up to March 2023. The increase shown in the year 2022-2023 could be following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act and the updated guidance on responding to domestic abuse in homelessness. It is also worth considering the impact post-covid may have had on presentations.

A relief or prevention duty was accepted in most cases. In the two cases where a duty was not accepted, one had advice or guidance given and the other household withdrew their application.

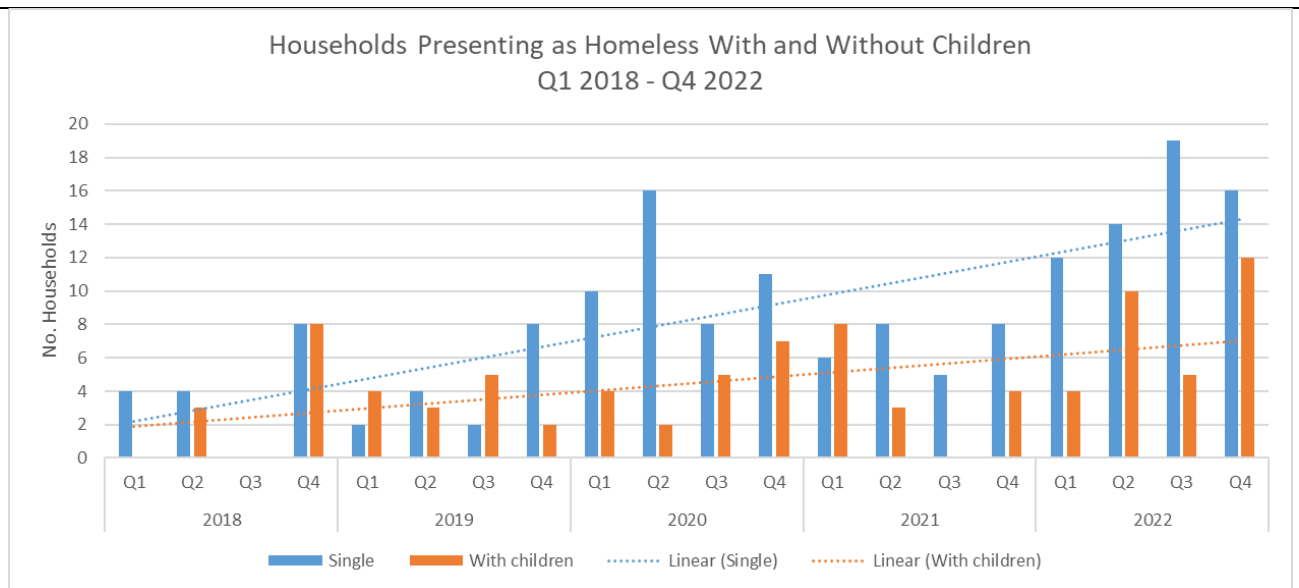


In terms of gender, most individuals presenting as homeless are female (211). In September 2020, 84% of the individuals were female. However as of March 2023 this has increased to 95%. The number of males presenting is the same (11).

The trendlines on the below chart show that the number of female presentations is increasing quite steeply over the reporting period, reflecting the overall increase in presentations. Male presentations are also showing an increasing trend but at a slower rate. However, this is something to be considered as to whether there are fewer safe accommodation options available for men.



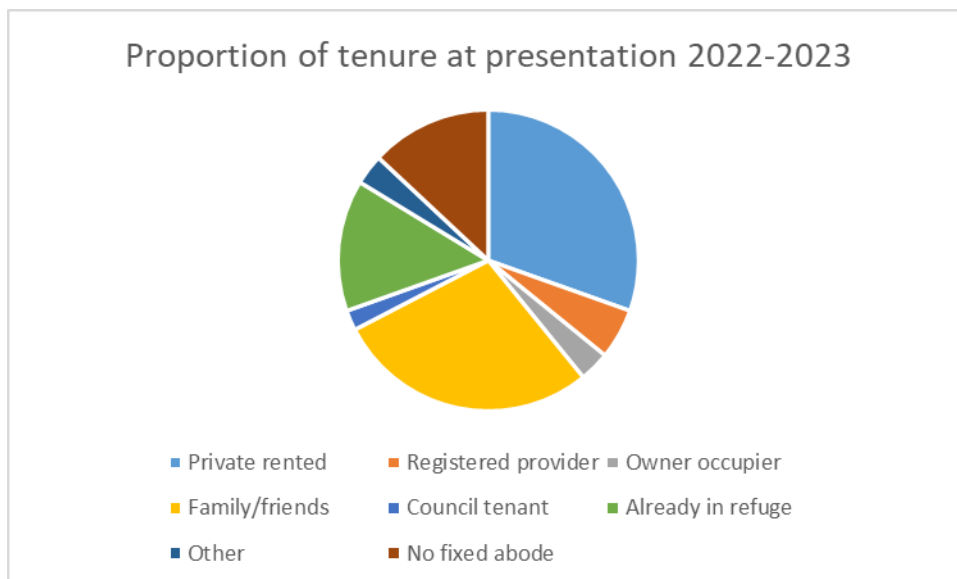
The number of single households continues to show an increasing trend from 2018 to 2023; however, this has slowed slightly since the last reporting period. Whilst both single households and households with children are increasing, single households requiring homeless assistance is increasing at a faster rate.



Tenure

The data also shows the tenure of people presenting as homeless as well as the tenure of the accommodation they go on to after support. The chart shows that that the most common tenure for individuals presenting due to domestic abuse was those living in private rented accommodation (30%).

The proportion of clients who were either staying with family and friends or already in refuge at presentation has increased from 12% in 2020 to 42% in 2023. This suggests that they had already been homeless for some time before presenting to Council homelessness services for assistance. It is likely they could be fleeing to family and friends in the first instance, before approaching services for formal assistance.



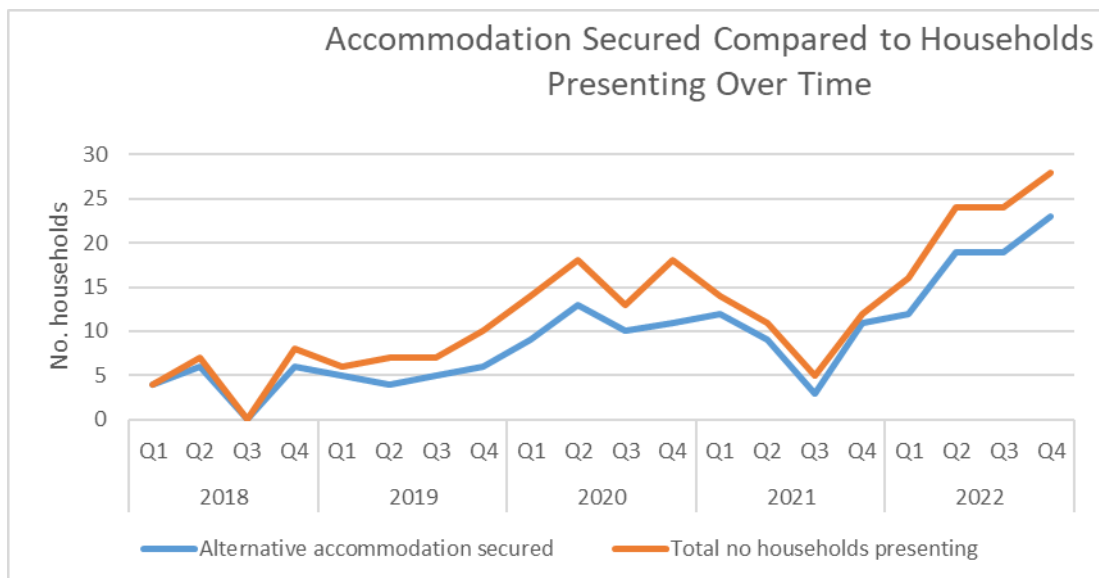
The low proportion of owner occupiers presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse reflects the further difficulty of leaving for survivors who are property owners. Particularly as owner occupiers represent the largest proportion of households in Hartlepool.

Outcomes

Of the 246 households that presented as homeless during the reporting period, 187 (76%) had accommodation secured. This was either by obtaining a private rented tenancy, registered provider or council tenancy or other social rented supported accommodation. Over half (59%) of individuals who received support from the housing advice team were supported to access registered provider tenancies.

Of those who didn't secure alternative accommodation, 8 stayed with family or friends, 6 were supported to remain safe in their accommodation and the remaining cases were withdrawn or contact lost with the service.

This suggests that the homelessness team have been successful in securing longer-term accommodation for clients presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse in most cases as shown in the chart below.



Hartlepool Borough Council moved to a new choice-based lettings system for social housing on the 17th April 2023, Hartlepool Home Search and subsequently left the Tees Valley Home Finder partnership. From April 2023 – March 2024, 174 housing register applications selected domestic abuse as their main reason for moving. Of these, 32 were awarded a Band 1 priority to move due to domestic abuse.

Health data

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust^{xvi} provides care and treatment for people with mental health and learning disability needs in Hartlepool. They did not have any available data to provide to the needs assessment due to a system change. This is a gap in assessing the needs of victims and survivors, perpetrators and their children who access mental health services.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust^{xvii} have an IDVA co-located within their trust, funded by the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland. They will

provide advice and support to patients disclosing domestic abuse. This role is trust wide and therefore it is unable to breakdown which patients were of Hartlepool residence. However, the IDVA completed 162 total interventions in year 2023/2024 in comparison to 115 interventions in year 2022/2023 which is a 41% increase. This can partly be accounted by a dip in interventions during the first quarter of 2022/2023 due to staff sickness. In 2023/2024 most interventions were providing safety planning and advice. However, this funding is due to cease in March 2026.

Data provided by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust shows there were 89 safeguarding concerns where domestic abuse was a category in 2023/2024 compared to 73 in 2022/2023. This is a 22% increase. However, due to the way the data is recorded this for all presentations to the trust and is unable to be broken down to Hartlepool residents.

Cardiff Model data previously provided in 2021 is no longer available.

Conclusion

Whilst the data shows that domestic abuse continues to be primarily a gender-based crime, perpetrated by men against women, this oversimplifies the situation somewhat. Demographic analysis of the services reviewed in this section shows that some groups are overrepresented in the client / referral data compared to other groups within that same demographic characteristic (e.g. age bracket) or compared to the local Hartlepool population. Additionally, whilst the numbers for some groups remain low, they are making up an increasingly significant proportion of service users.

Based on the evidence reviewed in this section, the following groups are overrepresented in the client data:

- Women – make up 79.8% of referrals to Harbour support services, 95% of homeless presentations due to domestic abuse and 71% of adult safeguarding referrals related to domestic abuse yet just 51.6% of the Hartlepool population
- People aged 19-44 – make up 66.9% of Harbour referrals yet just 30.9% of the Hartlepool population
- People living in social housing or private rented accommodation - make up 66.5% of Harbour referrals compared to 41% of the Hartlepool population
- People who are already homeless (particularly women and single households) – make up 42% of referrals to the Council's homelessness team

In terms of groups where total numbers remain low but they are representing an increasing proportion of the demographic makeup of referrals:

- Ethnic minorities make up a small proportion of referrals to Harbour but this proportion is increasing and is slightly higher than the local population for all minority groups
 - Black, Caribbean or Black British - 1.2% of referrals / 0.5% local population
 - Asian or Asian British – 1.9% of referrals / 1.7% of local population
 - Mixed or multiple ethnicities – 1.1% of referrals / 0.7% of local population
 - Other ethnicity – 0.7% of referrals or 0.6% of local population

- Males make up an increasing proportion of Harbour referrals. They currently make up 20% of referrals (increased from 18.6%) compared to 48.4% of the local population

Particular groups also make up an increasing proportion of the Safe Accommodation referrals:

- People with complex needs who cannot be admitted into refuge accommodation (increased from 4.2% to 9.8%)
- Women who are pregnant at the time of referral (increased from 8% to 12%)
- People with a disability (increased from 4% to 15%)
- People with mental health issues (increased from 33% to 47%)

Future analysis will show if these trends continue over the longer term. However, in the meantime, consideration needs to be given to how the differing (and intersecting) needs of these groups can be accommodated by services.

4. Which population groups are at risk and why?

Whilst national and local data shows that women are most at risk of domestic abuse, unfortunately the lack of demographic data and underreporting means that there may be groups of people who are hidden from services or have additional barriers to accessing support. Individuals also aren't always asked for their demographic data when accessing services and when they are, they are not obliged to provide this.

Age	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of any domestic abuse (8.7%) compared with those in age categories of 55 years and over, for year ending (YE) March 2024. The percentage of people aged 20 to 24 years who were victims of any domestic abuse (7.1%) was higher than those aged 55 to 59 years (3.8%). For those aged 75 years and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (2.1%).^{xviii}</p> <p>Older people are more likely to be abused by family members rather than intimate partners and experience barriers to accessing support due to abuse being normalised and accepted.^{xix}</p> <p>Harbour local data shows that in 2023/2024, 184 referrals were receive for clients aged 55 or over. This is an increase of 9% from 2020/2021.</p>
Children and Young People	Domestic abuse impacts children and young people both as victims when living in a household where domestic abuse occurs

	<p>between parents or family members and in their own interpersonal relationships.</p> <p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales only records domestic abuse victims from age 16 onwards. Figures for year ending March 2024 show that 8.7% of people aged 16-19 were victims of domestic abuse in the last year. This is almost double the average for all age groups of 4.8%. When broken down by sex, 11.2% of women aged 16-19 experienced domestic abuse, compared to 5.8% of men in the same age bracket.</p> <p>Another element of domestic abuse relating to young people that is a hidden harm is child and adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA). Respect.org.uk defines CAPVA as “where a young person (aged 8-18) engages in repeated abusive behaviour towards a parent or adult carer”.^{xx} Research suggests that CAPVA, like other forms of abuse, is under-reported with families only contacting the police when the situation has reached crisis point and they are afraid for their safety. CAPVA most commonly involves male children in late adolescence directing physical violence towards their mothers. Due to under-reporting and lack of a standardised definition of CAPVA, data is patchy.</p> <p>Harbour data shows that in 2023/24, 299 referrals were received for clients aged 18 and under. This represents an increase of 12 (4%) compared to 2020/21).</p> <p>Additionally, in terms of child referrals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 255 were for clients aged under 16 • 21 were accommodated in refuge. • 15 were accommodated in dispersed accommodation. • 22 of the referrals were repeats. • Most referrals were received from Social Services – Child Safeguarding (98), followed by self-referral (56) and Social Services – Early Help (53). <p>Local data for CAPVA incidents is not available, however, research reported by Respect.org.uk found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a youth offending sample, Respect and Numbers for Good found the prevalence of CAPVA in caseloads were between 21 and 27%, and between 64 and 67% of police Domestic Abuse incidents where the suspect was under 18. There were also significant levels of CAPVA reported in Children's Social Care, including Early Help caseloads. • Between 6 March 2019 and 4 January 2020, Northumbria police responded to an average of two incidents of CAPVA per day (515 total).
Disability	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that adults with a disability were more than twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without, for year ending March 2024 (9.2% and 3.9% respectively).</p>

	<p>According to ReducingTheRisk.org.uk, disabled people face additional barriers to accessing services. Someone who is disabled and experiencing domestic abuse may find it harder to protect themselves, access sources of help, or remove themselves from the abusive situation.^{xxi}</p> <p>People with disabilities may be reliant on the abuser for personal care or mobility.</p> <p>Learning disabilities can also affect victim-survivors access to support and their understanding of their own abuse.</p> <p>People with disabilities can be subject to all forms of domestic abuse, but due to their added vulnerability they may also experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An abuser withholding care or medication from them • An abuser removing mobility or sensory devices that they need for independence • An abuser claiming state benefits to care for them — enabling them to control the victim-survivor's finances more effectively • An abuser using their disability to taunt or degrade them <p>Disabled people also face difficulties when it comes to disclosing the abuse. Disabled victims may already be socially isolated because of their disability. They may also find it harder to disclose abuse because they have no opportunity to see health or social care professionals without their abuser being present.</p> <p>For a victim-survivor with disabilities, the concerns about moving out of their homes come with additional and vital concerns about accessibility of a new home or refuge.</p> <p>Their house may have been specially adapted for them. Care packages have been organised and they may be worried that they will lose their current level of independence if they are forced to move elsewhere.</p> <p>They may be reluctant to report domestic abuse from a partner whose care they depend on, and which they believe enables them to stay out of institutional care.</p> <p>Harbour data shows that for 2023/24, 131 clients disclosed that they had a disability (up 37 (39%) compared to 2020/21), while 688 (up 111 (19%) said they did not have a disability, however disability status was unrecorded for 1447 clients (down 378 (21%).</p> <p>Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the clients accommodated in refuge in 2023/24, 47% had mental health issues, 15% had a physical disability,
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Hartlepool JSNA

	<p>6% have a learning disability and 1% have a sensory impairment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of those accommodated in dispersed accommodation, 63% had mental health issues, 13% had a physical disability, and 0% had a learning disability or sensory impairment. • Of those clients referred to outreach services, 30% had mental health issues, 2% had a physical disability, 2% had a learning disability and 1% had a sensory impairment. • Of those clients referred to IDVA services, 32% had mental health issues, 0%- have a physical disability, 7% have a learning disability and 0% have a sensory impairment. • Of those clients referred for counselling measures, 26% of clients had mental health issues, 5% had a physical disability, and 0% had a learning disability or sensory impairment. • Of the clients referred for prevention measures, 45% had mental health issues, 5% had a physical disability or a learning disability and 2% had a sensory impairment. • Of the clients referred for Children and Young People measures, the proportion with mental health issues is not recorded, 1% have a physical disability, 3% had a learning disability and none had a sensory impairment.
Gender	<p>Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales for year ending March 2024 gives a domestic abuse prevalence of 3% for men, compared to 6.6% for women.</p> <p>Harbour data for shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023/24, 451 referrals were received for male victims of domestic abuse. • This represents 20% of all clients referred. • The number of males referred remains similar to 2020/21 (462) <p>Additionally, Adult safeguarding report that 24 males with a care need were referred with domestic abuse concerns during year ending March 2024. This is a 50% increase from 2020.</p>
Ethnicity	<p>The CSEW ending in March 2024 did not find any significant differences across ethnic groups for victims of domestic abuse. Although the percentage of minority ethnic victims accessing support services in Hartlepool is increasing, they often have additional risks including so-called honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>The Domestic Abuse Victim Characteristics release from ONS does not include reference to LGBTQ+ victims. However, ReducingTheRisk.org.uk identify that while LGBTQ+ victims experience well-established forms of abuse, they are also subject to other forms of abuse specific to their LGBTQ+ status and a general landscape of discrimination.^{xxii} This may include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia or manipulation of someone's internalised Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia • Conversion therapy • Threats to 'out' someone to their family/ colleagues/ friends • Withholding housing or financial support from them • Withholding medication or access to healthcare <p>LGBTQ+ people also face difficulties in disclosing abuse. The history of violence and legal discrimination as well as the general homo/trans/biphobia in British society can dissuade LGBTQ+ victim-survivors from disclosing for fear of giving a community already being marginalised a 'bad name'.</p> <p>Fear of 'outing' themselves by reporting. This is often compounded when living in smaller towns and rural areas and can make it difficult for the abused partner to seek help.</p> <p>Heteronormative assumptions may lead Police and other agencies to misunderstand the situation as a 'fight' between two men or women rather than a violent intimate relationship.</p> <p>Most information on domestic abuse relates to the experiences of heterosexual women.</p> <p>This lack of understanding means that some people may not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Believe it happens in LGBTQ+ relationships. ○ Recognise their experience of domestic abuse as that. ○ Know how to respond if they see domestic abuse being experienced by their friends or family. <p>Harbour data shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023/24, 649 referrals were recorded as being heterosexual, compared to 607 in 2020/21 (an increase of 7%) • 10 were recorded as being lesbian / gay - 9 in 2020/21(11% increase) • 13 were recorded as being bisexual – 6 in 2020/21 (117% increase) • 123 referrals were recorded as undisclosed – 112 in 2020/21 (10% increase) • In 1423 referrals no data was recorded – 1772 in 2020/21 (20% decrease) • 48 referrals were recorded as "other" sexuality – 1 in 2020/21 (4700% increase)
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5. Consultation and engagement

Building on previous consultations in 2019 and 2021, an online consultation was completed to review whether there were any changes in findings. Service users were invited to share their experiences of accessing domestic abuse services. Nonservice users were asked about the barriers that had prevented them using services available.

Background

The online survey, comprising of multiple-choice questions and free text boxes, ran for 8 weeks until the 30th November 2024. It was promoted widely to the public. The survey was included in the Your Say newsletter which was sent out 3 times during the survey period. The survey was also promoted via the Council's social media feeds and in the local press. Additionally, the survey was directly promoted to service users via Harbour circulating the link to their clients. On this occasion, only the online version was promoted. Paper copies would have been made available on request; however, no such request was received.

The online survey page was viewed by 111 individual people, of which 23 went on to complete the survey. Twenty-five survey responses were received, so 1 or more participants completed the survey more than once. This could potentially have been a support worker completing the form with one or more clients.

Of the 111 people who viewed the project page:

- 42 came direct via the URL shared by email or QR code
- 55 came via the Your Say newsletter email
- 1 came via the Council website
- 3 via search engine
- 24 via social media (23 via Facebook and 1 via X (formerly Twitter))
- 7 via other websites, including the Hartlepool Mail and MSN websites

Demographic information

Of the 25 survey responses:

- Three respondents skipped the demographic questions
- Twenty-one were female and one male
- All said their gender identity was the same as that registered at birth
- Two were 18-24
 - 4 were 25-34
 - 6 were 35-44
 - 5 were 45-54
 - 3 were 55-64
 - 2 were 65+
- Twenty described their sexual orientation as "heterosexual / straight" and 2 described it as "bisexual"

- Twenty described their ethnicity as “white”, 1 as “black, African, Caribbean, or Black British” and 1 “preferred not to say”
- Ten described their religion as “Christian”, 5 as “no religion”, 4 as “prefer not to say”, 1 as “atheist” and 1 as “Buddhist”
- In terms of whether their day-to-day activities were limited by a health condition or disability:
 - 7 were “not limited”
 - 5 were “limited a little”
 - 8 were “limited a lot”
 - 2 “preferred not to say”
 - This reflects both the fact that people with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than the general population and also that Hartlepool has a higher rate of disability and ill health than the England rate
- Two respondents had been in the care of the local authority at some stage, while 19 had not and 1 preferred not to say
- All 22 respondents said they had not been subject to immigration control
- Postcode data has been suppressed due to low response numbers to avoid accidental identification of respondents

Findings

There were 25 survey responses from 111 people who viewed the page. The low conversion rate from viewer to participant can potentially be explained by the challenging subject matter and the difficulties of retelling traumatic stories to answer the questions, so should not be taken as indicating a lack of interest or need in this service area.

