

Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership

Devon County Council

Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership Annual Report 2025/26 – Executive Summary

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Working together to protect Adults across Devon and Torbay

The Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership (TDSAP) brings together organisations from across health, social care, policing, housing, fire and rescue, probation, the voluntary sector and local government to help protect adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect.

Working together allows agencies to identify risks earlier, coordinate support more effectively and improve outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

The Partnership provides strategic leadership and oversight to ensure organisations work together effectively, learn from experience and continuously improve the way people are supported and protected.

What difference has the Partnership made?

During 2025/26, the Partnership has achieved its desired outcomes by focusing on strengthening collaboration between agencies, improving practice and ensuring that learning leads to meaningful change.

This work has had a real impact on people by:

- Improving how agencies identify and respond to adults experiencing abuse, neglect and exploitation.

- Supporting more joined-up responses to people with complex needs and multiple risks.

- Strengthening the voice of adults and carers so that safeguarding is centred on what matters most to them.

- Increasing professional awareness of self-neglect, domestic abuse, mental ill health and other significant safeguarding concerns.

- Embedding learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews to reduce the likelihood of similar circumstances occurring again.

Improving information sharing and coordinated decision-making

The Partnership's work is designed to ensure that adults are listened to, respected and supported to achieve the outcomes that are important to them.

Understanding safeguarding need in Devon and Torbay

During 2025/26, both Devon and Torbay experienced significant increases in safeguarding activity. Safeguarding concerns increased by 17% in Devon and 10% in Torbay compared with the previous year. Formal safeguarding enquiries also increased substantially across both areas.

Whilst rising numbers can indicate increasing demand and complexity, they can also demonstrate greater awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and improved confidence in identifying and responding to concerns.

Most risks occur in people's own homes

Most risks occur in people's own homes.

The majority of safeguarding enquiries related to risks occurring within an individual's own home.

This reinforces the importance of community-based support, preventative services and strong partnership working across health, social care, housing and emergency services.

Self-Neglect remains a significant concern

Self-neglect continued to feature prominently within safeguarding activity and Safeguarding Adults Reviews.

Self-neglect can include poor personal care, unsafe living conditions, refusal of support and behaviours that place a person's health or wellbeing at serious risk. Many people affected by self-neglect have complex circumstances involving

loneliness, trauma, mental ill health, substance misuse or physical health conditions. The Partnership has prioritised improving how agencies work together to support these individuals.

Domestic Abuse and Mental Health continue to be key themes

The Partnership has seen increasing evidence of links between domestic abuse, mental ill health, substance misuse and safeguarding concerns. These issues often overlap and require agencies to work together in a coordinated way to deliver effective support and intervention.

Putting people at the centre of safeguarding

A key principle of safeguarding is ensuring that people are involved in decisions about their own lives.

The Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) approach focuses on understanding what outcomes individuals want and ensuring safeguarding interventions help achieve those goals.

During 2025/26, the majority of people involved in safeguarding enquiries were asked about their desired outcomes and more than 90% reported that those outcomes had been fully or partially achieved.

This demonstrates the Partnership's commitment to delivering safeguarding that is not only effective but also person-centred.

For individuals and families this means:

- Being listened to and having a say in decisions.

- Receiving support that reflects their wishes and circumstances.

- Being treated with dignity and respect.

Learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews

One of the Partnership's most important responsibilities is overseeing Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs).

SARs are commissioned when an adult with care and support needs has died or experienced serious harm and there are concerns about how organisations worked together.

Their purpose is not to apportion blame but to identify learning and drive improvements.

During the year:

- 16 referrals for a SAR were received.

- 4 referrals met the statutory criteria for a review.

- 5 SARs were published.

- Learning was shared across all partner organisations.

- The reviews highlighted recurring themes including:

 - Self-neglect.

 - Mental ill health.

 - Domestic abuse.

 - Substance misuse.

 - Neglect and acts of omission.

 - Organisational practice and multi-agency working.

- In response, the Partnership has strengthened guidance, training, quality assurance arrangements and multi-agency learning opportunities to help prevent similar situations occurring in the future.

A Major Achievement: The Multi-Agency Risk Management Framework

One of the most significant achievements during 2025/26 was the development and implementation of the Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) Framework.

The framework provides practitioners with a consistent way of working with adults who experience multiple and complex risks.

This is important because traditional service responses do not always adequately address situations where risks span several organisations. The framework enables agencies to:

- Share information more effectively.

- Develop shared plans.

- Make collective decisions regarding risk.

- Coordinate support around the individual.

- Intervene earlier to prevent harm.

For people receiving support, this means a more coordinated approach, fewer gaps between services and a greater focus on preventing crisis situations from developing.

Working with Communities

The Community Engagement Group has continued to ensure that the voices of people with lived experience and local communities influence safeguarding work. Throughout the year, the Partnership worked with voluntary and community organisations to:

- Improve awareness of safeguarding adults.

- Continue to reach further into the communities that may be less likely to access support.

- Develop accessible information and resources.

- Support Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week activities.

- Promote inclusion and participation.

By listening to people with direct experience and involving communities in decision making, the Partnership is helping create safeguarding arrangements that better reflect local needs.

Looking Ahead

The Partnership will continue with the agreed three strategic priorities for 2025-2027, seeking assurance that practice is improving in key safeguarding risk areas. Ensuring that learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews is embedded into everyday practice.

Improving awareness, engagement and inclusion across Devon and Torbay.
These priorities will guide the Partnership's work over the months and help ensure that adults at risk receive effective, compassionate and coordinated support.

Conclusion

During 2025/26, the Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership continued to strengthen safeguarding arrangements across Devon and Torbay.

Through partnership working, learning from experience, investment in workforce development and the introduction of innovative approaches such as the Multi Agency Risk Management Framework, organisations have improved their ability to identify risk, respond effectively and support adults to live safer lives.

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