



## Annual Safeguarding Report 2023/24

### Executive Summary:

The Charity provides an annual report on Health and Safety on its website as part of its transparency agenda.

- 2.1 Safeguarding, as defined by the Care Act (2014), is to uphold the right of everyone to live free from abuse and the fear of abuse and to ensure the people we support are protected from harm. As a provider of housing with care and support, this underpins all operational activity across the organisation.
- 2.2 This report provides an update on progress made under the revised Safeguarding Action Plan (2024) and provides an overview of Concerns raised for the period from April 2023 to March 2024.

### Background/context

- 3.1 Recommendations from the Ann Craft Trust Review (2022), learning from the serious case management review in August 2023 and the Ann Craft Trust Review of Trust safeguarding roles and responsibilities (September 2023), continue to shape the current safeguarding strategy.
- 3.2 Whilst progress has been made during the last 12-months to fully embed the culture of safeguarding being 'everyone's business' across the organisation, the revised Safeguarding Action Plan is taking the next steps towards embedded change.

### Current position:

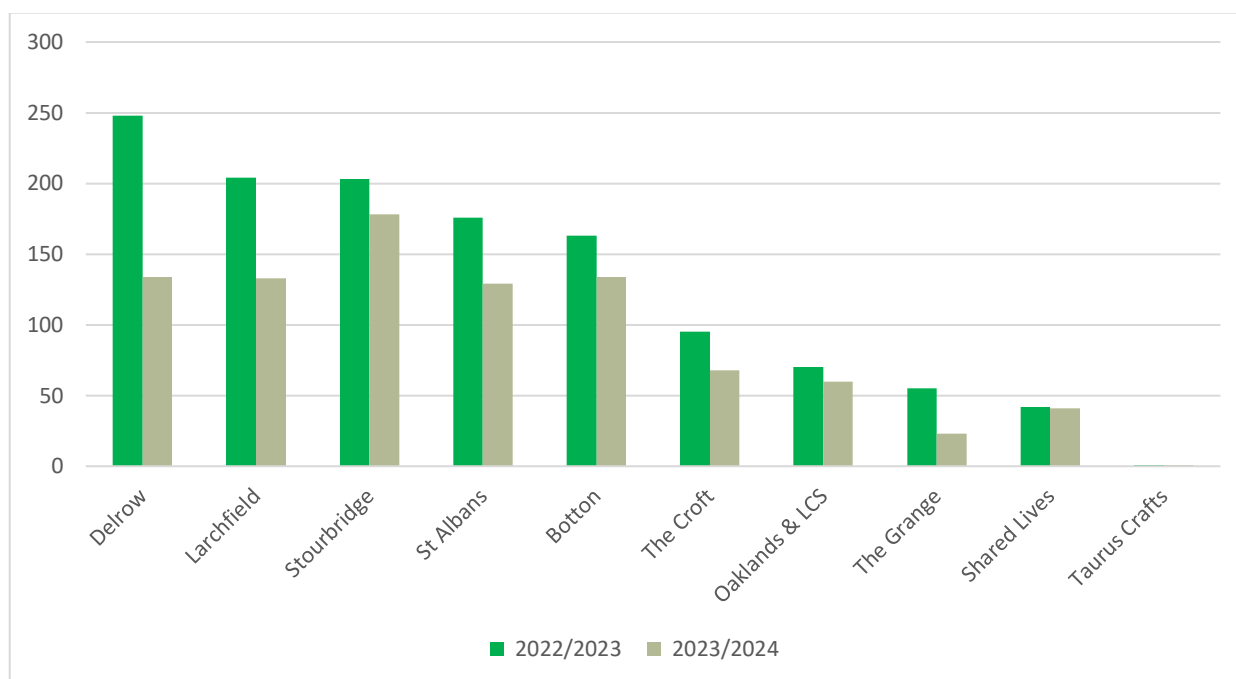
- 4.1 The launch of the 'Safeguarding Concerns' campaign, now falls within the Safeguarding Action Plan for this year. The Safeguarding platform on the intranet has been recently updated and provides a link to the revised Concerns form and the Golden Thread of Safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- 4.2 The Safeguarding Action Plan (2024) sets out clear actions, outcomes, deadlines and responsibilities. A Safeguarding taskforce, with representatives from each community, was tasked to support the development and implementation of the Action Plan and going forward this group will form part of the wider Organisational Safeguarding Forum (OSF) to discuss relevant matters, initiatives and trends.
- 4.3 The Trust is currently in the initial stages of procuring DSCR (Digital Social Care Records). One of the requirements of this system is that it will include a way to record and report safeguarding concerns. Until that time, we remain dependent on a stand-alone Word document being completed, saved locally and formal alerts sent to the

central repository and updated by resubmission, with all the attendant issues around tracking activity to closure. A review of residual risk in remaining on an e-mail-based reporting system is to be undertaken and other interim options and associated risks considered.

- 4.4 Our current safeguarding training needs are under review to ensure competency for specific job roles. The Safeguarding Action Plan includes agreeing a training and competency pathway to ensure staff at all levels are trained and supported in undertaking their safeguarding role. In addition, we are looking to develop toolbox talks around following policy and procedure, record keeping, making safeguarding personal, family engagement and partnership working. These would be made available on the Safeguarding platform on SharePoint and used in staff briefings and team meetings.

### The Data

- 5.1 901 Safeguarding concerns were recorded: Q1-246, Q2-241, Q3-190 and Q4-224. In the preceding year, 1257 Safeguarding Concerns were recorded and this represents a drop of 29%.
- 5.2 Stourbridge Community recorded the highest number with (178) and Taurus Crafts the lowest with (1). See Table below of total Safeguarding Concerns by community.



- 5.3 64 of the 901 were reported as formal Safeguarding Alerts to the local authority and 4 of these are still open and 16 were escalated to a s42 Enquiry. For comparison, there were 91 alerts raised in 2022/23 (25 to s42 Enquiry), 82 alerts raised in 2021/22 and 109 in 2020/21.

- 5.4 A formal alert is raised when there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult with care and support needs is at risk of, or experiencing abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves because of their needs.
- 5.5 The s42 Enquiry process is implemented when there are more serious grounds for concern; however, many of the alerts raised do not meet the criteria and are quickly closed after initial investigations by the LA Safeguarding Team.
- 5.6 Of the 64 raised with the local authority, staff supported the people we support to complete 26 x 'Keeping Me Safe' plans, which equates to 40%. The completion rate for 2022/23 was 38% (35/91).
- 5.7 Behaviours of Concern (328) was the most reported category (361 in 2022/23). Other notable categories are: 103 health-related falls (141 in 2022/23), 75 health related concerns (94 in 2022/23) and 36 financial abuse/discrepancies (76 in 2022/23).
- 5.8 There were a total of 204 medication errors reported in 2023/24. This represents a 38% fall in reported errors compared with 2022/23 (330 reported). The figure for medication errors in 2022/23 was itself a 62% reduction and achieved a Brilliant Basics target to reduce by 50%. The downward trajectory in reported medication errors has been maintained. The continued focus on medication and error reporting has driven improvement through post incident discussion, further training and competency re-assessment. Where medication errors have resulted in a safeguarding alert, outcomes and learning have been in respect of ensuring 'as required' medication protocols are up to date, handover protocols are in place to document and communicate any medication changes and there is a clear process for checking medication received from pharmacy by individual's living independently but require support to check their medication.

#### **Risks and mitigations:**

- 6.1 A key risk mitigation for the Trust is to deliver a clear training and competency pathway to ensure staff at all levels are trained and supported in undertaking their safeguarding role; the review of training is a key target in the Safeguarding Action Plan.