As this is a small sample size, it is difficult to draw robust conclusions. However, there are useful details included in the survey comments which provide a level of insight into the lived experience of domestic abuse survivors in Hartlepool.

Of the 25 survey responses, half had used DVA services and half had not.

Of those who had not used support services (the non-user group), all were the current or former partners/spouses of the perpetrator. Similarly, all but one of the people who had used a support service (service user group) were also current or former partners of the perpetrator. In the service user group one respondent was the child of the perpetrator.

The reasons given by the non-user group for not using a support service were “not being aware of anything available locally” (3 respondents), “managing the situation themselves” (3) and “other (please specify)” (4). The “other” reasons given were:

My Mother contacted The Police at the time who where[sic] disinterested and not supportive at all to my situation.

Incident was out of hours and didn't want to involve police as there was no violence but threat and controlling behaviour. I dealt with it myself but could

have done with having somewhere for him to sober up and stay overnights as he lives out of town and had no where to go so i had no choice but to let him stay (debated dropping off at local hotel)

I made a phonecall to harbour and the woman on the phone was so rude and snappy with me that it put me off following up.

The non-user group were also asked if they had tried to access a service but it had not worked out, what the reason for this had been. The responses were: "I was turned away" (1 respondent), "services did not seem to be suitable for men" (1), "I did not receive a call-back" (1) and "other (please specify)" (2). The "other" reasons are not very useful ("I'm not a victim of abuse" and "see above").

Finally, the non-user group were asked what could have been done differently to improve their experience. Three responses were received, as follows:

Understand that the victim has limited choices and sometimes does have to return to the home where abuser is. It's not as simple as NOT wanting to press charges, it can be that they are unable to at that time.

Ensure the staff hired are suitable or give them more appropriate training for the job.

I wish I had known were to go for help it would of [sic] meant I left the relationship earlier.

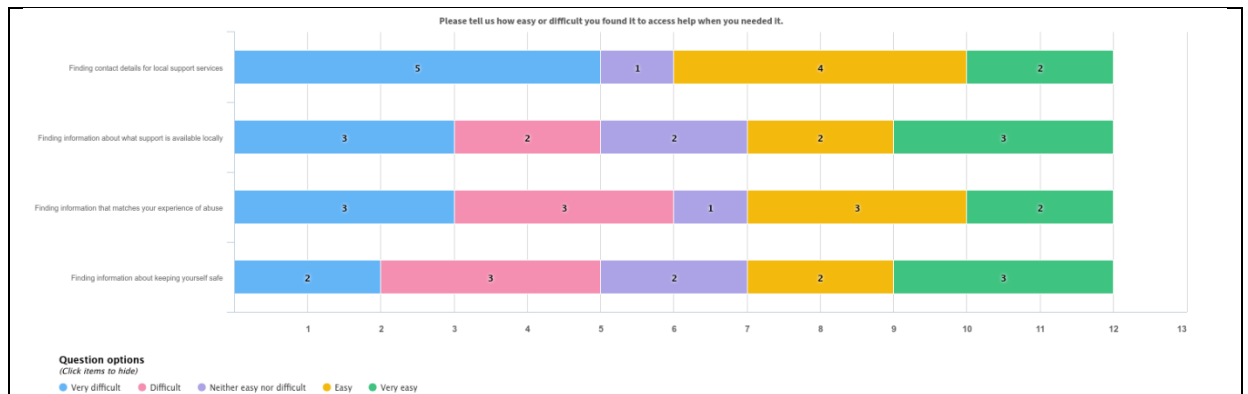
The service user group were asked how recently they had used the service. Ten respondents had used it within the past 12 months, three within the past 1-3 years and one more than 5 years ago. When asked how many times they had used the service, five had only used it once (not surprising given most had only accessed services recently) the other seven had used it more than 5 times. Unfortunately, the small sample size makes it difficult to draw conclusions from this data, but it is hoped that the respondents who used the service more than 5 times did so because they felt confident in the service they received.

The service user group were asked about how easy or difficult they had found it to find information about local services. The options were "finding contact details for services", "finding information about support", "finding information that matches your experience of abuse" and "finding information about keeping yourself safe".

About half of respondents found each element easy/very easy and half found it difficult/very difficult to access. The breakdown is shown in chart 3 below. Although the sample size is small, it still suggests that more could be done to make information easier to find.

Chart 1: Please tell us how easy or difficult you found it to access help when you needed it.

Hartlepool JSNA



Comments about finding information and support included:

Harbour were fantastic, police were too slow to respond in some events social services were terrible to deal with in regards to protecting my child from domestic abuse.

I suffered every form of domestic/sexual abuse and found myself alone cut off and unable to even speak or receive what was happening to me.

Harbour were useless - long wait lists for counselling and support. Cleveland Police are shameful at handling these cases and got me to drop the case due to insufficient evidence to support my mental health but really it was to save themselves the work. My IDVA and the rape centre in Middlesbrough was amazing.

Services are available but waiting list far too long iv waited over 12 months still not got appointment.

Iv begged for the last few months for help to be told to move on with my life nobody is really interested you get told to phone 111 or samarathons [sic] which don't really help or other on line groups these people aren't supportive of your needs iv.been here twice my first time was ten years ago with my ex husband and agian now with my ex partner

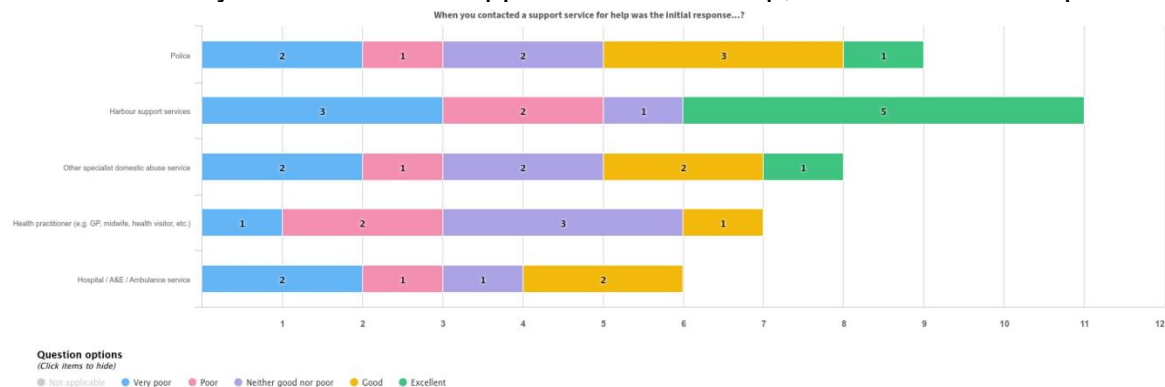
I was referred to social services and given information about the Harbour Domestic abuse services in Hartlepool. Getting in touch with the refuge was very easy and I was able to access help straight away.

Very easy to find the information if you look for it and the posters in healthcare places - getting the help from it is another case.

The service user group were asked who they approached for help. The most common response (almost double the number of responses for any other option) was "Harbour", the second most popular response was "friends or family" and in third was jointly the "police" and "healthcare practitioner". They were also asked about the initial response each provider made to their approach. Again, it was roughly a fifty-fifty split between poor/very poor and good/excellent. The breakdown is shown below

in Chart 2 (note only those options which received a response are included in the chart):

Chart 2: When you contacted a support service for help, was their initial response...?



Comments received relating to the initial contact included the following:

Harbour were brilliant very supportive, police did not respond to some incidents as quickly as needed, social services were terrible in communicating, cancelling meetings not turning up for visits etc.

The whole experience was terrible I found myself being misunderstood constantly. I would ask for help by the time I was contacted back more abuse had taken place and it continued in circles until I had nothing left. (Health, home, family, friends, employment and self respect).

Police not interested the fact your Ben harassed [sic: you are being harassed] by ex partner and family or the fact he already has criminal record for knife crime harbour tell you to move on with your life or put you in a [support] group which involves colouring books in or asking grants that's not support.

Harbour have been absolutely fantastic in helping me and my young children flee domestic abuse. We would still be with the perpetrator if they hadn't provided us with shelter and clothed and fed us. I will be eternally grateful to the staff at the Hartlepool refuge. They have saved my children's future.

Comments relating to other services not listed in the previous question:

Social services were involved but their input was neither supportive or proactive, they would arrange meetings and not turn up or contact myself, did not support myself or my child productively hardly any communication unless Marac meetings were taking place very unprofessional.

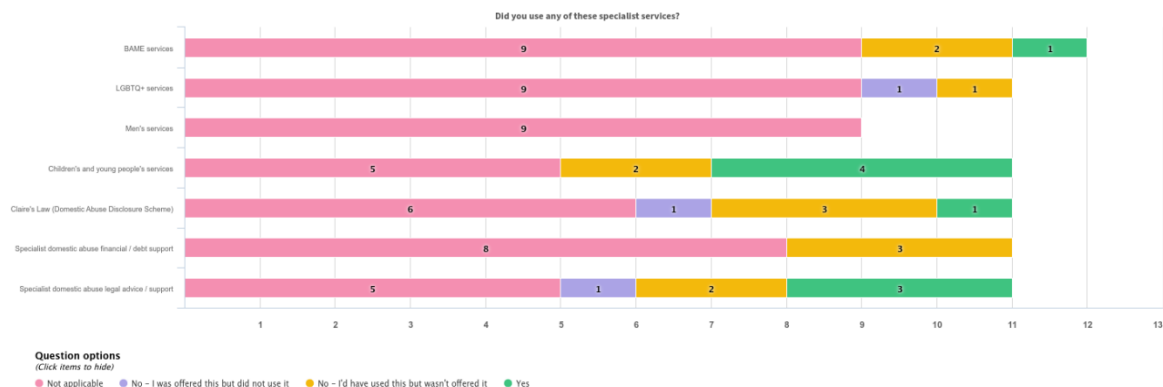
I spoke to Samaritans and self referred to my sister place in Middlesbrough. Received therapy but it was stopped and I was told it was by the request of Hartlepool Services. No one contacted me after and I found myself back in the same violent situation and needed to give up work. I then rang local services asking for help or a place in refuge and it took 3 months before I was contacted back.

Although (as already stated) the sample size is small, these responses and comments suggest that initial responses from services can be a bit “hit and miss”; and that where the initial response is not positive, it can cause serious problems for the victim/survivor.

When the service user group were asked about specialist services, only a small proportion of the respondents had used the services on the list. However, for all but one of the specialist services listed several respondents said that they would have used the service if they had been offered it. This suggests there may be a level of unmet need for specialist domestic abuse support services. The fact that no respondents requested men’s services is reflective of the fact that all but one of the survey respondents were female. There may well be more demand from the wider community for specialist men’s services. Chart 3 shows the breakdown of responses. The specialist services listed were:

- BAME services
- LGBTQ+ services
- Men’s services
- Children’s and young people’s services
- Claire’s Law (Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme)
- Specialist domestic abuse financial / debt support
- Specialist domestic abuse legal support

Chart 3: Did you use any of these specialist services?



When asked to comment on specialist domestic abuse services, respondents said:

To have been supported in line with the law. My Children have both been affected by my situation but never offered help.

Housing support were great with me and really did help me and support me in finding a place to live

Telephone helplines - Childline listened but I felt like they did not understand and kept telling me to go to the police, even though I had already been, and they did not want to do anything. Need a solution for people who are at a dead end.

Refuge accommodation - the safest I ever felt. I could not be found by him, and there was a system in place if he did find us. The only unnerving thing was that workers frequently came into our flat without knocking or notice, which was embarrassing for me as a teenage girl. It would be good if that could change.

Counselling - I used so many of these and had a consistently poor experience...I was terrified of our social worker who had betrayed my trust every time and made it clear that she did not believe me.

When asked if they had needed to move out of their local area to find safe accommodation, the majority of the service user group (7) had not. Of those that had moved, 2 had moved out of Hartlepool to another area, while 3 had moved into Hartlepool from elsewhere.

The service user group were also asked if they had been offered follow up support once their contact with services had ended. Half of respondents (6) had not been offered follow up support but indicated that they would have used it had it been offered. This suggests that where follow up support is available, and appropriate, service users would appreciate being made aware of it. Of the remaining respondents, 3 indicated that they had been offered follow up support and had used it, while 1 was offered follow up support but declined.

Respondents who had used follow up support made the following comments about the service they received:

Emotional support it helped me having someone to speak too who showed understanding and compassion.

Harbour outreach service was invaluable in helping me regain my independence.

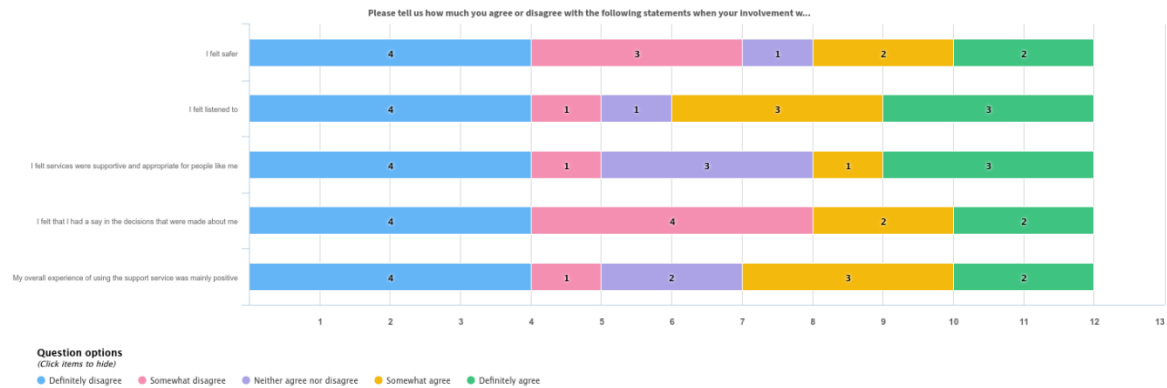
I had a worker come out every week to get me into the community, but it was really hard to click with her and I didn't know what I was supposed to do with her. We usually went to get food and eat in her car, but she didn't like this. I was scared to go anywhere with her because I didn't want anyone at school knowing or my family finding me. It didn't really work, but it did get me a break from home which did help.

When asked about how they felt when their involvement with services ended, the service user group were again split between positive and negative feelings. The two areas where there were more negative feelings than positive ones were that respondents disagreed that they “felt safer” and also disagreed that they felt they had “a say in decisions made about me”. This is concerning because the purpose of domestic abuse support services is to make the people who use them safe; however, the small sample size could be affecting the result and further investigation into client feedback would be required to find out if this is a significant issue for people leaving services. Chart 4 shows the breakdown of responses. The options were:

- I felt safer
- I felt listened to
- I felt services were supportive and appropriate for people like me

- I felt I had a say in decisions that were made about me
- My overall experience of using the service was positive

Chart 4: Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements when your involvement with services ended.



The service user group were also asked about their children and any support offered for them. Just over half the group had children (7 compared to 5 who did not). Of those with children, 5 were offered support for their children (of which 3 used the support and 2 declined it). One was not offered any support and the other skipped this question.

Three comments were received about the support offered:

Children's course.

Social services provided terrible support arranging and cancelling meetings, being met with poor attitude and made to feel like a bad person. Harbour were fantastic with myself and my child and provided a lot of support.

Harbour family support worker.

All the respondents who answered the question (3) said it was either "easy" or "very easy" to access the support for their children they had been offered. Two of the three also said that the support had been "good" or "excellent" and one said it was "neither good nor poor".

Finally, the service user group were asked if they had any further comments to make about their experience of using domestic abuse support services in Hartlepool. The following are a selection of the comments received:

More needed for Men.

No I have not needed services but believe there needs to be more provision for people with pets as in my experience victims are already subject to trauma without having to leave their pets, therefore more likely to remain in an abusive relationship.

I told a housing officer from the council i needed housing as I'd left my partner, implying abuse and because we owned the house they told me to go back until it sold.

Police should respond to all reports of stalking and domestic abuse and not arrange appointments for the following day, social services should be attending planned meetings and not turning up or supporting children included in domestic abuse cases. Harbour were fantastic and provided all the positive support I needed to get a conviction for my abused which saw him sent to prison and given a restraining order.

The 6 months wait time for eligibility for local welfare support is crippling families that are subject to DA.

I had a girl called Nicola she supported and valued my options,, I will be forever grateful for her time and compassion.. it is so scary when you are living in a abusive relationship and feel you have no one.

Harbour refuge at Hartlepool was absolutely amazing. We arrived with nothing and they clothed and fed myself and my two young children and looked after us until we were able to leave and move into a property of our own. They definitely need more resources as they rely heavily on donations. With a little funding they could work miracles. They saved our lives.

I didn't know the service was available to everyone. I always thought that the services were only for physical abuse. I have encountered verbal abuse and economic abuse and coercion. I recently had verbal abuse and was made to feel that I was the one with the problem because it was only meant as a joke. Even though it was offensive, derogatory and at the time the situation was frightening. Sadly the effect of husband drinking alcohol. I become the target.

Believe what the children say. My life was immeasurably changed and somewhat ruined by the treatment I received by police, social workers, medical professionals. Also you cannot lump together Harbour and the police for instance. I could not have had a worse experience with the police but Harbour was fantastic and I will always support their work. However, I am terrified of the police...

Conclusions

Unfortunately, the small sample size means that it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the survey data. However, some common threads are apparent such as that early intervention and preventative help would have greatly benefited some respondents. Understanding, empathy and listening to victims were also highlighted as being key things people would like to see from services.

Additionally, the response that people receive when they first contact services is crucial as to whether they go on to access and have a good relationship with that

service. Also, where people are made aware of follow up support that is available, they often go on to use this support. These are points that services may like to consider going forward.

The fact that over half of the respondents had some kind of limiting health condition or disability is very important. Consideration should be given as to how domestic abuse services can be made more accessible to people with disabilities (tying in with ongoing work across the Council in light of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee investigation into improving disabled access to all our services).

Additionally, Harbour service users are also encouraged to access the recovery service once formal support has ended and contribute to the Service User Panel to inform strategic decisions.

Issue number	Strategic Issues Arising from Consultation The following strategic issues were identified from the consultation. They have been considered in the overall findings and are represented in the final strategic issues outlined in section 6.
1	People with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than the general population and Hartlepool has a higher rate of disability and ill health than the England rate. 59% of the survey respondents reported a limiting health condition or disability.
2	Services need to be visible and accessible. There needs to be further education and awareness raising to reduce the stigma of domestic abuse and break down barriers. Some respondents in the survey stated they “were not aware of anything locally” or were “managing the situation themselves”.
3	Services need to be trauma informed and use professional curiosity, including in cases where service users decline to engage. Training should be provided to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of ‘personally connected’ covering intimate partners and family members. One respondent highlighted “staff should have more appropriate training”

6. Strategic issues

Issue number	Strategic Issue
1	There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.
2	Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).
3	There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

7. Evidence base

Issue number	
1	Source <i>Robinson, A. L., & Davies, B.</i>
	Title incl. web link 'Specialist policing units as a pathway towards procedural justice for domestic abuse victims.'
	Summary This study highlights how victims with complex needs often face significant barriers to accessing support. It evaluates specialist policing units in Wales and finds that dedicated, victim-led services with multi-agency collaboration improve outcomes for victims, particularly those who are reluctant to engage due to complex circumstances
	Source <i>Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse</i>
	Title incl. web link 'In Search of Excellence. A refreshed guide to effective domestic abuse partnership work – The Coordinated Community Response (CCR)' https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ee0be2588f1e349401c832c/t/5fd78eaf72a0a65a94da967e/1607962290051/In+Search+of+Excellence+2020.pdf

	Summary	Every agency who has a responsibility for dealing with survivors, their children and/or perpetrators, must work effectively within their own agency and with all other agencies who also have that responsibility, to secure the safety of the survivor and their children and hold perpetrators to account. The process by which this work is integrated and managed is known as the CCR.
2	Source	<i>Domestic Abuse Commissioner</i>
	Title incl. web link	'Victims in their own right? Babies, children and young people's experience of domestic abuse' https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/dac_bcyp_main-report_V6-DIGITAL.pdf
	Summary	Victims in their own right?' examines the current response to children and young people who experience domestic abuse at home or in their family across both the statutory and non-statutory response.
	Source	<i>Mayor of London Violence Reduction Unit</i>
	Title incl. web link	'Comprehensive needs assessment of Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse in London' https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/comprehensive_needs_assessment_of_child-adolescent_to_parent_violence_and_abuse_in_london.pdf
	Summary	The comprehensive needs assessment was commissioned to explore the scale and nature of CAPVA in London, to ensure services and support for children, young people and families is grounded in evidence. The research findings will inform a public health approach to violence prevention and reduction.
3	Source	<i>Hilder, S., & Freeman, C.</i>
	Title incl. web link	'Working with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Abuse: A UK Perspective. In Domestic Violence and Abuse: Contemporary Issues and Innovations.'
	Summary	This chapter explores the evolution of perpetrator intervention programmes in the UK, identifying challenges in holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring programme effectiveness. It stresses the need for evidence-based, coordinated approaches to reduce reoffending
	Source	<i>Jane Monkton Smith</i>
	Title incl. web link	'The Homicide Timeline' What is the Homicide Timeline Homicide Timeline
	Summary	The Homicide Timeline™ is a new framework for tracking homicide risk in cases of coercive control and stalking.

		This eight stage sequence is based on research which looked at over 400 cases of intimate partner homicide to identify a common behavioural pattern that can be used in a practical way by professionals to assess threat and risk.
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8. What is being done and why?

Overview of current Domestic Abuse services

National Domestic Abuse Services

- Women's Aid
- Refuge
- Man Kind
- Men's Advice Line
- Dog's Trust Freedom Project
- Forced Marriage Unit
- Galop
- Paladin
- Respect

Regional Domestic Abuse Services

There are several agencies who provide specialist services across the Cleveland and Tees area including -

Halo provides safeguarding and on-going confidential advice, help and support to black and minoritised women, girls and children who are at risk of and/or are survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, including forced marriage, honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation.

Community support includes refuge accommodation, help to stay safe, practical, emotional and cultural support, including legal, financial and community education.

ARCH Teesside is a specialist sexual violence service offering free and confidential support, help and advocacy to people in the Teesside area who have experienced rape and sexual abuse at any point in their lives.

A Way Out is an outreach and prevention charity which aims to engage, empower and equip vulnerable and excluded women, families and young people to live lives free from harm, abuse and exploitation and to reduce life-limiting choices and behaviour.

Suzy Lamplugh Trust offers expert advice in lone-working and personal safety training, stalking training, as well as consultancy, campaigning, and support services. Across the Cleveland area, Suzy Lamplugh Trust provides support

to victims of stalking via an Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC).

