

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4 March 2025

Subject: **MID DEVON HOUSING (MDH) SAFEGUARDING ADULTS, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY**

Cabinet Member: Cllr Simon Clist
Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader

Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe – Head of Housing and Health

Exempt: None

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: Annex A – MDH Safeguarding Adults at Risk, Children and Young People Policy

Annex B – MDH Equality Impact Assessment Safeguarding Adults at Risk, Children and Young People Policy

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation

In March 2024, a Consumer Regulation Health check advised that MDH establish a dedicated Safeguarding Policy to better manage risks associated with protecting vulnerable adults and children from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is a crucial legal obligation for MDH. Whilst the existing corporate policy was widely updated in 2024 as an initial policy priority, it lacks detail on the role of MDH as a landlord as required by housing providers. This new MDH specific policy has been developed in the context of the updated corporate policy for consistency.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet recommends to Council to adopt the MDH Safeguarding Adults at Risk, Children and Young People Policy and Equality Impact Assessment

contained in Annexes A and B respectively as recommended by the Homes Policy Development Group (PDG)

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The current MDDC corporate safeguarding policy addresses safeguarding generally across council services but lacks specific clarity on legal provisions outlined in the Care Act 2014 and the responsibilities of social landlords.
- 1.2 A comprehensive safeguarding policy for both children and vulnerable adults is necessary to ensure MDH meets its specific statutory obligations under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014.
- 1.3 Under the revised, statutory consumer standards issued by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) there is a greater emphasis on supporting our tenants and protecting their wellbeing. In the context of safeguarding, the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires MDH to consider the diverse needs of our tenants in relation to the housing and landlord services we provide and any matters of hate crime, discrimination or risks to vulnerable tenants. Furthermore, the Neighbourhood and Community Standard specifically sets out that landlords should understand the significant impact that domestic abuse and other safeguarding matters can have both on tenants experiencing it and their household members. In achieving this outcome MDH should have a victim-centred approach to assisting tenants who experience abuse.
- 1.4 Safeguarding is therefore an essential part of MDH's housing responsibilities.
- 1.5 The new MDH policy includes distinct sections focused on both adults and young people.

2 Current practice

- 2.1 MDH is committed to actively safeguarding vulnerable adults residing in its properties by collaborating openly with other agencies. This multi-agency approach is intended to prevent abuse, exploitation, and neglect of vulnerable adults.
- 2.2 Effective safeguarding is integral to our work practices and not seen as an "additional" task. Staff interacting with tenants play a crucial role in safeguarding, so mechanisms are established for them to report concerns confidently, supported by clear documentation and follow-up processes.
- 2.3 Staff are provided with training and internal procedures for managing safeguarding matters, including relevant referral forms.

3 Historical information

3.1 The following information provides detail of safeguarding referrals raised by MDH staff and contractors;

2023-24

MDH started central collation of information on referrals made by MDH staff and contractors from September 2023

14 Safeguarding cases

Cases relate to: self-neglect, hoarding, financial & material abuse, sex abuse and other (mental health)

2024-25

3 Safeguarding cases

Cases relate to: other mental health, suicidal thoughts and neglect & acts of omission

4 Recommendation

4.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendation is made:

That the PDG recommends that Cabinet recommends that Council adopt the MDH Safeguarding Adults at Risk, Children and Young People Policy and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annexes A and B respectively

Financial Implications

While the policy has no direct financial implications, it is suggested that staff receive in-person training to enhance awareness and understanding of safeguarding roles and best practices. East Devon District Council has found this approach effective, and training will be delivered by the MDDC Specialist Lead in Community Safety & Safeguarding.

Legal Implications

As a registered social housing provider, MDH has a statutory responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in line with the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014.

Risk Assessment

Maintaining an up-to-date safeguarding policy is essential, as MDH are legally obligated to ensure adequate procedures are in place. A failure to meet statutory duties could expose MDH to legal consequences if a safeguarding incident occurs without the appropriate measures being followed. This would represent a wider failure to protect vulnerable tenants and other household members from harm.

Impact on Climate Change

This policy or report will have no direct impact on climate change.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The safeguarding policy is designed to protect the entire community, with particular emphasis on vulnerable individuals who may be at greater risk due to age, disability, or other support needs.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The policy contributes to Objective 3.4 outlined in the Corporate Plan: “We will work closely with our tenants to ensure they feel safe, secure and happy in their homes”.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 15 January 2025

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 15 January 2025

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 14th January 2025

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 09 January 2025

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health

Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 255255

Background papers:

[mddc-corporate-safeguarding-policy.pdf](#)

[Care Act 2014](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)