Local Domestic Abuse Services

Harbour is the commissioned service provider for an integrated response to victims and survivors, including children, and perpetrators of domestic abuse in Hartlepool. This includes the provision of safe accommodation comprising of –

- a 7-unit refuge for women and children, inclusive of one space for disabled people and one space to be used for emergency use for a maximum of 7 days,
- a 6-unit refuge for single women with complex needs
- 3 dispersed properties for all victims of domestic abuse

Harbour also delivers a Sanctuary scheme to residents of Hartlepool in tandem with Crime Prevention Officers in Cleveland Police.

The number of units of safe accommodation available in Hartlepool has increased year on year since 2021. However, Hartlepool does not currently have any specialist or second stage (move-on) accommodation.

In addition to safe accommodation, Harbour are commissioned to deliver –

- outreach and assertive outreach in the community,
- empowerment programmes,
- counselling
- a dedicated children and young people therapeutic service
- a preventions service and programme for those who cause harm.
- Three specialist roles for the CHUB, safeguarding and assessment teams and early intervention.

Service users are also encouraged to access the recovery service once formal support has ended and contribute to the Service User Panel to inform strategic decisions.

Harbour offers services to the whole community, including –

- Women, men and trans people
- People from all ethnic groups and backgrounds
- People from the LGBTQ+ community
- Disabled people
- Children

In addition to this, the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland fund an IDVA in each locality, as well as specialist IDVA's for –

- Mental Health
- Hospital
- Children and Young People

- Court

They are subject to grant funding until March 2026.

The Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland has launched a Teeswide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy for 2025 – 2035.^{xxiii}

The Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy identifies three key priorities:

- Prevent – by identifying, responding and referring concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Protect – by identifying perpetrators and holding abuse behaviour to account.
- Pursue – by using protective measures to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.

Hartlepool Borough Council has commissioned the Safe and Together^{xxiv} Model as framework to improve the response to domestic abuse to families involved in children's services. An implementation plan is underway to develop this across multi-agency partners.

9. What needs are unmet?

Issue number	Unmet need
Hidden victims and victims with multiple and complex needs	Whilst service provisions are available and inclusive for all, the needs assessment has shown a cohort of hidden victims who may face barriers to accessing services. Additionally, local data has shown that victims support needs in relation to mental health, disability and substance use is increasing and becoming more multi-faceted, creating a greater need and demand on services.
Children and young people	The demand for services for children is increasing. There needs to be a focus on children being recognised as victims. Additionally, further work needs to be completed to understand the need of CAPVA. A standalone domestic abuse strategy for children should be considered.
Perpetrator accountability and provision	Data has shown that perpetrators of domestic abuse are committing multiple crimes and repeating this pattern of behaviour. The current perpetrator provision has seen an increase in repeat referrals therefore the effectiveness of the provision needs to be considered.

10. What needs to be done and why?		
Issue number	What needs to be done?	Why?
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention and prevention. Awareness raising and promotion of services, especially with hidden victims (such as those with disabilities, from ethnic minority groups or different cultural backgrounds and male victims) and those with complex needs • Utilise existing service user forums to ensure that victim and survivor voice informs the commissioning and delivery of services • Ensure services are accessible, trauma-informed and use professional curiosity when individuals decline their service or do not engage • Provide training to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of 'personally connected' covering 	<p>Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on both the victims and the wider community. Providing early intervention and prevention approaches are both life saving and will be cost effective in improving the health and wellbeing of the community.</p> <p>In view of the fact that disabled people are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse and individuals in Hartlepool are more likely to have a disability or report poor health, it is vital that we have accessible services and information.</p>

	<p>intimate partners and family members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure pathways and information sharing is robust, including MARAC, MATAC and HRAP • Consider alternative safe accommodation options including specialist, by and for and move-on. • Review the proportion of out of area referrals both in and out of Hartlepool. • Consider a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse • Understand the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law). • Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response victims receive 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on early intervention and prevention to ensure all children understand healthy relationships • Ensure all services are recognising children as victims in their own right • Ensure therapeutic support services are available for children • Review the prevalence of CAPVA, the demand on services and ensure that the offer in place can meet the need of children and their parents. • Understand the effectiveness of Operation Encompass 	<p>Children experience domestic abuse both in their family homes and in their own interpersonal relationships. This can have a lasting adverse impact through childhood and into adulthood.</p>

Hartlepool JSNA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response children as victims receive 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the OPCC Perpetration Strategy Review the criminal justice response to perpetrators within Hartlepool Monitor the effectiveness and engagement of perpetrator provision Reduce repeat offending and the number of repeat high risk MARAC cases Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response perpetrators receive 	Without addressing perpetrators behaviour, the cycle of abuse will continue.

11. What additional needs assessment is required?

Firstly, there will continue to be an underreporting of domestic abuse.

The data that is currently available from different sources has issues relating to

- Collection periods
- Data quality and quantity
- Interpretation of data
- Recording of demographics

To effectively understand the need of domestic abuse within Hartlepool, an agreed set of data standards across all services would need to be developed.

Review the need, demand and effectiveness of –

- Operation Encompass
- CAPVA
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)

- Perpetrator interventions

Response to consultation is low, therefore further consideration should be given for how to incorporate the victims voice to inform the commissioning and delivery of services.

12. Key contacts and references

Key contact

Name: Olivia Highley

Job title: Domestic Abuse Coordinator

Organisation: Hartlepool Borough Council

Email: Olivia.Highley@hartlepool.gov.uk

Phone number: 01429523919

Contributor/s:

Hartlepool Borough Council

Cleveland Police

Harbour Support Services

Halo

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust

References

See end of document for references

Appendices

Appendix 1

Definition

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional as well as coercive and controlling behaviour. Section 1 sets out the definition as follows –

[The] Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—

- a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected* to each other, and*
- b) the behaviour is abusive.*

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—

- a) physical or sexual abuse;*
- b) violent or threatening behaviour;*
- c) controlling or coercive behaviour;*
- d) economic abuse;*
- e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;*

And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

**Personally connected is defined in Section 2 as being or have been married, in a civil partnership, in an intimate personal relationship or are related.*

Section 1 of the Act also gives a statutory definition to economic abuse for the first time as:

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to—

- (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or*

(b) obtain goods or services.

The Act also defines child victims of domestic abuse in Section 3:

1) This section applies where behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is domestic abuse.

2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who—

- a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and*
- b) is related to A or B.*

Coercive and controlling behaviours within an intimate or family relationship are defined in Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015:

A person (A) commits an offence if— a) A repeatedly or continuously engages in behaviour towards another person (B) that is controlling or coercive, b) at the time of the behaviour, A and B are personally connected, c) the behaviour has a serious effect on B, and d) A knows or ought to know that the behaviour will have a serious effect on B. A and B are "personally connected" if— a) A is in an intimate personal relationship with B, or b) A and B live together and— i. they are members of the same family, or

ii. they have previously been in an intimate personal relationship with each other. A's behaviour has a "serious effect" on B if— a) it causes B to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against B, or b) it causes B serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on B's usual day-to-day activities.

Appendix 2

Domestic Abuse Act and Statutory Guidance

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent in 2021 and as well as setting out a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognising children as victims it also –

- Appointed the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out their functions and powers
- Introduced Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices
- Placed a duty on local authorities to provide safe accommodation with support to victims and children
- Prohibit perpetrators from cross-examining victims in civil and family courts and provide special measures to victims in criminal, civil and family courts
- Created a new offence of non-fatal strangulation
- Extended coercive and controlling behaviour to cover post separation abuse
- Extending the 'revenge porn' offence to cover threats to disclose material

- Reinforcing that an individual cannot consent to their own death to eliminate the 'rough sex gone wrong' defence.
- Provide eligible homeless victims with 'priority need' ^{xxv}

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act sets out the statutory duties on local authorities to –

- Carry out a needs assessment for accommodation based support and use this needs assessment to;
- Publish a strategy and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy in providing safe accommodation
- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Partnership Board including representation of victims and children of domestic abuse
- Present an annual report to the Secretary of State

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board meets quarterly to monitor the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan and reports into the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.

The statutory guidance was published in July 2022 and includes agency and multi-agency response to domestic abuse. Following this, the Government published their Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan^{xxvi} which focuses on prioritising prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and a stronger system

Each individual agency should have provisions in place in responding and identifying domestic abuse, including the use of the DASH risk assessment when professionals are trained to use the tool, using professional judgment and indicators to identify and manage risk.

The statutory guidance of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) should be used in conjunction with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) when responding to abuse involving children under the age of 18.^{xxvii}

Other relevant legislation -

- Serious Violence Duty
- Victims and Prisoners Act
- The Care Act
- Homelessness Code of Guidance
- National Statement of Expectations

Appendix 3

Glossary

Physical abuse

Physical assault including hitting, shoving, kicking, head-butting, slapping, hair pulling and assault with weapons. Also includes threatening to carry out any of these actions.

Sexual abuse

Any unwanted sexual contact including rape.

Verbal abuse

Shouting, swearing, calling names.

Economic abuse

Taking away someone's resources or economic independence. May involve actions like preventing the victim going to work or taking away their wages; taking out debt in the victim's name (with or without their knowledge); ruining the victim's credit score to make it difficult for them to access credit; damage to possessions and property.

Emotional abuse

Attacking the victim's personality by insulting or demeaning the victim, telling them they are worthless or unlovable, that everything is their fault, that they are a bad spouse/partner/parent, etc.

Gas lighting

A form of emotional abuse where the perpetrator causes the victim to doubt their own thoughts, memories, the events happening around them and even their own sanity.

Child contact abuse

Using child contact arrangements to abuse or harass the victim, for example, telling the victim they will report them as a bad parent to have the children removed or if they have been removed that it was the victim's fault; repeatedly taking the victim back to Family Court (particularly if the victim does not have access to legal aid); making malicious reports to social workers about the victim; encouraging the children to abuse the victim as well.

Online abuse

Using social media to stalk or harass the victim; posting or threatening to post indecent images of the victim online (revenge porn); installing "spyware" software on the victim's computer and/or smart phone to monitor their online activity or to track their "real-world" movements.

Stalking

Following, watching or spying on the victim - can be "real world", online or both.

Harassment

Repeated attempts to force contact or communication with the victim – can also include attempts to contact others connected with the victim e.g. family members, friends and co-workers.

LGBTQ+

Abuse based around an individual's sexuality e.g. saying the individual is "too gay" or threatening to "out" the survivor to family, co-workers, etc. who are not aware of their sexuality. LGBTQ survivors can face abuse from their partner and / or their family. They can also face hostility and prejudice from services.

Child-to parent abuse

A pattern of abuse that causes the parent(s) to fear the child. In the context of

young people and family violence, this can also extend to siblings and other members of the household. In an adult child-to parent-abuse context the abuse may revolve around the elderly parent(s) care needs, for example, the adult child's refusal to allow care for their parent as the cost will reduce their inheritance.

Disabled people

Disabled people can face abuse related to their disability and / or care needs, for example withholding medication; removing a disabled person's wheelchair or placing obstacles in the path of a blind person to restrict their mobility; using abusive language when talking to or about the survivor e.g. saying they are a burden. If the abuser is also the carer then the risk to the victim is even greater.

Older people

Similarly to disabled people, older people can face abuse related to their care needs, particularly if the abuser is also the person's carer. They can also face abuse from their adult children. Services can confuse signs of abuse for age-related infirmity.

Young people

Young people in abusive teen relationships face similar types of abuse as adults. As young people often have a large online presence they may also experience additional types of abuse related to this e.g. sexting, revenge porn and online stalking and harassment. Young people may also face abuse within a family context from siblings. They may also experience abuse from a parent if they are still living at home beyond age 16 (for purposes re: domestic abuse below age 16 would be classed as child abuse not domestic abuse however it also needs noting that a child aged 16-18 can still be defined as child abuse).

Honour-based violence (HBV)

HBV is motivated by a desire to preserve the "honour" of the perpetrator and / or the wider family. HBV can be perpetrated by the intimate partner and / or other family members. HBV victims are more likely to experience abuse from multiple perpetrators. Factors such as disability, sexuality and being "Westernised" can increase the risk of HBV. Forced marriage and FGM is a significant part of the abuse for many victims of HBV

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves any procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genital organs or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is most often carried out on young girls aged between infancy and 15 years old. This is child abuse and must be treated as such. Forced marriage A forced marriage is where one or both people do not or (in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity) cannot consent to the marriage and they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. Rejecting a forced marriage can be a trigger for HBV.

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- ⁱⁱ Office for National Statistics <https://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/en/SurveyResults.html> (Accessed July 2025)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Office for National Statistics <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024#domestic-abuse> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{iv} The Home Office <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f637b8f8fa8f5106d15642a/horr107.pdf> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^v Nomis https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021/report?compare=E06000001 (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{vi} Office for National Statistics <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseprevalenceandtrendsenlandandwales/yearendingmarch2024#data-on-domestic-abuse-in-england-and-wales> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{vii} Public Health England <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/domestic%20abuse%20rate> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{viii} Safer Hartlepool Partnership https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4471/safer_hartlepool_partnership (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{ix} Office for National Statistics <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesdatatool> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^x Operation Encompass <https://www.operationencompass.org/why-was-operation-encompass-created> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{xi} Safe Lives <https://safelives.org.uk/about-domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-response-in-the-uk/what-is-a-marac/> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{xii} Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board <https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/policies-strategies/high-risk-adults-panel/> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{xiii} Local Government Association <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/domestic-homicide-review-survey-2024> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{xiv} Domestic Abuse Commissioner <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/domestic-abuse-commissioner-responds-to-new-report-revealing-the-scale-of-domestic-homicide-and-suicide/> (Accessed July 2025)
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- ^{xvii} North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust <https://www.nth.nhs.uk/news/new-domestic-violence-advocate-supporting-teesside-patients-and-staff/> (Accessed July 2025)
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- ^{xxiii} Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Tees-wide-Tackling-Domestic-Abuse-Perpetration-Strategy-2025-2035-1.pdf> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{xxiv} Safe and Together Institute <https://safeandtogetherinstitute.com/> (Accessed July 2025)
- ^{xxv} Home Office <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet> (Accessed July 2025)
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**Hartlepool Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership
Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026 – 2029**

DRAFT

Contents

Title	Page Number
Foreword	
Duties and responsibilities	
How this strategy links to other local strategies	
Governance	
Introduction	
What are the key issues in Hartlepool?	
What have we achieved since the previous strategy?	
How have we responded to the Safe Accommodation Duty?	
What have we learned?	
What are the challenges?	
What are our priorities and what needs to be done to achieve them?	
What does success look like?	
Help and support	

Foreword

To be completed by the Leader of the Council.

Duties and responsibilities

Under the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**, several key duties have been placed on councils in England to improve support for victims of domestic abuse. These are primarily outlined in **Part 4 of the Act**, and include the following responsibilities:

Statutory Duties on Councils

1. Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation

Councils must ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children have access to **safe accommodation** and **specialist support services**. This includes:

- Refuges and other forms of safe accommodation including sanctuary
- Support services such as counselling, advocacy, and advice on staying safe

2. Development of Local Strategies

Councils are required to:

- Conduct a **needs assessment** for victims in their area
- Develop and publish a **local domestic abuse strategy**
- Review and update this strategy regularly

3. Multi-Agency Collaboration

Councils must work closely and form a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to ensure appropriate governance with:

- Police
- Health services
- Domestic abuse charities
- Other relevant partners to ensure a coordinated response

4. Monitoring and Reporting

Councils must report annually on:

- How they are meeting their duties
- The effectiveness of their strategies
- The outcomes for victims and children

5. Guidance Compliance

Councils must have **regard to statutory guidance** issued under the Act when exercising their functions. This includes ensuring that support is trauma-informed and accessible to all victims, including those with complex needs

How this strategy links to other local strategies

The needs assessment which has informed this strategy, also forms part of Hartlepool Council's wider Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The Domestic Abuse Strategy is closely linked to the following JSNA topics:

- Housing
- Violent Crime
- Mental Health
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Sexual Health
- Substance Misuse
- Youth Offending

The Domestic Abuse Strategy is also closely linked to the following local strategies:

- Housing Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Drug and Alcohol Strategy
- Community Safety Plan

Intersecting local initiatives:

- Making Every Contact Count (MECC)
- Whole Systems Approach
- Coordinated Community Response (CCR)
- Safe and Together
- High Risk Adults Panel (HRAP)

The Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland has launched a Teeswide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy for 2025 – 2035 which aligns with the strategic priorities in the Cleveland Police and Crime Plan.

The Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy identifies three key priorities:

- Prevent – by identifying, responding and referring concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Protect – by identifying perpetrators and holding abuse behaviour to account.
- Pursue – by using protective measures to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.

Governance

The Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership (DALSP) has oversight and governance of the delivery of the strategy, and is made up of –

- Victims and survivors of domestic abuse
- Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) including community safety, public health, children's and adults social care and housing
- Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust
- Cleveland Police
- Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (OPCC)
- Probation Service
- Registered Housing Providers
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)
- Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP)

The DALSP reports to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP).

Introduction

The most recent needs assessment in Hartlepool was published in 2021, followed by Hartlepool's Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022-2025. In line with the Council's duty to review and refresh its domestic abuse needs assessment and associated strategy, a new strategic needs assessment has been carried out during 2025. The data and intelligence gathered as part of the needs assessment has informed this strategy for 2026 - 2029.

We would like to thank the Council departments and Partner Agencies that contributed data and information to help in the assessment of the level of need for domestic abuse services in Hartlepool and the development of this strategy. We would also like to thank the service users and survivors who contributed their lived experience, and feedback, which allows us to continue in our victim and survivor-led approach.

What are the key issues in Hartlepool?

The needs assessment identified the following three key strategic issues:

1. There is an insufficient availability of support services for **victims and survivors** of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.
2. **Children** affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).
3. There is a lack of consistent accountability for **perpetrators** of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

What have we achieved since the previous strategy?

The key strategic priorities identified in Hartlepool's Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022-2025 were -

- Working with victims/ survivors (adults and children) for them to be true partners in our review and development of services;
- Focus on supporting as early as possible – develop a prevention/ early intervention offer;
- Re-commission support services based on lived experiences;
- Equip the workforce to ask the right questions and to support victims of domestic abuse;
- Develop more choice and options for safe accommodation; and
- Consider the needs of victims/survivors with multiple and complex issues using multi agency support in order to begin to address needs.

Key achievements against these strategic priorities include -

The voices of victims, survivors and children are represented by Harbour as the commissioned service provider but also by other specialist support agencies, including Halo, Hart Gables, A Way Out and ARCH. Services have service user panels and survivor groups that are utilised to influence change and development. Members of the partnership also identify as survivors of domestic abuse both as children and adults and contribute their lived experience. Survivor voice continues to be reflected in the refreshed Needs Assessment and Strategy.

The offer of domestic abuse services within Hartlepool has been updated and is reflected on the Hartlepool Borough Council website. The development of a new website is ongoing.

There have been numerous awareness raising campaigns including –

- Violence Against Women and Girls week of action led by Cleveland Police with support from specialist agencies,
- 'Ask for Angela' was launched by Community Safety in licensed premises across Hartlepool
- 'Ask for Ani' campaign has been reinforced with pharmacies.
- Harbour celebrated their 50th anniversary and hosted a 'Walk a Mile in their Shoes' event, bringing together survivors and the professionals that support them.

A full commissioning process was completed in 2022 for support and safe accommodation and therapeutic support for children Harbour being awarded both contracts commencing on the 1st October 2022 for three years. These are monitored with a robust performance framework with regular outcome monitoring.

Domestic abuse services have been complemented with funding from the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner that is aligned with commissioning arrangements, including hospital, court, mental health and Independent Domestic Violence

5.1 Appendix 2

Advocate's (IDVA) that operate within Hartlepool and a programme for perpetrators with complex needs. Other organisations have received funding from the OPCC, including ARCH Teesside that provide support to adults and children who are victims of sexual abuse and Halo who received funding from the OPCC to support with black and minority ethnic groups. Unfortunately, this funding is grant funded, time limited and subject to yearly funding allocations.

Reducing parental conflict work is led by Changing Futures North East.

The Safe and Together model continues to be implemented across the workforce which is strengthening our response to domestic abuse by partnering with survivors and intervening with perpetrators and keeping children safe and together with the non-offending parent. Additional training has been provided to Health Advocates within the local authority, including training on responding to disclosures of domestic abuse within the workplace. Training is delivered by Harbour and partners via workforce development and the HSSCP and TSAB.

TSAB updated the Team Around the Individual (TATI) process, now known as High Risk Adult Panel (HRAP) and offers another pathway to strengthen the response to individuals with multiple and complex issues, including victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. Strategic MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) continues to oversee the action plan recommended by Safe Lives.

Appendix 2

How have we responded to the Safe Accommodation Duty?

Harbour is the commissioned service provider for an integrated response to victims and survivors, including children, and perpetrators of domestic abuse in Hartlepool. This includes the provision of safe accommodation comprising of –

- a 7-unit refuge for women and children, inclusive of one space for disabled people and one space to be used for emergency use for a maximum of 7 days,
- a 6-unit refuge for single women with complex needs
- Dispersed properties for all victims of domestic abuse.

At the time of writing, Harbour have secured additional dispersed properties across the North East, with the total number in Hartlepool being 6.

The provision of safe accommodation for women with complex needs is a unique model of delivery and has received regional and national recognition, with options being explored for co-commissioning and reciprocal arrangements with commissioners across the North East.

The number of units of safe accommodation available in Hartlepool has increased year on year since 2021. However, Hartlepool does not currently have any specialist or second stage (move-on) accommodation.

Hartlepool Home Search was launched as the new Choice Based Lettings System in Hartlepool and victims of domestic abuse are awarded a priority banding in line with the allocations policy, in partnership with the Housing Advice Team and Registered Social Landlords.

The Safe Accommodation Duty also includes the requirement to provide other support services such as counselling, support services and advocacy. Harbour also delivers a Sanctuary scheme to residents of Hartlepool in tandem with Crime Prevention Officers in Cleveland Police.

In addition to safe accommodation, Harbour are commissioned to deliver –

- outreach and assertive outreach in the community,
- empowerment programmes,
- counselling
- a dedicated children and young people therapeutic service
- a preventions service and programme for those who cause harm.
- Three specialist roles for the CHUB, safeguarding and assessment teams and early intervention.

Service users are also encouraged to access the recovery service once formal support has ended and contribute to the Service User Panel to inform strategic decisions.

Harbour offers services to the whole community, including –

- Women, men and trans people

- People from all ethnic groups and backgrounds
- People from the LGBTQ+ community
- Disabled people
- Children

Data returns have been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), formerly Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the financial years 2021 – 2022, 2022 – 2023, 2023 – 2024 and 2024 – 2025.

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What have we learned?

Whilst the needs assessment shows that domestic abuse continues to be primarily a gender-based crime, perpetrated by men against women, this oversimplifies the situation somewhat. Demographic analysis of the services reviewed in the needs assessment shows that some groups are overrepresented in the client / referral data compared to other groups within that same demographic characteristic (e.g. age bracket) or compared to the local Hartlepool population. Additionally, whilst the numbers for some groups remain low, they are making up an increasingly significant proportion of service users.

Based on the evidence reviewed in this needs assessment, the following groups are overrepresented in the client data:

- Women – make up 79.8% of referrals to Harbour support services, 95% of homeless presentations due to domestic abuse and 71% of adult safeguarding referrals related to domestic abuse yet just 51.6% of the Hartlepool population
- People aged 19-44 – make up 66.9% of Harbour referrals yet just 30.9% of the Hartlepool population
- People living in social housing or private rented accommodation - make up 66.5% of Harbour referrals compared to 41% of the Hartlepool population
- People who are already homeless (particularly women and single households) – make up 42% of referrals to the Council's homelessness team

In terms of groups where total numbers remain low, but they are representing an increasing proportion of the demographic makeup of referrals:

- Ethnic minorities make up a small proportion of referrals to Harbour but this proportion is increasing and is slightly higher than the local population for all minority groups
 - Black, Caribbean or Black British - 1.2% of referrals / 0.5% local population
 - Asian or Asian British – 1.9% of referrals / 1.7% of local population
 - Mixed or multiple ethnicities – 1.1% of referrals / 0.7% of local population
 - Other ethnicity – 0.7% of referrals or 0.6% of local population
- Males make up an increasing proportion of Harbour referrals. They currently make up 20% of referrals (increased from 18.6%) compared to 48.4% of the local population

Particular groups also make up an increasing proportion of the Safe Accommodation referrals:

- People with complex needs who cannot be admitted into refuge accommodation (increased from 4.2% to 9.8%)
- Women who are pregnant at the time of referral (increased from 8% to 12%)
- People with a disability (increased from 4% to 15%)
- People with mental health issues (increased from 33% to 47%)

Future analysis will show if these trends continue over the longer term. However, in the meantime, consideration needs to be given to how the differing (and intersecting) needs of these groups can be accommodated by services.

Strategic Issues Arising from Consultation

People with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than the general population and Hartlepool has a higher rate of disability and ill health than the England rate. 59% of the survey respondents reported a limiting health condition or disability. Services need to be visible and accessible. There needs to be further education and awareness raising to reduce the stigma of domestic abuse and break down barriers. Some respondents in the survey stated they “were not aware of anything locally” or were “managing the situation themselves”.

Services need to be trauma informed and use professional curiosity, including in cases where service users decline to engage. Training should be provided to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of ‘personally connected’ covering intimate partners and family members. One respondent highlighted “staff should have more appropriate training”.

What are the challenges?

Gaps in the available data continues to be a significant challenge in understanding the level of need in Hartlepool. The needs assessment identified the following gaps:

- Detailed demographic data is patchy, with some services collecting more detailed data than others. Some key gaps in demographic information include:
 - Where survivors have a disability, more detailed information about the types and levels of disability experienced would enable a better understanding of the barriers that exist for people with disabilities.
 - Health data is patchy and, in some cases, unavailable. This is a significant gap in assessing the needs of victims and survivors, perpetrators and their children who access health services. In some cases, data is only available at NHS Trust level and cannot be broken down to find which patients were of Hartlepool residence. Additionally, the Cardiff Model data which was previously provided in 2021 is no longer available.
 - Cleveland Police provide Operation Encompass disclosures to schools but are unable to break this down into district area and were unable to provide any data relating to this. This continues to be a gap as highlighted in 2021.
 - Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, although approached, weren't able to provide data if they are not a commissioned service due to the level of pressure this places on already limited services.

Funding from central government is often allocated on a yearly basis and therefore it is difficult to make commitments when commissioning services. Due to this, teams can be small and staff turnover can also be high and can create instability in services. An example of this, is the hospital based IDVA's that have received grant funding since 2022 from the OPCC will come to an end in March 2026.

Support for victims of crime is precarious due to staffing pressures and funding cuts which has a significant impact on the delivery of crime prevention and target hardening as part of the sanctuary scheme offer.

The demand for services for children is increasing. There needs to be a focus on children being recognised as victims. Additionally, further work needs to be completed to understand the need of Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA). A standalone domestic abuse strategy for children should be considered.

Data has shown that perpetrators of domestic abuse are committing multiple crimes and repeating this pattern of behaviour. The current perpetrator provision has seen an increase in repeat referrals therefore the effectiveness of the provision needs to be considered. Additionally, the referrals into the Preventions Service from the Criminal Justice System (CJS) continues to be low. It is increasingly challenging to hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour, without intervention from the CJS.

Appendix 2

What are our priorities and what needs to be done to achieve them?

The strategic priorities have been identified from the needs assessment. Additionally, they align closely with the Government's Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan.

Priority 1: Supporting Victims

There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.

Why?

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on both the victims and the wider community. Providing early intervention and prevention approaches are both lifesaving and will be cost effective in improving the health and wellbeing of the community. In view of the fact that disabled people are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse and individuals in Hartlepool are more likely to have a disability or report poor health, it is vital that we have accessible services and information.

What needs to be done?

- Early intervention and prevention. Awareness raising and promotion of services, especially with hidden victims (such as those with disabilities, from ethnic minority groups or different cultural backgrounds and male victims) and those with complex needs
- Utilise existing service user forums to ensure that victim and survivor voice informs the commissioning and delivery of services
- Ensure services are accessible, trauma-informed and use professional curiosity when individuals decline their service or do not engage
- Provide training to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of 'personally connected' covering intimate partners and family members
- Ensure pathways and information sharing is robust, including MARAC, MATAAC and HRAP
- Consider alternative safe accommodation options including specialist, by and for and move-on.
- Review the proportion of out of area referrals both in and out of Hartlepool.
- Consider a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse
- Understand the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law).
- Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response victims receive

Priority 2: Recognising Children as Victims

Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).

Why?

Children experience domestic abuse both in their family homes and in their own interpersonal relationships. This can have a lasting adverse impact through childhood and into adulthood.

What needs to be done?

- Focus on early intervention and prevention to ensure all children understand healthy relationships
- Ensure all services are recognising children as victims in their own right
- Ensure therapeutic support services are available for children
- Review the prevalence of CAPVA, the demand on services and ensure that the offer in place can meet the need of children and their parents.
- Understand the effectiveness of Operation Encompass
- Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response children as victims receive

Priority 3: Pursuing Perpetrators

There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

Why?

Without addressing perpetrators behaviour, the cycle of abuse will continue.

What needs to be done?

- Support the OPCC Perpetration Strategy
- Review the criminal justice response to perpetrators within Hartlepool
- Monitor the effectiveness and engagement of perpetrator provision
- Reduce repeat offending and the number of repeat high risk MARAC cases

Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response perpetrators receive

What does success look like?

For victims...

Victims and survivors will continue to be partners in the delivery of the strategy and action plan and continue to shape and support services

Victims who have accessed services will report –

- Feeling safer
- A reduction in all types of abuse (physical, sexual, harassment and stalking, jealous and controlling behaviour)
- Improved quality of life
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved relationships with their children
- Improved self-esteem and confidence
- Improved support networks

There will be a reduction in repeat victims.

Pathways for victims who do not access services or who have unplanned exits from services will be robust to ensure they receive support that is person-centred and trauma-informed to their individual need.

Services will be flexible and able to accommodate the need of different groups such as:

- Disabled people
- People from an ethnic minority or with cultural needs
- Male victims
- People with complex needs

The community will feel confident in knowing where they can access support and service providers will continue to raise awareness of support to both adults and children.

Practitioners will report that their skills and knowledge regarding domestic abuse have improved. Audits will show that practitioners have a developed understanding of domestic abuse and respond in line with the Safe and Together principles.

There will be an increase in the number of people able to access safe accommodation, including those with complex needs. The number of households who successfully move on from safe accommodation will increase.

There will be consideration of a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse.

Strategic MARAC will have appropriate oversight and governance of the MARAC process. Information sharing process will be robust, including for MARAC, MATAC and HRAP.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) will be effective in responding to disclosures.

For children...

Children who have accessed services will report –

- Feeling happier
- Feeling safer

There will be an increase in the number of children able to stay with the non-offending parent because of implementing Safe and Together.

Children will be recognised as victims in their own right and offered the appropriate support packages based on their needs, including therapeutic support.

Practitioners will be confident in recognising the difference between reducing parental conflict and domestic abuse. Parents will be able to access the appropriate support accordingly.

Children will receive the appropriate level of Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) to understand healthy relationships.

There will be a clear link with youth services, including youth offending to strengthen partnership working and ensure as many professionals as possible are trauma informed.

There will be improved professional understanding and a clear offer for families who experience Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA).

Operation Encompass will be effective in providing support to children experiencing domestic abuse. There will be a clear understanding of how this operates in Hartlepool, in line with statutory duties.

For perpetrators...

Practitioners will feel confident in intervening with perpetrators and holding them accountable for their behaviour, including within the criminal justice system.

There will be a clear understanding of the role of the criminal justice response to perpetrators of domestic abuse.

There will be a reduction in the number of perpetrators identified as repeating their pattern of behaviour, resulting in a reduction of repeat high risk MARAC cases.

5.1 Appendix 2

When a perpetrator is identified within the MATAC cohort, there will be a clear reduction in risk that is sustained.

There will be an increase in the number of individuals referred to and accessing prevention interventions. There will be an increase in the number of individuals successfully completing behaviour change programmes.

There will be a robust offer of support for perpetrators, including accommodation in order to safely manage risk to victims and children.

The DALSP will support the priorities outlined in the Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy.

DRAFT

Help and Support

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police. If you can't speak, you can ring 999 then press 55 when prompted: this is called the Silent Solution System.

For information and support in Hartlepool you can contact –

Harbour Support Services

Harbour works with families and individuals affected by abuse from a partner, former partner or family member and provides an integrated support service to residents of Hartlepool.

T: 03000 20 25 25 (24 hours)

E: info@myharbour.org.uk

W: www.myharbour.org.uk

Adult Safeguarding

If you are worried about an adult being abused or neglected please contact:

The Integrated Single Point of Access (iSPA), *Monday Thursday 8:30am-5pm; Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm*

Tel: 01429 523390

SMS: 078336 72357

Email: ispa@hartlepool.gov.uk

If you need urgent help when our offices are closed, you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552

Children's Safeguarding

The Children's Hub is the first point of contact for anyone who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or young person or thinks they may need extra help and support.

Tel - 01429 284284

Email - childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

The service operates Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm.

The Emergency Duty Team provides an out-of-hours response to emergency situations involving child protection, child care, mental health and other adult care service matters.

Tel - 01642 524552

Further information and support can be found at

<https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/domesticabuse>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

Guidance for completing this form is available in the “Single Impact Assessment: Toolkit for Officers”, available from the Single Impact Assessment page on the intranet at <https://hbcintranet/Pages/Single-Impact-Assessments.aspx>.

Section 1 – Details of the proposed action being considered

1.1 Lead Department:	Adult Services and Public Health
1.2 Lead Division:	Public Health
1.3 Title of the proposed action:	
Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026 – 2029	
1.4 Brief description of the proposed action:	
Updating the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026 – 2029 in line with statutory duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.	
1.5 Who else is involved:	
Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims and survivors of domestic abuse • Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) including community safety, public health, children’s and adults social care and housing • Integrated Care Board (ICB) • North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust • Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust • Cleveland Police 	

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

- Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (OPCC)
- Probation Service
- Registered Housing Providers
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)
- Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP)

1.6 Who will make the final decision about the proposed action:

Adult Services and Public Health Committee

1.7 Which wards will be affected by the proposed action? Tick all that apply

All wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hart	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seaton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burn Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headland & Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throston	<input type="checkbox"/>
De Bruce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manor House	<input type="checkbox"/>	Victoria	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fens & Greatham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rossmere	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A - Internal council activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foggy Furze	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural West	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1.8 Completed By:

Name	Job Title	Date Completed
Olivia Highley	Domestic Abuse Coordinator	07/08/2025

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

1.9 Version	Author	Summary of Changes	Date
1	Olivia Highley	N/A	07/08/2025

Section 2 – Explaining the impact of the proposed action**2.1 What data and evidence has informed this impact assessment?**

A full domestic abuse needs assessment was carried out for 2024/2025. This included using local data requested from partner agencies –

- Cleveland Police
- Safer Hartlepool Partnership
- Children's Hub
- Adult Safeguarding
- Housing Advice and Homeless Service
- Harbour Support Services
- Halo Project
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust

National data was analysed as a comparison accompanied by a literature review. A consultation with the public and service users was carried out.

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

2.2 If there are gaps in evidence or not enough information to assess the impact, how have you addressed this or how will you address it?

Gap(s) Identified	How it / they have or will be addressed
<p>Hidden victims and victims with multiple and complex needs</p> <p>Whilst service provisions are available and inclusive for all, the needs assessment has shown a cohort of hidden victims who may face barriers to accessing services. Additionally, local data has shown that victims support needs in relation to mental health, disability and substance use is increasing and becoming more multi-faceted, creating a greater need and demand on services.</p>	<p>Within the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026.</p>
<p>Children and young people</p> <p>Additionally, further work needs to be completed to understand the need of CAPVA.</p>	<p>Within the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026. A standalone domestic abuse strategy for children should be considered.</p>
<p>Perpetrator accountability and provision</p> <p>Data has shown that perpetrators of domestic abuse are committing multiple crimes and repeating this pattern of behaviour. The current perpetrator provision has seen an increase in repeat referrals therefore the effectiveness of the provision needs to be considered.</p>	<p>Within the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026 and the Teeswide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy.</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

2.3 Risk Score

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
Age		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of any domestic abuse (8.7%) compared with those in age categories of 55 years and over, for year ending (YE) March 2024. The percentage of people aged 20 to 24 years who were victims of any domestic abuse (7.1%) was higher than those aged 55 to 59 years (3.8%). For those aged 75 years and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (2.1%).</p> <p>Older people are more likely to be abused by family members rather than intimate partners and experience barriers to accessing support due to abuse being normalised and accepted.</p> <p>Harbour local data shows that in 2023/2024, 184 referrals were receive for clients aged 55 or over. This is an increase of 9% from 2020/2021.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on people within different age groups by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
Disability		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that adults with a disability were more than twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without, for year ending March 2024 (9.2% and 3.9% respectively).</p> <p>According to ReducingTheRisk.org.uk, disabled people face additional barriers to accessing services. Someone who is disabled and experiencing domestic abuse may find it harder to protect themselves, access sources of help, or remove themselves from the abusive situation.ⁱ</p> <p>People with disabilities may be reliant on the abuser for personal care or mobility.</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
		<p>Learning disabilities can also affect victim-survivors access to support and their understanding of their own abuse.</p> <p>People with disabilities can be subject to all forms of domestic abuse, but due to their added vulnerability they may also experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An abuser withholding care or medication from them • An abuser removing mobility or sensory devices that they need for independence • An abuser claiming state benefits to care for them — enabling them to control the victim-survivor's finances more effectively • An abuser using their disability to taunt or degrade them <p>Disabled people also face difficulties when it comes to disclosing the abuse. Disabled victims may already be socially isolated because of their disability. They may also find it harder to disclose abuse because they have no opportunity to see health or social care professionals without their abuser being present.</p> <p>For a victim-survivor with disabilities, the concerns about moving out of their homes come with additional and vital concerns about accessibility of a new home or refuge.</p> <p>Their house may have been specially adapted for them. Care packages have been organised and they may be worried that they will lose their current level of independence if they are forced to move elsewhere.</p> <p>They may be reluctant to report domestic abuse from a partner whose care they depend on, and which they believe enables them to stay out of institutional care.</p> <p>Harbour data shows that for 2023/24, 131 clients disclosed that they had a disability (up 37 (39%) compared to 2020/21), while 688 (up 111 (19%) said they did not have a disability, however disability status was unrecorded for 1447 clients (down 378 (21%).</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
		The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on disabled people by ensuring services are accessible for all.
Gender Reassignment		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>Harbour client data shows that their service have been and continue to be accessed by a small number of transpeople.</p> <p>LGBTQ+ people also face difficulties in disclosing abuse. The history of violence and legal discrimination as well as the general homo/trans/biphobia in British society can dissuade LGBTQ+ victim-survivors from disclosing for fear of giving a community already being marginalised a ‘bad name’.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on transpeople by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provided a definition of ‘personally connected’ which recognises domestic abuse as being perpetrated towards intimate partners and family members.</p> <p>The overwhelming majority of clients accepted into refuge were experiencing abuse from an intimate partner or ex-partner rather than from a family member. However, in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 the proportion of clients experiencing abuse from a previous partner was higher than from a current partner, though in 2023/24 the proportion experiencing abuse from a current partner was around 1 in 3, compared with 1 in 4 in 2022/23.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals regardless of their marital status by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>For new clients accommodated, pregnant clients increased by 50% in 2023/24 compared with 2022/23, from 8% to 12%.</p> <p>Pregnancy is a well known risk factor for individuals at risk of domestic abuse as domestic abuse occurs or increases in severity and frequency during pregnancy or within 12 months after birth.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on women who are pregnant ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
Race (Ethnicity)		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The percentage of minority ethnic victims accessing support services in Hartlepool is increasing, and these communities may have additional risks including so-called honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. This group may have specific needs relating to their ethnicity.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals of all ethnic backgrounds ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
Religion or Belief		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>It is now widely recognised that anyone of any gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, race, or religion can be a victim of domestic abuse. Individuals may experience additional risks and have specific needs relating to their religion and beliefs.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals of all religions and beliefs ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

Sex		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>Women and girls in Hartlepool continue to be at the greatest risk of domestic violence and abuse with 70% of all victims known to the police being female.</p> <p>Women make up 79.8% of referrals to Harbour support services, 95% of homeless presentations due to domestic abuse and 71% of adult safeguarding referrals related to domestic abuse yet just 51.6% of the Hartlepool population</p> <p>It is widely known that domestic abuse is recognised as a gendered crime and predominantly perpetrated by men towards women, in intimate partner relationships as a form of violence against women and girls.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals of all sex ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
Sexual Orientation		
Positive Impact	<p>Likelihood score:</p> <p>Impact score:</p> <p>Overall score:</p>	<p>LGBTQ+ victims experience well-established forms of abuse; they are also subject to other forms of abuse specific to their LGBTQ+ status and a general landscape of discrimination. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia or manipulation of someone's internalised Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia • Conversion therapy • Threats to 'out' someone to their family/ colleagues/ friends • Withholding housing or financial support from them • Withholding medication or access to healthcare <p>LGBTQ+ people can also face difficulties in disclosing abuse. The history of violence and legal discrimination as well as the general homo/trans/biphobia in British society can dissuade LGBTQ+ victim-survivors from disclosing for fear of giving a community already being marginalised a 'bad name'. Fear of 'outing' themselves by reporting. This is often compounded when living in smaller towns and rural areas and can make it difficult for the abused partner to seek help.</p> <p>Heteronormative assumptions may lead Police and other agencies to misunderstand the situation as a 'fight' between two men or women rather than a violent intimate relationship.</p> <p>Most information on domestic abuse relates to the experiences of heterosexual women. This lack of understanding means that some people may not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe it happens in LGBTQ+ relationships. • Recognise their experience of domestic abuse as that. • Know how to respond if they see domestic abuse being experienced by their friends or family. <p>Harbour data shows that referrals from people who identify as LGBTQ+ is increasing.</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3**

		The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ by ensuring services are accessible for all.
Care Leavers (Local)		
Positive Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	<p>The Domestic Abuse strategy has a whole system approach and ensures that children who are in the care of the local authority can continue to receive support into adulthood.</p> <p>Care Leavers are now exempt from the local connection test when applying for social housing along with victims of domestic abuse which will have a positive impact going forward.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on Care Leavers by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
Armed Forces (Local)		
Positive Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	<p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy has a whole system approach and ensures that vulnerable adults who are or have been in the armed forces receive support. This forms part of our commitment under the Armed Forces Covenant. There is also a support package available via Cleveland Police for veterans in the justice system (Op Nova).</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on Armed Forces personnel and Veterans by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
Poverty and Disadvantage (Local)		
Positive Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	<p>Domestic abuse impacts everyone regardless of their social and economic status. Commissioned services are free at the point of access and non-means tested.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form


Appendix 3

Section 3 - Mitigation Action Plan or Justification

Group(s) impacted	Proposed mitigation	How this mitigation will make a difference	By when	Responsible Officer

Justification If you need to justify your proposed action explain this here

Section 4 - Sign Off

Responsible Officer sign off:	
Name	Olivia Highley
Job title	Domestic Abuse Coordinator
Assistant Director / Director sign off:	
Name	Jill Harrison 
Job title	Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

Once the Single Impact Assessment is completed please send to impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Section 5 - Review (To be completed after implementation)

5.1 Review completed by:		
Name	Job Title	Date review completed

5.2 Did the impact turned out as expected?

5.3 Were the proposed mitigations the correct ones and were they successful in reducing any negative impacts?

5.4 Were there any unexpected outcomes?

Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form**Appendix 3****5.5 Following the review please identify next steps here (Select one)**

- ☐ Additional mitigation required (give details below - 5.6)
- ☐ Original proposed course of action needs to be revisited
- ☐ No further action required

5.6 Additional mitigation(s) or justification

Group(s) impacted	Proposed mitigation	How this mitigation will make a difference	By when	Responsible Officer

Justification If you need to justify your proposed action explain this here

Submit form with completed review to impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk

ⁱ Reducing The Risk <https://reducingtherisk.org.uk/disabilities-and-domestic-abuse/> (Accessed July 2025)

ADULT SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

4 December 2025



Subject: TEESWIDE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT & STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

Report of: Executive Director of Adult Services & Public Health
and Independent Chair of Teeswide Safeguarding
Adults Board

Decision Type: For information

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:

- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives.
(People)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To present the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024/25 and Strategic Plan for 2025-2028.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) was established in order to meet the requirements of the Care Act 2014, which created a legal framework for adult safeguarding, requiring all Local Authorities to set up Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) for their areas.
- 3.2 The four Tees Local Authorities have worked together for a number of years along with strategic partners to promote cooperation and consistency in relation to safeguarding adults work, and this collaborative working has continued, with the statutory responsibility now resting with the TSAB.
- 3.3 Adrian Green was appointed as Independent Chair of TSAB in April 2024 and will present a summary of the report.

4. PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 It is a requirement of the Care Act that a SAB publishes an annual report that sets out:
- what it has done during that year to achieve its objective,
 - what it has done during that year to implement its strategy,
 - what each member has done during that year to implement the strategy,
 - the findings of any safeguarding adults reviews which have concluded in that year,
 - any reviews which are ongoing at the end of that year,
 - what it has done during that year to implement findings of reviews; and
 - where it decides during that year not to implement a finding of a review, the reasons for its decision.
- 4.2 The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report for 2024/25 is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 It is also required under the Care Act that a SAB publishes a strategic plan setting out its strategy for achieving its objective and what members will do implement the strategy.
- 4.4 The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Business Plan for 2025 - 2028 is attached as **Appendix 2**.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	There are no risks associated with this report.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	Statutory partners (Local Authorities, NHS commissioners and Cleveland Police) make an annual contribution to the running costs of the TSAB and the associated Business Unit. There are no additional financial considerations associated with this report.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	Not applicable.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	As set out in the report, there are requirements within the Care Act 2014 in relation to SABs, and specifically the publication of an Annual Report. The attached document ensures that this requirement is fulfilled
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	There are no equality and diversity implications specifically associated with this report. People with protected characteristics can be more vulnerable to

	abuse and TSAB policies and procedures address equality and diversity considerations so that the safeguarding process takes this into account.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There are no staffing considerations associated with this report. The TSAB Independent Chair and Business Unit staff are employed by Stockton Borough Council on behalf of the statutory partners.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There are no asset management considerations associated with this report.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are no environment, sustainability and climate change considerations associated with this report.
CONSULTATION	TSAB uses a wide range of methods to engage with professionals, partners and the wider public including the TSAB website (www.tsab.org.uk), online surveys, conferences, social media, bulletins and media campaigns. A Communications & Engagement Sub Group oversees this work and a Communication & Engagement Strategy is in place. Safeguarding Adults Week runs annually in November and provides additional opportunities to raise awareness.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes and endorses the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024/25 and the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Business Plan for 2025-2028.

7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Safeguarding adults is fundamental to the work of adult services and the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024/25 provides assurance on the delivery of associated statutory requirements.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

Jill Harrison
 Executive Director of Adult Services & Public Health
 Tel: 01429 523911
 Email: jill.harrison@hartlepool.gov.uk

Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 11.11.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 11.11.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 11.11.2025

Annual Report

2024-25



Table of Contents

Introduction from Adrian Green, Independent Chair..... 3

What does the Board do? 4

Board Member Organisations..... 4

Board Structure 5

Sub-Groups..... 5

Key achievements 2024-25 6

Safeguarding Data 2024-25..... 7

Communication and Engagement..... 10

You said, we did..... 12

Training 13

Priority 1: Joint Working..... 14

Priority 2: People 14

Priority 3: Communication..... 16

Priority 4: Services 17

Partner Activity..... 21

Our Priorities 2025-26..... 27

Appendix 1 28

Appendix 2 29

Glossary 30

Introduction from Adrian Green, Independent Chair

Welcome to the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board's 2024/25 Annual Report. The Care Act 2014 requires all Safeguarding Adults Boards to produce an annual report providing the public with information on the progress made against the Board's priorities, the outcomes of safeguarding adult reviews and their recommendations and what the Board has done to improve practice that keeps adults in our communities safe from abuse and neglect.

Our committed partnership members ensure TSAB continues to be very well supported in the delivery of the Board and its Sub-Group's work.

Whilst it is disappointing that we narrowly missed one of our key performance indicators this year, TSAB will work with our partners to deliver an improvement in who is asked about their safeguarding desired outcomes. The Board strives to ensure that the public understands what abuse and neglect is and how to report it. There has been a 7% increase in concerns raised, and whilst not complacent, we hope that these increases are an outcome of the Board's continued engagement work.

The Board is committed to listening to people involved in or affected by safeguarding and I am proud of the work that has been achieved and the 30% increase in responses to our annual survey. This contributes directly to the activities reported within this report's 'You Said' We did' and our Safeguarding Week section. I also commend the partnership's continuing training offer, which last year supported 7,500 learners, helping to keep safeguarding practice up to date and the public safer.

When incidents of concern do occur, the Board has a duty to identify the learning opportunities to prevent reoccurrence, and this report provides a summary of the Safeguarding Adult Review notifications received and the actions undertaken on those that have been published.

As part of our planning cycle, the Board and its partners reviewed our vision and priorities for the next three years and these are presented for your information and will be reported upon from next year.

As ever, budgets are limited, our elderly population continues to increase in number and cases grow in complexity with increased needs. The NHS is in a period of significant restructure with the abolition of NHS England and significant change within the Integrated Care Board responsible for the commissioning of local health services. The TSAB will continue to work with and support our partners to ensure that we continue to prevent and support those at risk of being subject to abuse and neglect. As Chair, I would like to thank all the partners on the Board for their continued commitment and support, in particular the Business Unit team and the Sub-Group chairs.



Adrian Green.
Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Independent Chair.

What does the Board do?

The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) is a statutory body responsible for protecting adults' rights to live independent lives, free from abuse and neglect. The Board works collaboratively with partners to set the strategic direction for adult safeguarding in Tees and seeks assurance from partners that they have appropriate and robust safeguarding arrangements in place.

Board Member Organisations

6 Statutory Partners:

- Cleveland Police
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Council
- NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

24 Non-Statutory Partners:

- A Way Out
- Beyond Housing
- Care Quality Commission
- Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees (Voluntary Development Agency)
- Cleveland Fire Brigade
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Hartlepool Community Trust
- Healthwatch Hartlepool
- Healthwatch South Tees
- Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees
- HMP Holme House Prison
- Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency
- North East Ambulance Service
- North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
- People First
- National Probation Service
- Redcar & Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency
- South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Tees Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
- Teesside University
- Thirteen Housing

Board Structure

The Board has continued to engage with key strategic partnerships across Tees including the Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships, Tees Harm Outside The Home (HOTH) and the Cleveland Anti-Slavery Network as well as regional and national Safeguarding Adults Networks.

Sub-Groups

The Board has a number of Sub-Groups leading on key pieces of work in order to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the Board's Strategic Business Plan 2024/25. The purpose of the Sub-Groups are summarised below.

Communication & Engagement (CE)

Leads the development, implementation and evaluation of a multi-agency strategy aimed at increasing awareness of safeguarding adults and promoting the involvement of adults at risk, carers and advocates in the Teeswide safeguarding adult's processes.

Learning Training & Development (LTD)

Leads the development, implementation and evaluation of a multi-agency learning, training and development strategy.

Operational Leads (OL)

To provide a forum to enable safeguarding adult's operational leads from TSAB partner agencies to share good practice, problem-solve, access peer support and engage in multi-agency audits. The Sub-Group also provides qualitative data to inform the development of person-centred policies, procedures and strategies.

Performance, Audit & Quality (PAQ)

Leads the development and implementation of a performance framework and provides an audit and quality assurance function on behalf of the TSAB.

Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR)

Leads on the development and implementation of the Teeswide SAR Policy and Procedures to ensure that learning from any reviews undertaken locally and nationally is disseminated appropriately. The Sub-Group also considers notifications for SARs and makes recommendations to the Independent Chair.

Task & Finish Groups

During 2024/25 there were a number of Task & Finish Groups to look at specific work streams:

- Adult Exploitation Strategy
- National Safeguarding Adults Week
- Policy, Procedures and Practice
- Annual Consultation Survey Review
- Collaborative Working and Information Sharing between Professionals to Protect Adults
- High Risk Adults Panel Review

Key achievements 2024-25

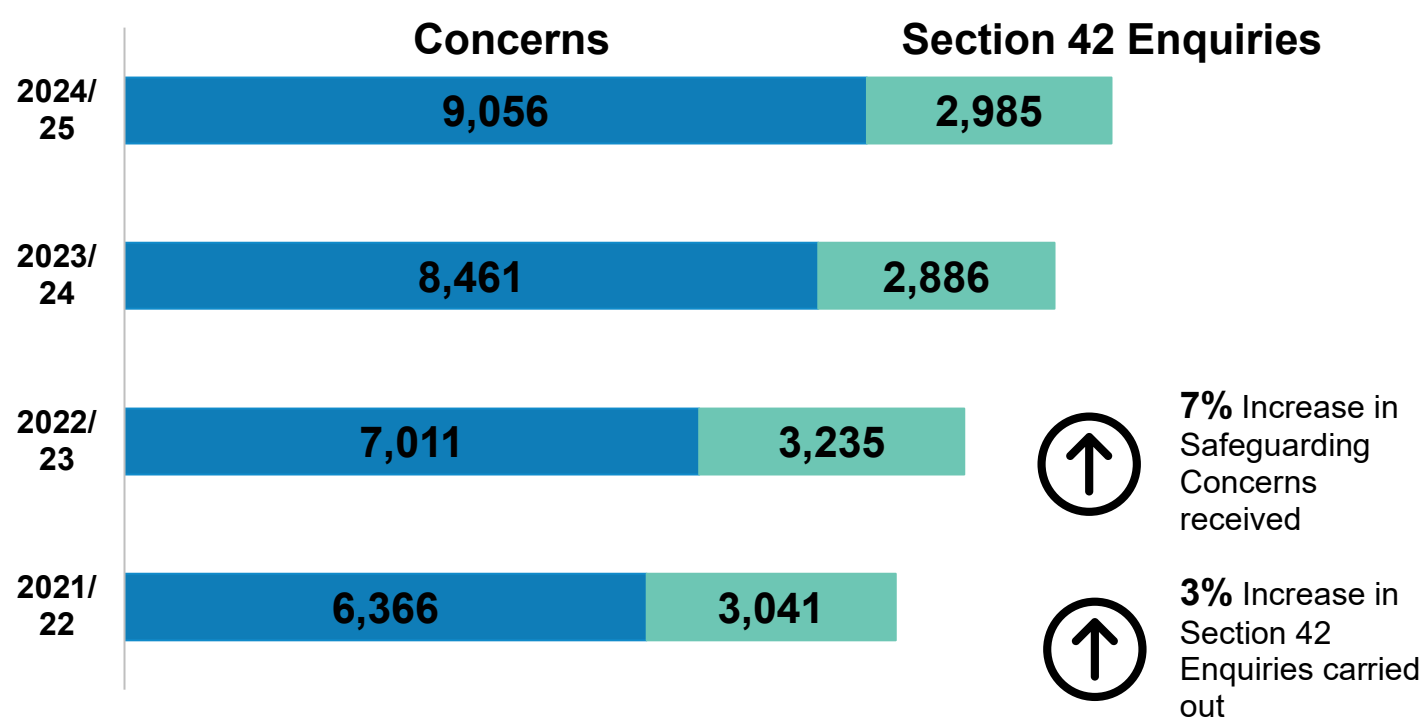


Safeguarding Data 2024-25

Concerns and Section 42 Enquiries¹

Safeguarding Concern - a report made to the lead agency for the safeguarding process to raise concerns of adult abuse/ neglect.

S42 Enquiries - The Care Act 2014 (Section 42) requires that each Local Authority must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and/or neglect.



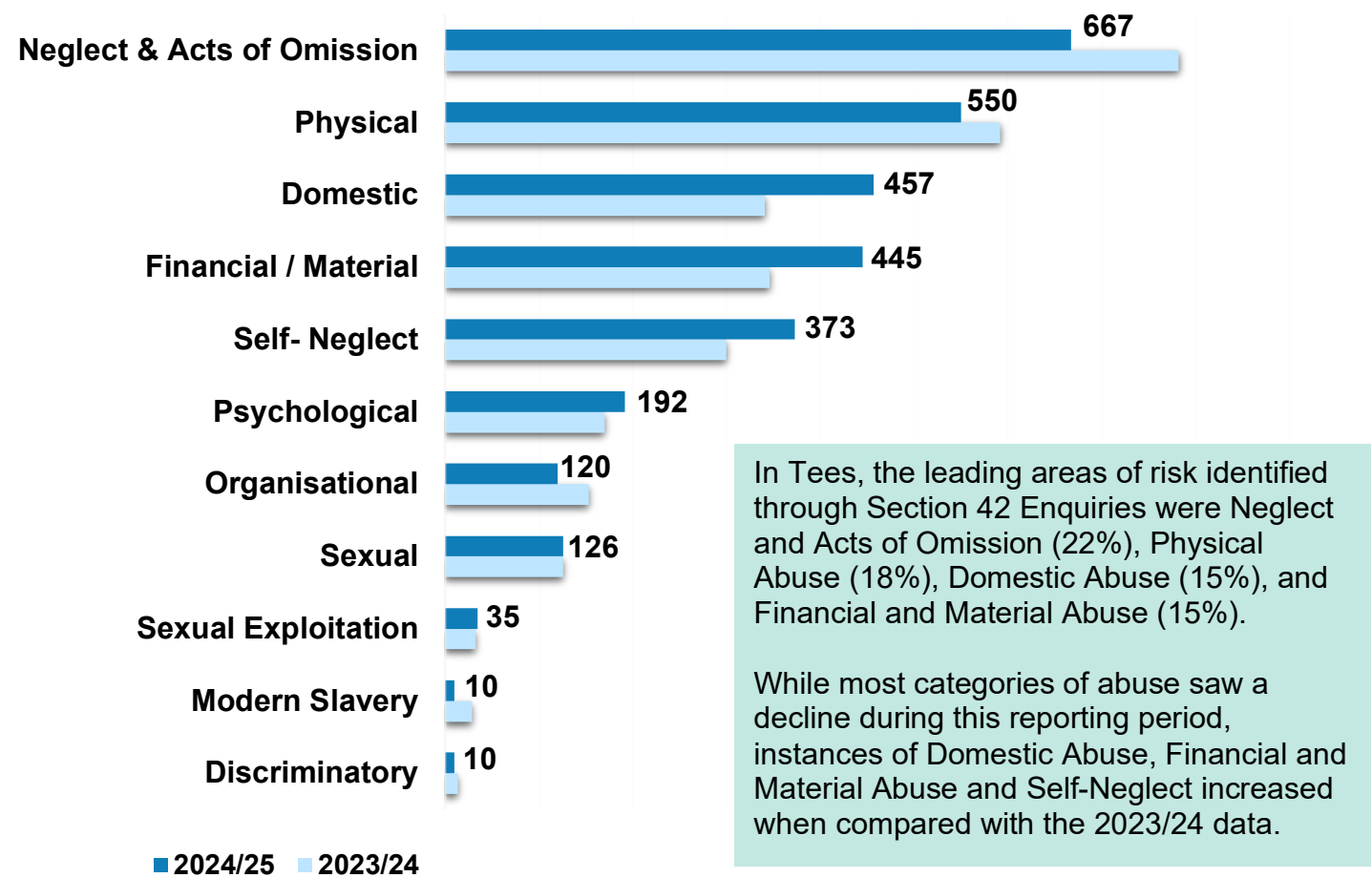
Location of Risk: Section 42 Enquiries



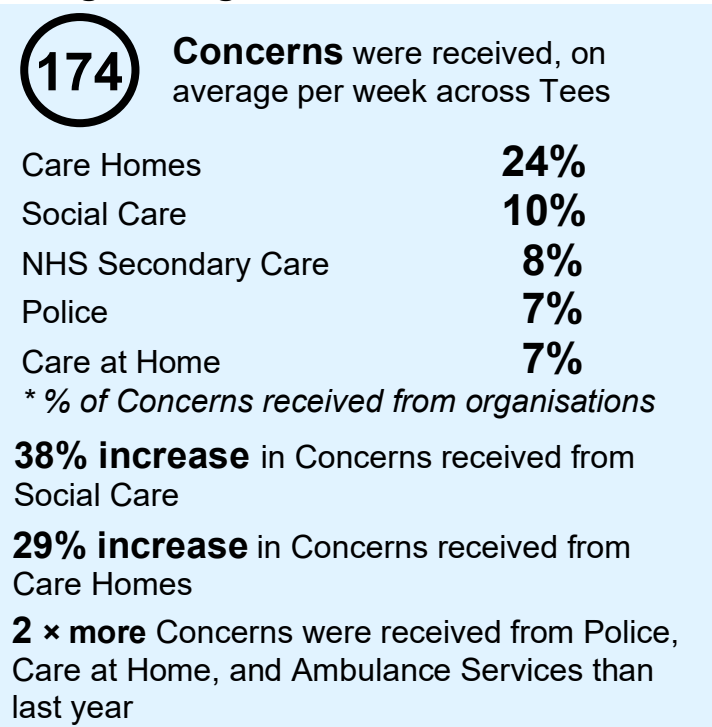
An individual's Own Home remains the most common setting for risk across Tees, reflecting trends observed in previously published national data.

¹ Data on this page relates to Section 42 Enquiries commenced

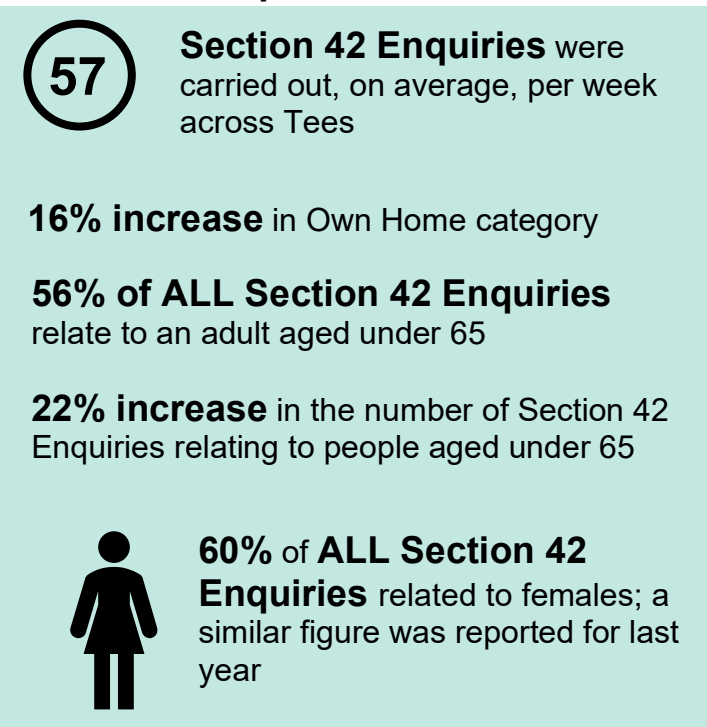
Types of Risk: Section 42 Enquiries

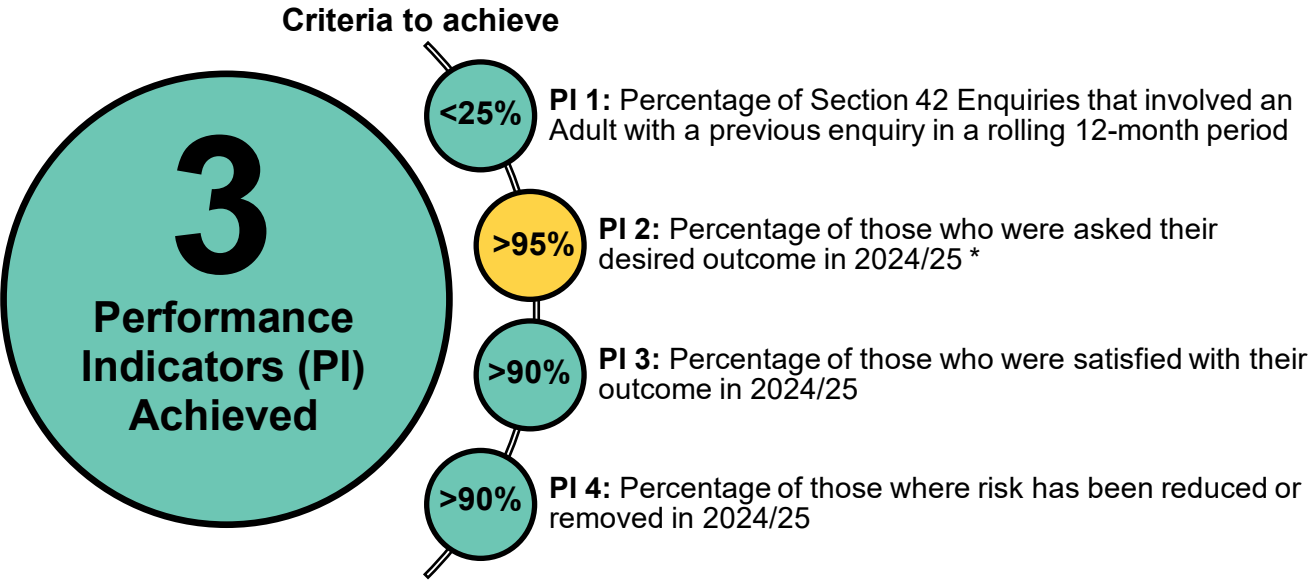


Safeguarding Concerns Received



Section 42 Enquiries Commenced

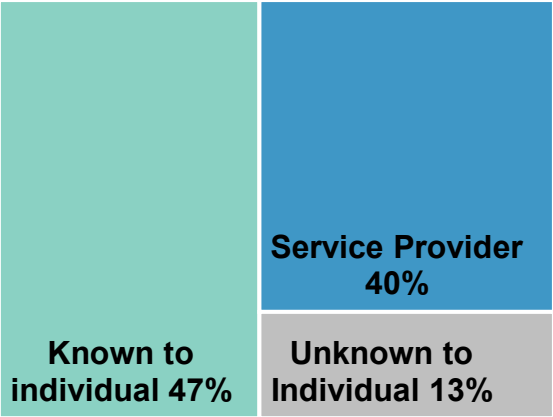




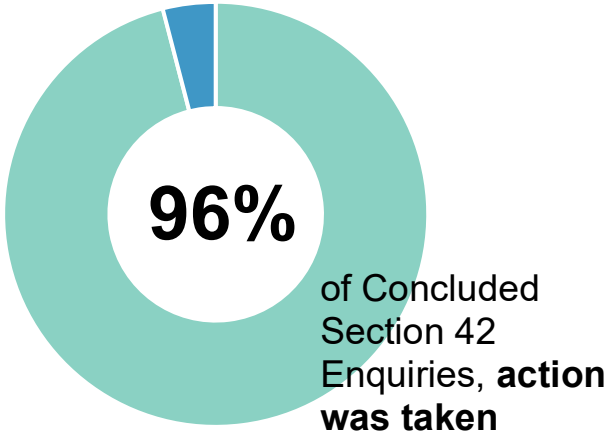
* PI 2 narrowly missed its annual target, with the result falling just short of the expected criteria.

Outcomes of Concluded Sections 42 Enquiries

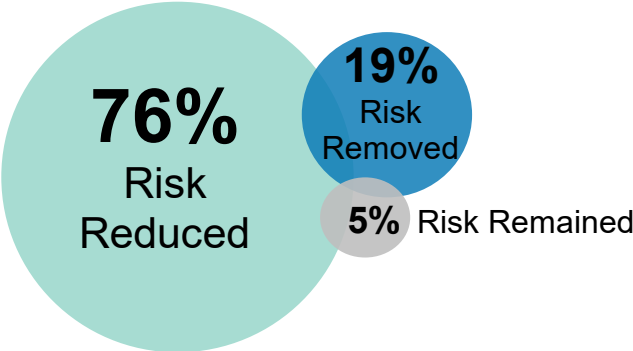
Source of risk to the adult



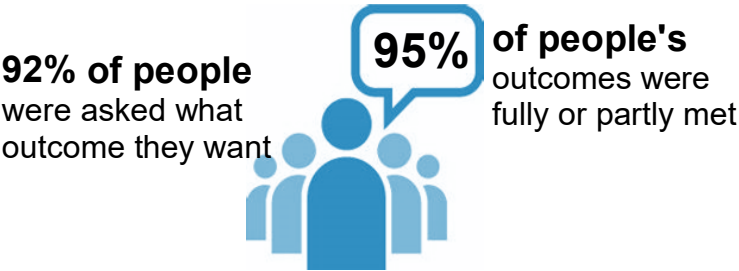
Safeguarding Action



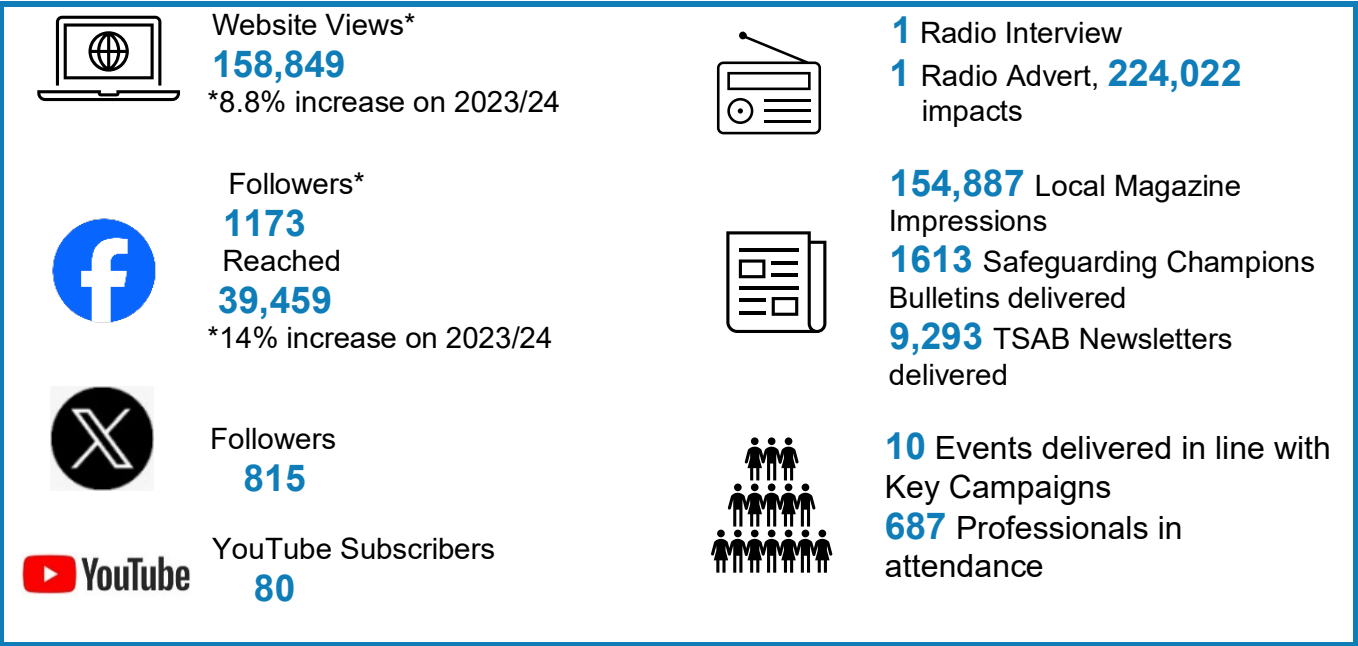
Safeguarding Outcome



Adults Voice



Communication and Engagement



Awareness Raising Campaigns

Throughout the year, the Board engaged collaboratively with partners on a wide range of awareness raising activities, utilising multiple communication and engagement methods with the aim of engaging professionals, members of the general public, harder to reach groups and digitally excluded individuals. The Board participated in a number of national campaigns including National Safeguarding Adults Week, as well as facilitating three local ‘Spotlight On’ Campaigns.

National Safeguarding Adults Week (NSAW) continues to be a key event for the Board, featuring a comprehensive communication and engagement plan of activity. This included a social media campaign, an advert on Hits Radio, and a radio podcast with the Board’s Independent Chair. Adverts featured in the Gazette and Hartlepool Life newspapers. A Safeguarding Poster was displayed by partners on digital screens and printed TSAB Safeguarding Literature was shared by partners, including Safeguarding Bookmarks via home library services in Stockton and Middlesbrough. 5 webinars were held for professionals covering Professional Curiosity, Autism and Suicidality, Financial Abuse and Scams, Exploitation and Cuckooing.

The Board’s ‘Spotlight On’ campaigns included, Carers Week and Elder Abuse Day, Transitional Safeguarding and Discriminatory Abuse.

Safeguarding Champions

The Safeguarding Champions Scheme continues to grow, with **499** professionals from a variety of organisations across Tees currently enrolled (this is a **37.4%** increase when compared to 2023/24). Champions receive a quarterly e-bulletin containing safeguarding information and training and resources to support them to communicate safeguarding messages throughout their networks and communities.

Safe Place Scheme

There are currently **96** [Safe Place](#) locations Teeswide.

The Steering Group, operating under the governance of the Board, continues to oversee the scheme throughout the year. The group monitors the number of venues joining the scheme and discusses additional work led by Safe Place Scheme leads, which further strengthens the scheme within each local authority. During 2024/25 additional work was also carried out to review the information pack for venues and to redevelop the training video for venues.



Involving individuals with lived experience

The Board continues to seek to provide opportunities for members of the general public and those with lived experience to directly influence the work and priorities of the Board. In 2024/25 the Board:

- Co-hosted the “Prioritising Child Sexual Abuse” Roadshow, in conjunction with the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse, Hartlepool & Stockton Safeguarding Children Partnership, South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland. The event included a very impactful presentation from an individual with lived experience.
- Facilitated a Safeguarding Workshop with carers at We Care You Care’s workshop. The feedback from carers prompted the development of two new posters, capturing messages from carers and promoting the service offer available across Tees for carers.
- Sought feedback from members of Stockton’s Lived Experience Forum to support with the review of the Annual Consultation Survey.
- Published and promoted the Annual Consultation Survey between October 2024 and January 2025, providing members of the public, individuals with lived experience and carers, the opportunity to influence the future direction of the Board’s priorities.
- Sought feedback from members of Recovery Connections on the “[Making Services Easier to Engage in Guidance](#)”
- Commissioned work with Signapse² to adapt the “What is Safeguarding?” and “What is Modern Slavery?” animations to include a British Sign Language Interpreter. Feedback was received, including from two deaf individuals, which resulted in positive amendments being made to the videos.
- Redeveloped the [Safe Place Scheme Video](#), involving members of Independent Voices and Larchfield Community. Members of Hartlepool Day Centre and Independent Voices were also involved in the auditing of Safe Place Venues and have provided feedback on the existing Safe Place Scheme Service User Leaflet to support its redevelopment.
- Held a weeklong campaign ‘A Spotlight on Transitional Safeguarding’ in conjunction with the Children’s Partnerships. The campaign featured an online event attended by 212 professionals.

The overwhelming majority of respondents noted the power and impact of hearing from a presenter with lived experience of child sexual abuse.

Prioritising child sexual abuse: Teesside Roadshow Evaluation



² A company using AI technology to create automatic sign language translation

You said, we did...

In 2023/24 367 professionals and 163 members of the public completed our annual survey. You can see below some examples of how these responses have helped to inform the work of the Board in 2024/25:

You said...

Professionals and members of the public felt less informed about Discriminatory Abuse.

We did...

In March 2025 the Board facilitated a week-long campaign 'A Spotlight on Discriminatory Abuse', featuring a webinar for professionals and social media campaign.

You said...

Members of the public felt less informed about psychological abuse.

We did...

In June 2024, as part of 'A Spotlight on Carers Week and Elder Abuse Day', the Board launched a new animation 'Hidden Harms' which explores older adults and domestic abuse, including psychological abuse.

You said...

Make sure individual's needs are listened to and information is shared appropriately and in a timely way with the organisations involved in protecting them.

We did...

Re-developed TSAB's annual survey, with the support of Stockton's Lived Experience Forum. The new survey was launched in October 2024.

Launched two BSL videos on Safeguarding and Modern Slavery, including reporting options for those who are deaf, hard of hearing or are speech impaired. Developed new guidance on information sharing between professionals to protect adults.

You said...

Strengthen links with organisations, children's partnerships and community safety partnerships at a strategic and local level to embed a 'think family' approach to safeguarding.

We did...

Co-hosted the Child Sexual Abuse Roadshow and 'A Spotlight on Transitional Safeguarding' Campaign with the Safeguarding Children's Partnerships across Tees.

You said...

Work more closely in engaging with local communities to report abuse and neglect.

We did...

Delivered a number of awareness raising presentations, including Healthwatch Hartlepool, Stockton Wellbeing Champions, Independent Voices' Staying Safe Workshop and the Deaf Empowering Network.

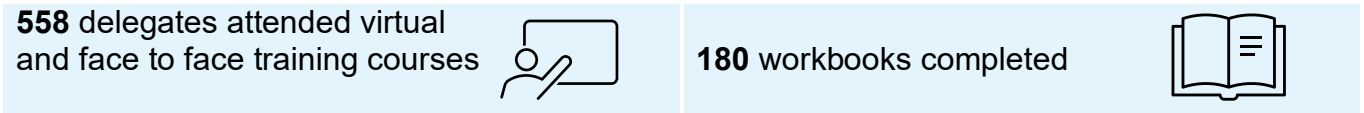
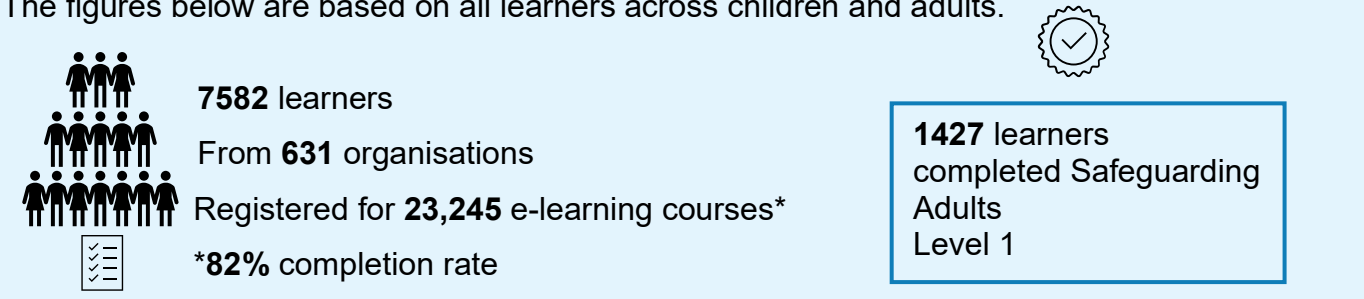
Training

The Board provides free multi-agency training, designed to supplement single agency training provision. The Board continued to deliver its existing training programme as well as commissioning additional courses.

Me-Learning

The Board commissions the e-Learning platform (Me-Learning) in conjunction with the local Safeguarding Children Partnerships. There are often crossovers between children and adult safeguarding work and therefore it is recognised that people who work with children and/or adults greatly benefit from having access to a wide range of safeguarding courses available in one place.

The figures below are based on all learners across children and adults.



Webinars



Webinar Feedback in 2024/25

I have started to think and include clients in the decision when making a safeguarding referral, even more than I used to. I can see that trust between me and the client is being built up, helping the client to be more open and have more courage to ask for help. They are more open to ideas and solutions on how to sort out the problem at hand.

Learner feedback from the Making Safeguarding Personal Webinar

It will impact daily on how we approach, support our clients of domestic abuse and how we work with other professionals in being creative in our professional thinking collectively.

Learner feedback from the Complex Cases Webinar

Priority 1: Joint Working

Aim: We will develop a whole system approach to safeguarding adults which is responsive to individuals' needs, views and wishes.

What we said we would do:

1. Ensure Board partners work together in an effective manner to protect adults from all forms of abuse and neglect.
2. Consider and act upon the impact of new legislation and statutory guidance on safeguarding practice.
3. Engage and Collaborate with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships, Domestic Abuse Steering Groups, Health and Well-being Boards, Tees Exploitation Group (TEG) and partners to deliver joint priorities and objectives.
4. Engage and collaborate with the multi-partnership and multi-agency development work regarding Missing Adults, Transitions, Contextual Safeguarding and Adult Sexual Exploitation.
5. Further embed trauma informed practice, strengths based and person-centred approaches to all safeguarding adults' work.
6. Explore different safeguarding operating models and joint protocols to enhance partnership working and information sharing.

What we did:

- Delivered a multi-agency audit schedule including Domestic Abuse, Transitions and Sexual Exploitation and The High-Risk Adults Panel (HRAP).
- Reviewed the Teeswide Inter-Agency Safeguarding Adults Procedure.
- Shared a draft version of the "Making Services Easier to Engage in" Guidance with members of Recovery Connections to review and provide feedback on. This resulted in changes to the guidance, including the title.
- The Adult Exploitation Strategy was developed, and an implementation group was convened. Progress on the implementation of the strategy will be reported on in 2025/26.
- Held a multi-agency in-person workshop, in collaboration with the Harm Outside the Home Chair and the Children's Partnerships, to begin the development of a Transitions process for children and young people transitioning to adulthood who are experiencing/ at risk of exploitation. Work in this area remains ongoing and will be reported on in 2025/26.
- A member of the TSAB Business Unit attended Stockton's Domestic Abuse Strategy Planning meeting in June 2024, promoting TSAB learning and resources.
- A Task and Finish Group was established to review the High-Risk Adults Panel arrangements across Tees.
- Developed new guidance on Collaborative Working and Information Sharing between Professionals to Protect Adults.
- In May 2024, a Ministerial Letter was sent to Directors of Housing, Adult Social Services, and SAB Chairs in England with recommendations on supporting individuals who are rough sleeping. TSAB held a meeting with partners and appointed a board member to lead a working group. These recommendations are now part of the TSAB Strategic Plan 2025–2028 and will be further detailed in the 2025–2026 annual report.



Collaborative efforts between Adult Social Care and Children's Services have led to significant developments in the transitions process. This work ensures a smooth and timely transfer of support for young people moving into adulthood who require ongoing assistance.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council



Priority 2: People

Aim: We will ensure the workforce is well trained, supported and equipped to safeguard the most vulnerable people within our communities.

What we said we would do:

1. Seek assurance from partners that staff understand the legislative framework and the principles of trauma informed practice to ensure the best outcomes for adults at risk.
2. Seek assurance from partners that staff are provided with single agency Safeguarding Adults training in accordance with the TSAB Training Strategy.
3. Seek assurance from partners that staff are provided with support and training, particularly in relation to the management of high risk/complex cases and with consideration of vicarious trauma.
4. Learn from the findings of local, regional, and national Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR), applicable Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDR), Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews (SCPR) and any other relevant reviews and implement action plans.
5. Provide opportunities for partners to share learning and best practice in all aspects of safeguarding adults work which will promote staff and public confidence.

What we did:

- Introduced impact assessments for managers, to assess the effectiveness of the TSAB training being delivered.
- Included learning from the Molly and James SAR in the Trauma Informed Practice Training.
- Continued to undertake Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) evaluations with Statutory Partners to seek assurance on the training and support provided to staff.
- Following learning identified in the James SAR and [The Domestic Homicide Oversight](#)

Mechanism: Homicide Abuse Learning Together (HALT) Study Briefings, the Board hosted a weeklong campaign 'A Spotlight on Carers Week and Elder Abuse Day'. This included two workshops for professionals 'Identifying and Supporting Carers' and 'Spotting and Stopping Abuse of Older Adults' and the launch of a new animation '[Hidden Harms](#)'.

- In collaboration with the Children's Partnerships, delivered a presentation at 2 GP engagement sessions on the learning from SARs and SCPR's. A total of 101 GP's attended.
- Held a week-long campaign with the Children's Partnerships - "A Spotlight on Transitional Safeguarding", following learning identified in the Jack SAR. The campaign featured an online event, including a presentation on the Jack SAR and Diabetes and Transition.
- Good news stories were shared in the TSAB Newsletter including a significant increase in the number of professionals from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector registered to access Me-Learning and Independent Voices winning 'Innovation Champion at the National SAB Excellence Awards.



The ICB ensures that learning from statutory reviews is disseminated across health commissioned services where agencies are not directly represented, for example primary care. The learning is shared via quarterly engagement sessions with GP safeguarding leads and via the safeguarding professional forum whose members include safeguarding leads from across the private and charity sector.

NENC Integrated Care Board



Priority 3: Communication

Aim: We will provide accessible and clear information, advice and support that helps people to understand what abuse is, how to prevent abuse from happening, how to seek help and how to engage with the work of the Board.

What we said we would do:

1. Ensure mechanisms are in place that enable adults, their families, and their carers to better inform the future direction and priorities of Adult Safeguarding across Tees.
2. Ensure that all public-facing materials are accessible and understandable.
3. Ensure adults and/ or their representatives or advocates who use safeguarding services are asked what they want as outcomes from the safeguarding process and that their views actively inform what happens.
4. Provide tools and resources to facilitate engagement with adults in need of safeguarding support.
5. Ensure the Safeguarding Champions initiative continues to improve engagement with local communities, harder to reach groups, the seldom heard and creates stronger links with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.
6. Ensure robust information sharing across and between agencies and partnerships to ensure the best outcomes for adults using safeguarding services.

What we did:

- A Task and Finish Group was established to review the Annual Consultation Survey and feedback was sought from the Lived Experience Forum. Inclusion North was commissioned to produce an Easy Read version of the new survey. A total of 697 survey responses were received (579 professionals and 118 members of the public) to inform the future direction and priorities of the Board. The total number of surveys completed increased by 31.5% when compared to 2023/24.
- Inclusion North was commissioned to create an updated Easy Read version of the [Protecting Adults from Abuse and Neglect leaflet](#).
- The TSAB website provider was commissioned to support with the work required to ensure the website is accessible to all. Work in this area remains ongoing.
- The Board successfully delivered three Spotlight on Campaigns (Carers Week and Elder Abuse Day, Transitional Safeguarding and Discriminatory Abuse) and National Safeguarding Adults Week to raise the profile of adult safeguarding amongst professionals and the public.
- A gap analysis of Safeguarding Champions was undertaken to support targeted recruitment. Engagement opportunities with professionals via events continue to be utilised to increase the Safeguarding Champion cohort, including the GP engagement sessions which resulted in 26 GP's joining the scheme.
- A Safeguarding Presentation was delivered at Independent Voice's "Staying Safe" Workshop for adults with Learning Disabilities.
- To ensure the Board continues to be inclusive, diverse communication methods have continued to be utilised in 2024-2025 including radio interviews and adverts, resident newsletters, newspapers, leaflets and posters.



We actively promoted Safeguarding Adults Week, sharing key messages and raising awareness. The Council has also championed the recruitment of Safeguarding Champions internally and with partners.

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council



Priority 4: Services

Aim: Services are commissioned and provided by our partners to meet the individual needs of adults who are most at risk of abuse or neglect

What we said we would do:

1. Ensure that adults at risk of neglect and/or abuse can access support services and schemes such as the Safe Place Scheme and Ask ANI.
2. Seek regular assurance from our partners on the safe commissioning and delivery of services.
3. Implement our new performance monitoring processes and systems to obtain accurate, current, and validated information.
4. Provide opportunities to share information about innovative services and solutions for working with people with complex needs.
5. Work with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector to understand and share the range of services and support available to meet the needs of adults most at risk of abuse and neglect.

What we did:

- The Safe Place Scheme training video was redeveloped with support from adults with learning disabilities from Independent Voices and Larchfield Community. Further work to re-develop the service user leaflet with support from Independent Voices and Hartlepool Day Centre is ongoing and will be reported on in 2025/26.
- The “Find Support in your Area” webpage continued to be reviewed, updated and promoted during campaigns. Findings from the Bernadette SAR Practitioner Survey resulted in new services being added to the page including homelessness teams, drug and alcohol services and neighbourhood safety teams.
- The QAF self-audit tool was strengthened to include safe commissioning of out-of-area care and to support service contract arrangements.
- Work remains ongoing to continue developing the TSAB Data Dashboard in PowerBi to incorporate data from other partner agencies.
- Awareness presentations were delivered to number of organisations to raise awareness of adult safeguarding and the work of TSAB, including Stockton Wellbeing Champions, Deaf Empowering Network, Hartlepool Healthwatch and a Provider Forum. An information stall, including TSAB leaflets in different languages was included at the Healthwatch Health and Care Ambassador Event for asylum seekers.
- Members continued to monitor the TSAB performance indicators each quarter via the TSAB Data Dashboard.



Our Access Safeguarding Lead has led on a review of our Safe Places Scheme. This looked at how we support adults to feel safe in our town. Key to this was feedback from residents of Larchfield who provided an insight into how they would like to be supported. They also took part in the TSAB promotional video.

Middlesbrough Council



This year, we strengthened our safeguarding culture by delivering targeted training to new managers and care providers, sharing key learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs), and promoting refreshed self-neglect guidance. Staff and partners were kept informed through forums, newsletters, bite-sized training, and accessible public information, ensuring safeguarding remains at the heart of our community.

Hartlepool Borough Council



Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR)

A SAR is undertaken when agencies who worked with an adult who has been subject to abuse or neglect, come together to find out if they could have done things differently and prevented serious harm or death from happening. A SAR does not blame an individual or organisation for their actions, its purpose is to learn from what happened and identify changes that could help prevent similar harm to others in the future.

Under the Care Act 2014, Safeguarding Adult Boards (SAB) are required to commission a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) when an adult dies or is seriously harmed as a result of suspected or known abuse or neglect and there is reasonable cause for concern about how, or if partners worked together to safeguard the adult.

In 2024/25 a total of 3 [SARs](#) were published: JJ, Jack and Susan

SAR Sub-Group Activity

The role of the Sub-Group is to consider new SAR notifications, to oversee any ongoing SARs or other reviews, ensure any learning from reviews (locally, regionally or nationally) is considered by TSAB partners and taken forward in their own organisations, and to oversee the implementation of action plans arising from review activity across Tees. Membership of the Sub-Group comprises of senior managers from our key partner organisations. The SAR Sub-Group met on a bi-monthly basis, with bi-monthly notification meetings in between to ensure we meet the timescale for the consideration of a new SAR Notification could be met.

SAR Data 2024/25

8 SAR Notifications Considered	2 progressed to a Mandatory SAR	2 progressed to a Discretionary SAR
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4 were No Further Action under Section 44 of the Care Act 2014, however 3 of those cases progressed as a single agency review and learning will be presented to the SAR Sub-Group in 2025/26.

SAR Sub-Group Achievements

- Monitored 14 open cases (as of 31st March 2025)
- No action plans were signed off as complete during 2024/25
- Considered the learning from 5 reports on Regional and National SARs
- 15 learning reports regarding Care Providers who have been subject to the [Responding to and Addressing Serious Concerns \(RASC\)](#) Protocol were considered

North East SAR Champions Network

- A Task & Finish Group was set up in February 2024 to develop Cross Boundary SAR Guidance for Business Units, an update will be reported on in 2025-26.
- Effectiveness of the SAR Escalation Protocol raised nationally.
- National Survey to Business Managers regarding key questions around SARs, such as how timescales are captured.
- Discussed National SAR Analysis, Interface between SARs/Coronial Process and Ministerial Letter re Rough Sleeping.
- Regional offer to practitioners for a number of webinars during National Safeguarding Adults Week 2024.
- Speakers invited from RISE (Safeguarding in Sport) and North East Procurement Framework for Independent Reviewers.

Published Safeguarding Adult Reviews 2024-25 (full reports are available [online](#))

• JJ SAR

JJ was a 23-year-old, White British transgender male. JJ was diagnosed with Childhood Autism, Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorders and Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder. JJ had a number of physical health conditions. JJ was known to use illicit substances and was at risk of death due to misadventure as a result of self-harm. Key findings from JJ's case related to multi-agency working, engagement, legal literacy, risk assessments, safety planning and escalation, protected characteristics, professional challenge, trauma informed care and vicarious trauma.

What we've done to implement recommendations:

- Learning from Regional and National SARs Report involving Discriminatory Abuse
- [Mental Capacity Act Resources Webpage](#) developed and published
- [Professional Challenge Procedure](#) and [Professional Challenge Briefing](#) reviewed
- [Professional Curiosity Briefing](#) reviewed
- Trauma Informed Practice training sessions continued during 2024/25
- Spotlight on Discriminatory Abuse Campaign
- Spotlight on Services article featured in TSAB Newsletter focusing on Hart Gables who support the LGBTQ+ community
- [Trauma Informed Practice Toolkit](#) developed
- Multidisciplinary Guidance Team (MDT) guidance reviewed and strengthened
- Sought assurance from partner agencies on how the learning from this case has been considered, implemented and embedded into practice, via Single Agency Analysis Reports

• Jack SAR

Jack was 20 when he died alone in a hotel room due to diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). He had been placed in the hotel under the severe weather protocol having been no fixed abode. He was known to both Stockton and Middlesbrough Council's Safeguarding Teams. There were concerns regarding self-neglect due to mismanagement of his diabetes, substance use disorders and homelessness. Key findings from Jack's case related to self-neglect due to mismanagement of diabetes, substance misuse, homelessness/housing, transitional safeguarding, cross boundary working, engagement and mental capacity.

What we've done to implement recommendations:

- [Making Services Easier to Engage in Guidance](#) developed and published
- Learning from Regional and National SARs Report involving Transition
- Rough Sleeping Workshop convened
- Learning from Regional and National SARs Report involving Diabetes
- Multi-Agency Audit focusing on Transition
- Themed discussion on Transition at Operational Leads Sub-Group
- Spotlight on Transitional Safeguarding Campaign
- Transitional Safeguarding Webinar (included an overview of Jack's SAR and a speaker who talked about the risks associated with diabetes)
- Spotlight on Services article featured in TSAB Newsletter focusing on Matrix Neurological who support people with brain injuries
- Sought assurance from partner agencies on how the learning from this case has been considered, implemented and embedded into practice, via Single Agency Analysis Reports

• Susan SAR

Susan had a stroke when she was 37 leaving her with physical disabilities and communication difficulties. Susan was supported by her mother and other family members including her son. Susan's son had a diagnosed psychotic illness that was well managed when he took his medication. Susan's mother was also a huge support to Susan's son, ensuring that he took his medication and attended his appointments. Susan's son became mentally unwell following the death of his grandmother when he stopped taking his medication. Susan's son assaulted Susan. She died 18 days later at the age of 58 from unrelated physical health causes. Key findings from Susan's SAR were related to effective good practice, professional curiosity, triaging of assessments, flagging of previous Safeguarding Concerns.

What we've done to implement recommendations:

- [Professional Curiosity Briefing](#) reviewed
- [Professional Curiosity Webinars](#) held during Safeguarding Adults Week delivered by the Susan author
- Good practice discussion held on enabling a professionally curious workplace at the Operation Lead Sub-Group
- Learning from the SAR incorporated into the Complex Cases and Safeguarding Training for managers courses
- Sought assurance from partner agencies on how the learning from this case has been considered, implemented and embedded into practice, via Single Agency Analysis Reports

SAR Findings Not Implemented

Molly Recommendation: *The local Crown Prosecution Service should identify how the current national review (Operation Soteria) will be implemented locally and provide updates to TSAB.*

Attempts were made to raise the criminal justice issues in Molly's case, together with Newcastle SAB and their findings from Operation Sanctuary and Thematic Analysis of SARs involving ASE via the National SAR Escalation Protocol. Local discussions were paused until the national picture was known. No formal response was received in relation to the criminal justice issues raised. TSAB tried to pursue this locally by writing to local CPS contacts. No response was received, and the action was marked as 'incomplete' in September 2024.

Partner Activity

Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) continues to support the work of the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), with representatives chairing both the Communication & Engagement and Safeguarding Adult Review Sub-Groups. These Sub-Groups promote multi-agency engagement, sharing best practice, embedding learning from reviews, and the development of local policy. We regularly promote the Board's work through articles in our adult staff newsletter and resident magazine Hartbeat and actively support Spotlight On campaigns and National Safeguarding Adults Week. The Council also engages with local safeguarding champions and providers to share learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs). Our commitment to adult safeguarding was recognised with a 'Green' rating in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), which highlighted our work with elected members as good practice. This was reflected in a Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating, which identified strengths including a strong multi-agency safeguarding partnership and effective systems, processes and practices to safeguard people from abuse and neglect. In 2024/25, we invested in approaches that support Trauma-Informed Practice and Making Safeguarding Personal. The CQC recognised this, noting that safeguarding enquiries were carried out with the person's wishes and best interests at the centre, that the local authority was very person-focused and responsive to safeguarding concerns, and that people were supported to participate in the safeguarding process as much as they wanted and helped to understand safeguarding.



Middlesbrough Council (MBC) have championed and supported the development of the Adult Exploitation Strategy and look forward to progressing its vision through the Adult Exploitation Working Group. During National Safeguarding Adults Week in November 2024, we hosted events to raise staff awareness, including a presentation from Social Work England on fitness to practice and a session focused on understanding exploitation. Practitioners heard from guest speakers from Cleveland Police and took part in group activities covering Safe Places, the Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Exploitation Pathway, identification of Adult Exploitation, and use of the TSAB Exploitation Tool. The session concluded with a presentation from CC Inform highlighting learning resources for staff. To increase public awareness in Middlesbrough, we created simple posters and social media messages encouraging recognition of abuse and how to report or access support. In 2024, Middlesbrough developed a provider engagement event for Safeguarding Adults Week: Let's Start Talking – Taking the Lead on Safeguarding in Your Organisation. In November 2024, we held our second Professional and Organisational Learning Day, supporting agencies and commissioned providers to learn from partners including My Sisters Place, A Way Out, Halo, Arch, and DePaul, and to share work around Prevent, fraud awareness, and safeguarding outreach. During Social Work Week in March 2025, we shared learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs), highlighting the challenges faced by informal carers. Presentations were delivered alongside colleagues from the Dementia Hub, We Care You Care, and Teesside Hospice, and the event was opened to TSAB Sub-Group members



Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) has made a strong and proactive contribution to the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) Strategic Business Plan for 2024–2025. We have continued to support the Board in achieving the aims and objectives of the Strategic Plan, including chairing the Learning, Training & Development Sub-Group, the Adult Exploitation Strategy Working Group, and actively contributing to other TSAB Sub-Groups. The Council has strengthened its Making Safeguarding Personal processes to ensure the voice of the adult informs learning after safeguarding procedures conclude. Learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) has been widely shared and embedded within the service. A robust process has been developed to ensure safe admissions for individuals placed in bed-based provision outside the borough. Work continues with the intelligence team to improve data quality, and staff have actively engaged in TSAB training opportunities. We also completed the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), achieving an overall Green rating. Our Care Home Out of Authority Provider Assurance Form was identified as an area of best practice and shared with members of the Operational Leads Sub-Group.



Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) actively supported the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board's (TSAB) strategic priorities throughout 2024/25. Our initiatives and campaigns were guided by the message that safeguarding is everyone's business and the six key safeguarding principles, which are central to protecting our communities. We maintained a strong collaborative approach, working with partners including the Police, NHS, Probation, Housing, and the Voluntary Sector. This multi-agency work ensured the needs and voices of those requiring support were met and heard. A key initiative was the implementation of the Right Care, Right Person approach within Adult Social Care (ASC), with training provided to partners. SBC contributed to the development of the Teeswide Adult Exploitation Strategy 2024–2027, informed by learning from Molly's Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR). To continuously improve our practice, staff members across Adult Social Care (ASC) received regular updates on local, regional, and national SARs and Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs). The Adult Safeguarding Team supported the development of Trauma-Informed Practice Guidance to embed this approach in frontline work which is essential when working with vulnerable adults. We actively engaged in and promoted access to the High Risk Adults Panel (HRAP), Peer Advocacy and a new idea has been developed jointly with our colleagues from SBC Housing of the Repeat Homeless and Rough Sleeper Team project as part of the Council's wide Powering Our Future initiative. We proudly supported National Safeguarding Adults Week (Nov 18–22, 2024), themed Working in Partnership, through events that engaged staff, partners, and the public in raising awareness of abuse, prevention, and reporting. The Make it Real Board continued to be recognised for its contributions, with experts by experience central to service delivery and co-production, especially in assessments and risk management. To assure TSAB of service quality, we completed several audits, including the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), achieving a 'Green' rating across all domains demonstrating our commitment to providing safe and responsive services.



Cleveland Police have actively supported TSAB priorities through daily collaboration and subject matter expertise in review work. The force is a committed member of the SAR Governance arrangements, contributing to all SAR reviews and learning activities. An enhanced SAR tracker has been developed to monitor progress and ensure accountability in implementing recommendations. Cleveland Police completed its bi-annual TSAB self-audit, fully contributing to the Adult Safeguarding QAF assessment demonstrating operational alignment with TSAB standards achieving a Green Rating. This rating confirms consistent excellence in adult safeguarding practices, supported by evidence of good practice. The force continues to support and promote TSAB awareness campaigns, annual surveys, and newsletters via social media. Cleveland Police maintains strategic leadership in MARAC through the Detective Superintendent Adult Safeguarding Lead. Ongoing efforts are in place to strengthen and improve operational MARAC arrangements. Additionally, Cleveland is a pilot force for the Domestic Abuse Protection Order, reflecting innovation and leadership in safeguarding and its commitment to tackling violence against woman and girls and Domestic Abuse. Working with partners from within the local strategic sex work forum, Cleveland Police has devised guidance for all officers when dealing with sex workers, particularly within the engagement role. Sex Work Liaison officers have been trained on all districts within the force area, whose role now includes building relationships and engagement with sex workers. The aim of this is to increase confidence in Cleveland Police and encourage reporting. Work is ongoing with regards to our attendance at adult strategy meetings, to ensure attendance where required, and that the record keeping is consistent. This will ensure better outcomes for vulnerable adults. Cleveland Police continues to demonstrate strategic alignment, operational focus, and proactive engagement with TSAB priorities. The force's contributions reflect a strong commitment to safeguarding adults across Tees wide.



North-Tees, Hartlepool (NTHFT) & South Tees (STHFT) Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust continue to contribute to high-risk panels, audits, and multi-agency task groups on policy, procedures, and pathways, alongside this we revised and developed internal guidance to support staff in safeguarding adults at risk. This includes policies on patients with known mental illness absconding from ED, missing in-patients, rapid tranquillisation, and non-attendance of appointments. Weekly vulnerable adults' meetings continued to bring together specialist staff to address concerns requiring further intervention. While North Tees supports this work, some policies differ slightly however, alignment is underway. Weekly safety panels are in place across both Trusts to ensure timely responses. Training compliance improved, with strengthened links between adult and children's services, highlights include an April Transitions conference, protected supervision time for operational leads and the young people's diabetes team, and continued placements for student nurses and medical students. Learning from reviews was shared via training, communications, and governance structures. The Mental Health Steering Group oversees training gaps and strengths, with trauma-informed care remaining a priority. We supported national and Board campaigns including Mental Health Awareness Week, World Suicide Prevention Day, VAWG 16 Days of Action, Discriminatory Abuse, and National Safeguarding Adults Week. Safeguarding Champions received enhanced communication to promote resources and learning within clinical teams. A multi-agency approach to Right Care Right Person (RCRP) was undertaken, with communications to ED and Urgent Treatment teams clarifying responsibilities where police are not the appropriate first response. Progress continues toward electronic patient records and process alignment across sites. South Tees

completed the QAF, which was well received and highlighted good practice in transitional work and supervision with the young people's diabetes team. Both sites have completed their QAF action plans. As part of the Mental Health Strategy, a central staff site continues to offer up-to-date guidance and signposting for mental health support offering up-to-date information, guidance, and signposting to national, local and internal sources of mental health support for patients, relatives and colleagues.



North East & North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board (ICB) maintains a strong commitment to prevention and early intervention, recognising their importance in safeguarding children, families, and adults. The ICB continues to implement national guidance, lead in its convening role, and drive engagement and collaboration across multi-agency partnerships. It remains committed to learning from safeguarding reviews and incidents to improve outcomes, keeping the voice of the population central to its work. Designated leads attend NHS provider safeguarding committees to monitor performance, ensure compliance with safeguarding standards and contractual obligations, and assess the safety and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. As a statutory partner, the ICB contributes to each safeguarding partnership/board's annual report, outlining key achievements and priorities. Safeguarding and quality governance is maintained through local delivery teams and wider ICB structures, ensuring continued oversight and contribution to partnership work. The ICB supports Safeguarding Adult Reviews through Governance Group membership and by engaging primary care services where relevant. It actively participates in Sub-Groups, chairs the Performance, Audit and Quality (PAQ) Sub-Group, and contributes to focused priority work. In 2024, the ICB engaged in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), providing assurance of effective safeguarding processes. It also supported other partners in the QAF process, offering guidance on health-related aspects. The ICB promotes the TSAB training offer and shares new or updated guidance across primary care networks.



Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) successfully completed its Quality Assurance Framework submission, receiving positive feedback and an overall 'Green' rating. The Trust has strengthened safeguarding training by re-establishing its internal domestic abuse training package and developing a new MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) training package. Topical safeguarding sessions were delivered to safeguarding link professionals, and National Safeguarding Week was actively promoted across hospital sites. In 2024/25, TEWV launched its Co-creation Framework, co-developed over several months to define core values and typologies of co-creation for use internally and with external partners. A co-produced video was also created to support the implementation of a Think Family approach, promoting holistic and inclusive care. The Organisational Learning Group continued to evolve, enhancing how safeguarding learning is shared across the Trust. Safeguarding learning is regularly disseminated, and new communication methods are being explored to improve access to learning resources. NICHE undertook a Phase 2 Assurance Review of Practice and Governance in 2024/25, focusing on patient safety incidents, complaints, and safeguarding events. The final report, published in December 2024, provided good assurance that governance of quality concerns and overall quality governance meet expected standards. The Trust reviewed its safeguarding supervision arrangements and developed a plan to extend all-age safeguarding supervision to a wider range of services in 2025/26, further strengthening support and oversight.



Healthwatch Stockton continues to actively support the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) through a range of communication and engagement activities. Between April 2024 and March 2025. We have promoted TSAB campaigns, surveys, newsletters, and training opportunities across our social media channels, with 18 dedicated posts on Facebook/X and 3 on LinkedIn, reaching hundreds of local residents. We have also featured TSAB content in our quarterly newsletters, including the Summer 2024 edition sent to over 440 subscribers and published multiple TSAB articles on our website, including updates on safeguarding initiatives, newsletters, and the annual survey. In addition to this, Healthwatch Stockton is exploring opportunities to further support safeguarding priorities through our Enter & View programme. This statutory function enables us to gather anonymous feedback from service users, families, and staff, helping to identify concerns and promote safer outcomes. As new models of care are rolled out across the region, we are also working to ensure that referral pathways are inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse communities. We remain committed to amplifying public voice and supporting system-wide safeguarding efforts, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with TSAB.



Healthwatch Hartlepool over the past year, has continued to support and promote the strategic priorities of the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB). We regularly share links to the TSAB newsletter and other safeguarding information across our social media platforms to help raise public awareness of adult safeguarding issues and processes. Staff and volunteers have accessed a range of safeguarding training modules via the TSAB website. Safeguarding training is a mandatory component of both our Volunteer Induction and Enter and View training programme, ensuring all team members are equipped to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.



Hartlepower Community Trust continues to support the work of the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), primarily through attendance at TSAB meetings and contributing to discussions from a voluntary sector perspective. We actively promote TSAB's work by sharing the TSAB newsletter with approximately 430 subscribers to our own newsletter. Through our support for both aspiring and established voluntary organisations, we champion TSAB values and priorities, emphasising the importance of adult safeguarding and how to apply sound safeguarding practice



Thirteen Group continues to support the Board in promoting awareness campaigns, the annual survey and the TSAB Newsletter on social media. Thirteen also promote TSAB material, including courses, surveys and campaigns in their own Newsletter which is uploaded to our intranet for our 1600 colleagues to read and be informed. Colleagues utilise the training opportunities available through TSAB to continue to develop their knowledge and skills around adult safeguarding. Thirteen is also a member of various groups that feed into the board i.e. Operational Safeguarding Leads and Multi Agency Audit groups. As part of our prevention work, we have delivered several Dementia Friends sessions, these have been in partnership with Dementia Action Teesside and to date we have over 450 Dementia Friends here at Thirteen.



The National Probation Service in Stockton, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, and Redcar, have worked throughout the year to improve our response to Safeguarding Adults, guided by the most recent Self-Assessment (QAF) Audit supported by TSAB. We now have named Safeguarding Adults Champions and are enhancing our response to Domestic Abuse through joint work with the police. We are also focused on embedding trauma-informed practice across our services. Our aim is to improve engagement, identify when safeguarding is required, enable signposting to specialist agencies, and gain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind individuals' behaviors. To support this, every Probation Practitioner is completing learning on Trauma-Informed Practice, which includes lived experience presentations and specialist training for designated practitioners within the PDUs on the Trauma Recovery Model. These practitioners are currently sharing their learning within teams as part of mandatory continuous professional development events.



Our Priorities 2025-26

2025-26 will see the implementation of a new three-year [Strategic Plan](#), with new priorities, aims and objectives.

Priority: Information, Engagement and Involvement

Aim: We will provide accessible clear information, advice and support to engage and involve the workforce and local communities in helping to understand what abuse is, how to prevent abuse from happening, how to seek help, and how to engage with the work of the Board.

Priority: Confident, Competent Practice

Aim: We will ensure the workforce, across all sectors, is well trained, supported, competent and confident to safeguard adults within our communities.

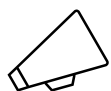
Priority: Emerging Challenges and Enabling Solutions

Aim: We will be responsive to emerging trends and challenges and provide a solutions and outcomes focused co-ordinated response to safeguarding issues.

The **six safeguarding principles** set out in the Care Act 2014 will underpin the Board's strategic aims and objectives and all aspects of safeguarding adults work across Tees:

1. Empowerment
2. Proportionality
3. Partnership
4. Prevention
5. Protection
6. Accountability

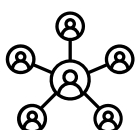
The Board's [Strategic Business Plan 2025-28](#) has been developed following feedback from the Annual Consultation Survey 2024/25 and feedback from the Board's Development Day. The top 3 priorities identified by professionals, service users and the general public included within the Strategic Plan are as follows:



1. Raise awareness of how professionals and organisations can better support those who have experienced trauma to access and engage with services.



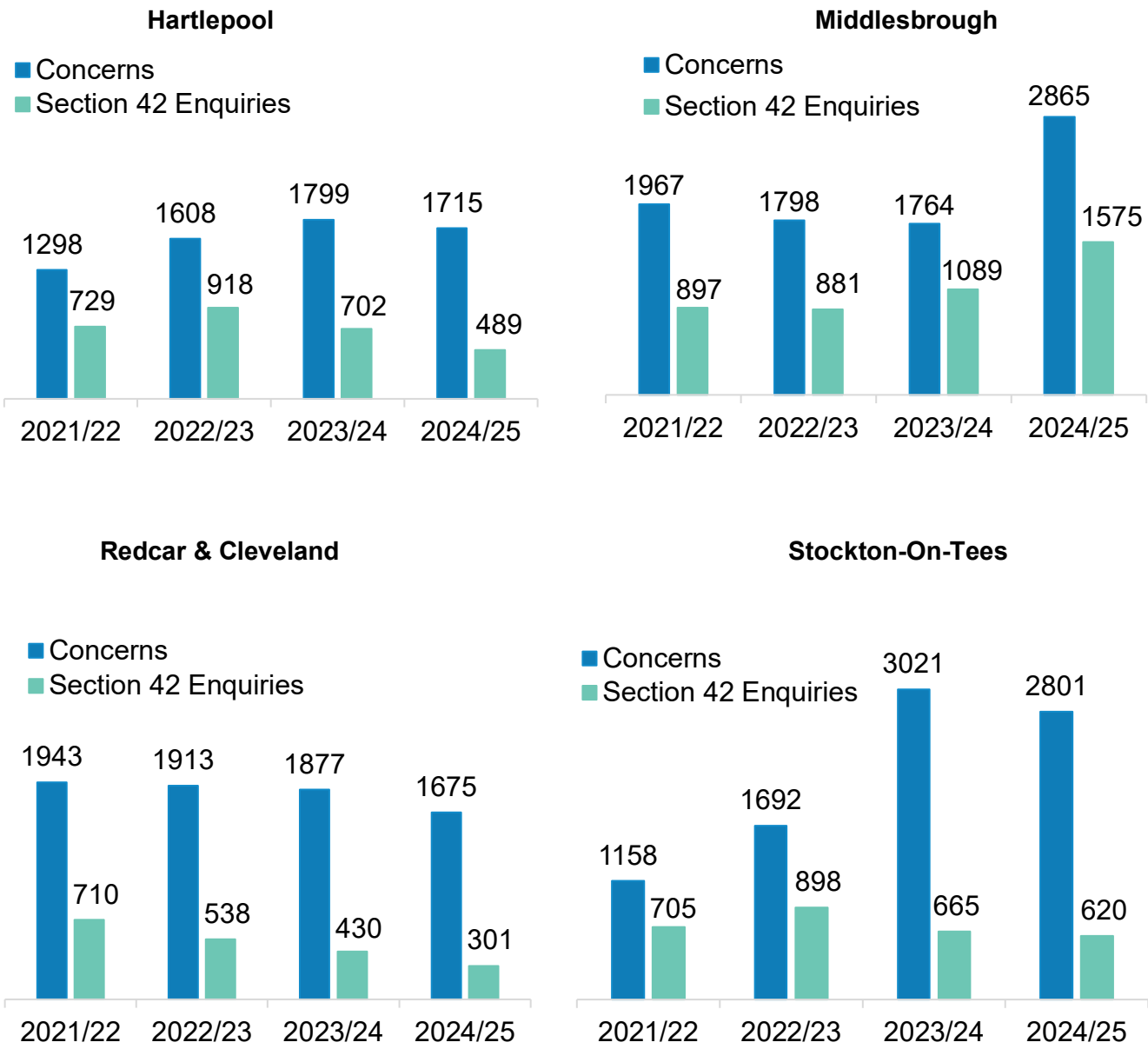
2. Work more closely in engaging with local communities and local services on how to report concerns of abuse and neglect.



3. Work more closely with organisations to improve the lives of people and families most at risk of abuse and neglect.

Appendix 1

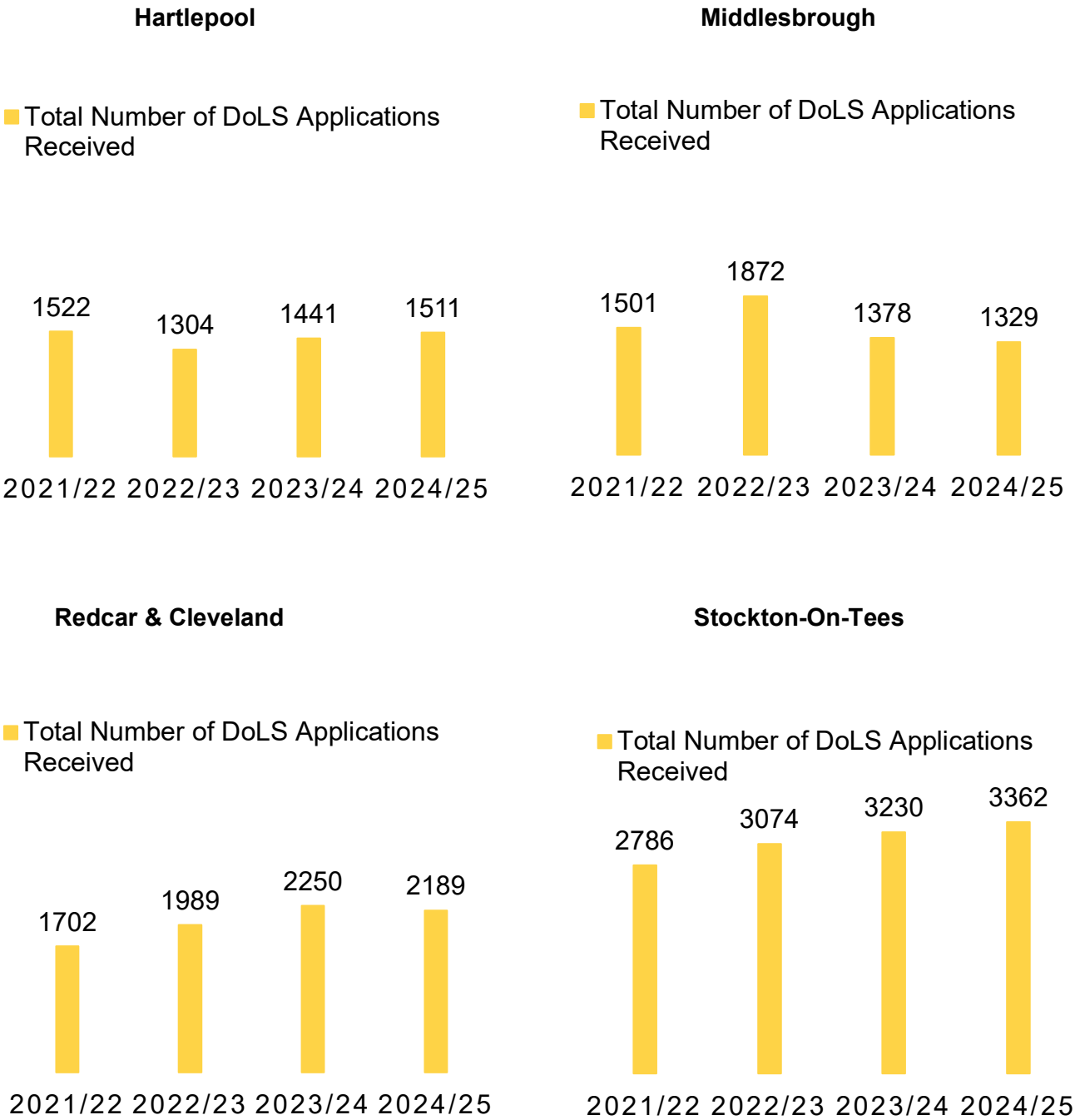
Concerns and Section 42 Enquiries by Local Authority in Tees:



Appendix 2

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, under The Mental Capacity Act 2005, provide legal protection for those individuals who are 18 years old and above and who are, or may become deprived of their liberty in a hospital or care home.

Total Number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Applications Received:



Glossary

Ask ANI - The Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) codeword scheme was developed by the Home Office to allow victims of domestic abuse to access support from the safety of their local pharmacy during in the pandemic. The guidance was withdrawn in October 2024, with the scheme being no longer available in pharmacies from November 2024 due to pandemic measures being removed however, the Safe Spaces scheme continues to operate in pharmacies, banks, and building societies across the UK, providing a safe place for victims to seek help.

ASE (Adult Sexual Exploitation) - Sexual exploitation is the sexual abuse of an adult in exchange for attention, affection, food, drugs, shelter, protection, other basic necessities and/or money, and could be part of a seemingly consensual relationship. It involves someone taking advantage of an adult, sexually, for their own benefit through threats, bribes, and violence.

Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDR) - Formerly known as Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), DARDR is a multi-agency review which seeks to identify and implement lessons learnt from deaths which have, or appear to have, resulted from domestic abuse, either by homicide or suicide.

DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) - are part of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005. The Safeguards aim to make sure that people in care homes and hospitals are looked after in a way that does not inappropriately restrict their freedom.

HRAP (High Risk Adults Panel) - The purpose of the High Risk Adults Panel is to work in collaboration with a core group of multi-agency professionals and extended members to reduce/remove or manage the risk of 'our' most vulnerable individuals who are identified as being complex and at high risk of harm.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) - is an initiative which aims to develop a person-centred and outcomes focus to safeguarding work in supporting people to improve or resolve their circumstances. MSP is applicable to all agencies working with adults in relation to safeguarding, including those at the initial stages of a Safeguarding Concern being identified.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) - information sharing and action planning meeting for victims of domestic abuse who are at risk of serious harm or death.

Power BI – Power BI is a data visualisation tool that pulls together information to produce high quality performance reports.

RASC (Responding to and Addressing Serious Concerns) - a TSAB policy and procedure which sets out the framework for dealing with serious concerns of care providers on a multi-agency basis.

Rough Sleeping - the most acute and extreme form of homelessness that is characterised by someone about to, or actually, bedding down in the open air (such as on the street, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments) or places not designed for habitation (including cardboard boxes, stairwells, cars and other makeshift and not fit for purpose places). Rough

sleeping does not include instances of those in hostels, shelters, recreational shelters such as campsites or spaces of protest, squatters, and travellers.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews - A Safeguarding Adults Review is a statutory requirement of the Care Act 2014 (Section 44). The purpose of a SAR is to:

- Determine what the relevant agencies and individuals involved in the case might have done differently that could have prevented harm or death.
- Learn lessons from the case and apply the learning to future cases to prevent similar harm occurring again.
- Explore examples of good practice where this is likely to inform and improve inter-agency practice.

The Care Act 2014 sets out the criteria for carrying out a SAR and SABs **must** carry out a review if:

- There is reasonable cause for concern about how the Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB), its members or other persons involved worked together to safeguard the adult; **and**
- The adult has died, and it is known or suspected that the death resulted from abuse or neglect, including self-neglect; **or**
- The adult is alive, but it is known or suspected that they have experienced serious abuse or neglect, including self-neglect.

Safeguarding Champions - volunteers from a broad range of organisations that are far reaching and able to link directly with the community and clients they support.

Safe Place Scheme - Safe Place Scheme locations are venues in the community where people who need extra support can go if they need some help. This 'help' can range from a phone call to home or help with directions.

The idea is that vulnerable people can use these venues if they are feeling unsafe, whilst out in the community. Many who benefit from the scheme may never actually need to use it, but the existence of the 'Safe Place' venues allows people to feel safer and go out and about more (live more independently).

Service User – someone who uses health and/or social care services.

Vicarious Trauma – is sometimes referred to as 'secondary trauma'. Anyone who engages empathetically with survivors of traumatic incidents can be affected and experience trauma themselves through their connection with the person.



www.tsab.org.uk



Neighbourhood 1.1 - Adults and Health and Wellbeing, Dunedin
House Columbia Drive, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 6BJ



01642 527263



@TeeswideSAB



@TeeswideSAB



See it, report it!

If you suspect a neighbour, friend or family member is being neglected or abused,
or you need help yourself.

Call **Cleveland Police** 101 or 999 in an emergency.
Call your local Adult Social Care Team:

Hartlepool:	01429 523 390	iSPA@hartlepool.gov.uk
Middlesbrough:	01642 065 070	adultaccessteam@middlesbrough.gov.uk
Redcar & Cleveland:	01642 771 500	AccessAdultsTeam@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
Stockton-on-Tees:	01642 527 764	FirstContactAdults@stockton.gov.uk
Evenings and Weekends:	01642 524 552	



TSAB Strategic Business Plan 2025-28

April 2025 / V1

Contents

Vision..... 3

What we do 3

Safeguarding Principles 3

The Board’s Planning Cycle..... 4

Measuring Success..... 4

Priorities and Aims 5

Board Priorities 6

Vision:

**Adults in the Tees area with care and support needs
can live safely, free from abuse and neglect.**

What we do

We seek assurance that organisations work in partnership to deliver joined up services that safeguard adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect. The work of the SAB is underpinned by the Care Act.

The Care Act 2014 sets out the objectives and functions of Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) as:

- Ensure that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
- Ensure that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome focused
- Work collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- Ensure agencies/individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect has occurred
- Ensure that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in the area

We will do this by:

- Providing leadership, challenge and direction to ensure that partner agencies improve outcomes for adults at risk of abuse or neglect
- Promoting values of openness, trust, respect and learning
- Seeking assurance, listening to and empowering our communities by supporting the workforce to keep adults who may have care and support needs safe from abuse or neglect

Safeguarding Principles

The safeguarding principles set out in the Care Act 2014 will underpin all aspects of safeguarding adults work across Tees.

Empowerment:	Prevention:	Proportionality:
I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens	I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.	I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed.
Protection:	Partnership:	Accountability:
I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part	I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is	I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.

in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.	helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.	
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The Board’s Planning Cycle

The TSAB Strategic Plan for 2025-28 has been developed in consultation with our partners, key stakeholders, staff and communities across Tees. The TSAB works closely with other partnerships and organisations to achieve and support objectives that keep adults with care and support needs safe in Tees. The Strategic Business Plan identifies which actions the Board leads on, and which it contributes to and influences.

The plan will shape the direction of the Board for the next 3 years, the actions will be reviewed annually and adapted where required to respond to emerging issues and priorities. The strategy will be underpinned by an annual Business Plan and progress will be reported on at Board meetings across the year, in the form of Sub-Group updates. In addition, the Strategic Business Plan Progress Monitoring Framework will provide a mid and end of year update against all the Strategic Business Plan actions.

In line with the Care and Statutory Support Guidance, TSAB will produce an Annual Report at the end of each financial year to report on progress of the Strategic Plan and provide an overview of achievements from partners in relation to the Annual Business Plan.

The Business Plan will be delivered through the work of the five main Sub-Groups; Communication and Engagement, Learning, Training and Development, Operational Leads, Performance, Audit and Quality and Safeguarding Adult Reviews, and any other relevant Task & Finish Groups as required.

Measuring Success

Through quantitative and qualitative assurance methods each objective and corresponding action will be monitored and measured for progress made through 2025-28. Each Sub-Group has a workplan they own which they review and monitor at each Sub-Group meeting. The workplans provide detailed actions of how each Sub-Group will strive to assist in the achievement of the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan. Progress updates on the workplans will be provided as part of the Sub-Group updates at each Board meeting.

Priorities and Aims

The overarching Priorities and Aims for 2025-28 are set out below:



Priority: Information, Engagement and Involvement

Aim: We will provide clear and accessible information and advice and work with local communities to raise awareness of what abuse is, how to prevent abuse from happening, how to seek help, and how to engage with the work of the Board.



Priority: Confident, Competent Practice

Aim: We will ensure the workforce, across all sectors, is well trained, supported, competent and confident to safeguard adults within our communities.



Priority: Emerging Challenges and Enabling Solutions

Aim: We will actively identify and respond to emerging trends and challenges, working together to provide a solutions and outcomes focused, co-ordinated response to safeguarding issues.

Board Priorities

The TSAB will seek assurance from statutory organisations and multi-agency partners that the following aims, objectives and actions are delivered.

Priority: Information, Engagement & Involvement

Aim: We will provide clear and accessible information and advice and work with local communities to raise awareness of what abuse is, how to prevent abuse from happening, how to seek help, and how to engage with the work of the Board.

Objectives: We will	2025-26 Actions: We will do this by	Assurance Methods	Lead
1. Listen to the voice of adults with care and support needs, their families and carers, and facilitate sharing user experience to inform our future direction and priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Further developing mechanisms which support gathering feedback from individuals with care and support needs who have used safeguarding services Using co-design and engagement, where possible, to ensure the voice of adults at risk, their carers, and families is heard in respect of safeguarding adults Using the information we gather as a feedback loop to improve practice and promote co-production / co-design with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Consultation Survey Annual Communication & Engagement Report Feedback from Focus/User Groups 	Communication & Engagement Sub-Group
2. Further develop the Safeguarding Champions initiative to improve engagement with local communities and services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to engage and involve local communities, including, harder to reach and seldom heard groups, with the work of the Board, considering equity and equality of access across all aspects of the Boards work. Providing Safeguarding Champions with the tools and resources they need to ensure they can carry out the role effectively and ensure there is representation from across all agencies including the VCSE sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Communication & Engagement Report Annual Consultation Survey Results Feedback from individuals, families and carers & focus groups Newsletter and Bulletin subscribers Safeguarding Champions 	Communication & Engagement Sub-Group
3. Ensure that the TSAB website and all public facing materials are accessible and easy to understand, with clear information that signposts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to develop the TSAB website, along with the web hosts, to ensure that all resources and content complies with accessibility standards Ensuring that the TSAB website provides an up to date platform for signposting to specialist support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Accessibility Guidelines Measure 	Communication & Engagement Sub-Group

to support services			
4. Ensure adults and /or their representatives, who use safeguarding services are asked what they want from the safeguarding process and their views inform the outcome, following the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuing to monitor and report on the TSAB Performance Indicator relating to outcomes and consider service improvements across partner agencies as required 2. Implementing a multi-agency audit programme considering how well Making Safeguarding Personal is embedded in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Performance Indicators • Quarterly PowerBi Dashboard Data • Multi-Agency Audits • Lessons Learned Reports 	<p>Performance, Audit and Quality Sub-Group</p> <p>Operational Leads Sub-Group</p>
5. Ensure adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect are aware of local sources of support and schemes such as the Safe Place Scheme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivering a Communication and Engagement Plan including raising awareness of how professionals and organisations can report abuse and neglect, and better support those who have experienced trauma to access and engage with services 2. Review the 'Find Support in your area' webpage to ensure it reflects local service provision across Tees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign and website analytics • Social media • Adult Exploitation Strategy Implementation Plan • National Safeguarding Adults Week Evaluation • Website analytics 	<p>Communication & Engagement Sub-Group</p> <p>Adult Exploitation Implementation Working Group</p>

Impact/ Outcomes – People will receive clear and concise information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and how to seek help, and will be provided with opportunities to engage in the work of the Board

Priority: Confident, Competent Practice

Aim: We will ensure the workforce, across all sectors, is well trained, supported, competent and confident to safeguard adults within our communities

Objectives: We will	2025-26 Actions: We will do this by	Assurance Methods	Lead
1. Seek assurance that staff are legally literate and understand the legislative framework and the principles of trauma informed practice to ensure the best outcomes for adults at risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement where staff are enabled, encouraged and supported to be professionally curious Seeking assurance that there is a comprehensive understanding and appropriate application of the Mental Capacity Act. Routinely reviewing and updating policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect best practice and legislative changes Seek assurance from partners that staff are provided with single agency Safeguarding Adults training in accordance with the TSAB Training Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegate Feedback Impact Assessments Training Evaluations QAF/self-audit tool Reviewed Policies, Procedures & Guidance 	<p>Learning, Training & Development Sub-Group</p> <p>Performance, Audit & Quality Sub-Group</p> <p>Operational Leads Sub-Group</p>
2. Learn from, and embed into practice and policy, the findings of local, regional and national SARs, DARRs, SCPRs and other relevant reviews and implement the action plans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and implementing action plans for all SARs and other applicable reviews Continuing to develop methods to share and review learning from reviews to ensure it is embedded in practice and policies Maintaining links with the National and Regional safeguarding networks to inform projects and workstreams Reviewing the SAR Policy and Procedures following the sector led improvements identified through the National Analysis of SARs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAR/other learning review action plans National SAR library Practitioners Surveys National SAB Business Manager meeting minutes Regional ADASS Leads Meeting minutes & workplan Sector led improvements action plan 	<p>Safeguarding Adult Review Sub-Group</p> <p>Learning, Training & Development Sub-Group</p> <p>Business Manager/Chair</p>
3. Provide the wider workforce with the opportunity to access a comprehensive multi-agency training offer in collaboration with the Safeguarding Children Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and delivering the TSAB Training Plan to align with TSAB priorities, ensuring that the voice of people with lived experience of abuse and neglect and the learning from local reviews, is included in the training, resources and events Explore new and innovative approaches to training delivery considering different methods of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Plan 2025-26 Training Strategy 2025-26 Training Course Directory QAF/self-audit tool 	<p>Learning, Training & Development Sub-Group</p> <p>Relevant Partnerships</p>

			Business Managers
4. Seek assurance from partners that staff are provided with support, training, capacity and supervisory oversight in relation to the management of high risk/complex cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuing to seek assurance from partners via the QAF on the training and support provided to staff, with the consideration of vicarious trauma 2. Provide opportunities for staff to share best practice and seek peer support, guidance and direction, where cases are open, in relation to managing complex/high risk cases collectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QAF/self-audit tool • OL meeting minutes 	Performance, Audit and Quality Sub-Group Operational Leads Sub-Group

Impact/ Outcomes - Communities will have confidence that professionals are competent, confident and well trained in supporting and working in the best interests of adults at risk of abuse and neglect and will only be involved as far as is reasonable, proportionate, justifiable and necessary.

Priority: Emerging Challenges, Enabling Solutions

Aim: We will actively identify and respond to emerging trends and challenges, working together to provide a solutions and outcomes focused, co-ordinated response to safeguarding issues

Objectives: We will	2025-26 Actions: We will do this by	Assurance Methods	Lead
1. Seek assurance that Board partners are working together effectively to protect adults with care and support needs from all forms of abuse and neglect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working with relevant partners, partnerships and user groups to develop a consistent robust approach for transitional safeguarding planning including young people at risk of exploitation Providing opportunities to share information about innovative services and solutions to improve the lives of people and families most at risk of abuse and neglect Utilising staff engagement forums to seek feedback in understanding the barriers, enablers and challenges faced by frontline practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Studies Good news stories Staff feedback & Practice Support Forms Transitions Protocol Newsletter/Bulletin 	<p>Operational Leads Sub-Group</p> <p>Communication & Engagement Sub-Group</p> <p>TSAB, HSSCP, STSCP Business Managers Meetings</p> <p>HoTH Transitions Working Group</p>
2. Receive assurance that safeguarding arrangements across Tees are robust and effective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering the annual Quality Assurance programme, which includes the Quality Assurance Framework/ Self-audit tool Delivering a multi-agency case file audit schedule, which includes a repeat audit of the High Risk Adults Panel, to report on the effectiveness of the 12 month review Continue to develop the PowerBi dashboard to produce high quality performance reports which support the analysis and further development of multi-agency safeguarding practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance Framework – Self-audit tool Multi-agency Audit Schedule, Tool & Lessons Learned Reports HRAP risks/system barriers, non-attendance and non-completed actions are escalated to TSAB PowerBi Dashboard Data and supporting analysis 	<p>Performance, Audit and Quality Sub-Group</p> <p>Operational Leads Sub-Group</p>

3. Collaborate and align with Safeguarding Children Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships, Health & Wellbeing Boards and other relevant partners to deliver on key joint priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working collaboratively with relevant partners, partnerships and user groups to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Adult Exploitation Strategy 2. Establish mechanisms to ensure there is collaboration in relation to cross cutting issues to encourage sharing of priorities and reduced duplication 3. Continuing to build upon the joint working protocol and workplan with the Safeguarding Children's Partnerships to deliver on joint objectives and actions, and extend out to other relevant Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Exploitation Implementation Action Plan • Tees Adults and Children Joint Working Protocol & Action Plan 	Operational Leads Sub-Group Adult Exploitation Implementation Working Group Communication & Engagement Sub-Group Business Managers Relevant Partnerships
4. Work with partners to ensure there is a coordinated approach to protecting individuals with care and support needs who are most at risk of harm, with an appropriate offer of support and interventions, relevant to their needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with relevant agencies to protect and provide appropriate support for adults with care and support needs who are experiencing rough sleeping and/or are self-neglecting 2. Establishing a Working Group to strengthen the joined up local approach to protecting individuals with care and support needs, who are rough sleeping 3. Working to break down the barriers to accessing services across our communities and highlighting the importance of escalating concerns about more vulnerable individuals, including those self-neglecting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report 2024-25 • Working Group minutes/action plan • Communication Plan • Awareness Campaigns/Evaluation Reports 	Rough Sleeping Working Group Rough Sleeping Champion Communication & Engagement Sub-Group
5. Seek assurance that service provision commissioned by partners meets the individual needs of adults most at risk of abuse and neglect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuing to engage and work in partnership with commissioned providers to ensure the needs of individuals most at risk of abuse and neglect are met 2. Maintaining and correlating accurate records of services subject to the 'Responding to and Addressing Serious Concerns Protocol', including mapping data within the PowerBi data dashboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OL meeting minutes • PowerBi Data Dashboard • RASC Lessons Learned Reports 	Operational Leads Sub-Group Safeguarding Adults Review Sub-Group Performance, Audit & Quality Sub-Group

Impact/ Outcomes – Professionals will identify emerging challenges, and provide a collaborative response to adults with care and support needs who are most at risk of harm, providing solutions and outcomes led by the wishes of the adult