

Safeguarding Annual Report 2022-2023



Contents

Overview	4
Our demographics	5
Age vs. concerns raised	6
Nature of reports	7
Strategic aims and actions in 2022/23	8
Case study 1	9
Case study 2	10
Key strategic aims for 2023/24	11



Foreword from our Independent Chair

"I am delighted, as the Independent Chair of Midland Heart's Safeguarding Board, to present its Safeguarding Annual Report for 2022-2023. This is Midland Heart's fourth report of its kind, and it demonstrates the association's dedication and commitment to safeguarding.

After many years at a senior level in the care sector, I have been working as an independent consultant with a particular focus on safeguarding since 2016 and I have chaired Midland Heart's Safeguarding Board since April 2022. It has been great to work with an organisation that has such a strong commitment to all aspects of safeguarding. I've been particularly impressed with the creation and success of the HomeChecker form and the way it makes safeguarding part of the everyday role of every Midland Heart colleague who has contact with tenants.

It is encouraging to note that, whilst we have seen an increase in the number of cases recorded, this is partially attributed to the HomeChecker form. The gas capping process is also more robust in ensuring colleagues report possible signs of harm and abuse.

It is also good to see the impact of improved training, giving colleagues the confidence to make necessary referrals to the local authority. This has resulted in a 4% increase since 2020.

I am looking forward to continuing to support Midland Heart's new strategic aims and to grow and deliver positive outcomes for the association's most vulnerable tenants. Thank you for taking the time to read this important annual report; safeguarding is and will always be, a priority for us all. Should you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding, please get in touch via our Customer Hub."

Peter Cheer
Independent Chair of the Midland Heart
Safeguarding Board

Overview

A snapshot of our safeguarding progress this year:



1,179

safeguarding cases in 2022/23, 10% increase in the last 12 months.



33,928

tenancies managed in 2022/23.



71

closed cases with accepted referrals to local authorities.

There were 1,068 safeguarding cases in 2021-2022.

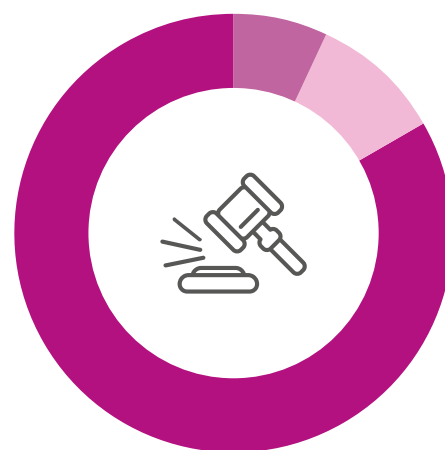
Following the trends from previous years, self-neglect, domestic, physical, and psychological abuse are the most common root causes of safeguarding interventions. Being able to identify what concerns most affect our tenants will remain a priority as we move forward.

Making safeguarding a priority:

We introduced our HomeChecker form in 2022 to strengthen our processes when identifying serious concerns at our tenants homes. We are pleased to share the incredible work colleagues have done in ensuring the HomeChecker form is in full swing. Over this financial year, around 48,000 HomeChecker forms were completed during our visits. The largest nature of concern we found within the HomeChecker form is self-neglect, which correlates with the nature of property condition. It is important to note that many tenants will find it difficult to maintain their home when at risk of harm and abuse. In light of this, we will continue to promote property condition as everyone's responsibility through our communication campaigns, alongside external government guidance that has raised the importance of considering vulnerability when visiting our homes.

Where did our closed cases come from?

- Retirement Living 5%
- Independent Living 7%
- General Needs 59%



Taking a look at the demographics of our referrals

We are pleased to share that the analysis of our demographics shows that our safeguarding cases largely reflect our tenant base. Furthermore, in the case of gender and ethnicity, there are no concerning trends when compared to our baseline. This is a positive position to be in, as we have a solid awareness of the concerns impacting our tenants. Moreover, this has been greatly attributed to the knowledge and work of our colleagues, also the tenant insight we have received which is valued highly.

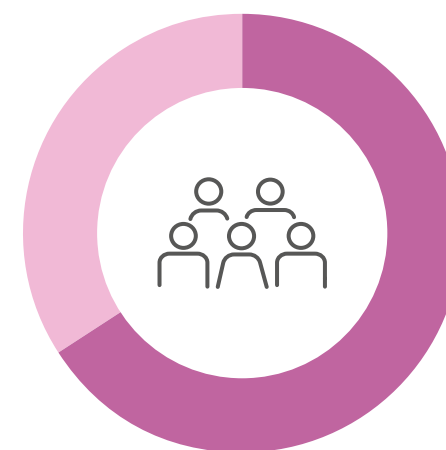
Gender: Since our 2021-2022 Annual Report, we have found that the demographic make-up of our safeguarding referrals have remained the same. Research shows that we continue to house a higher proportion of women than men.

Ethnic diversity: When looking at our demographics for our ethnically diverse tenants, we have found our trends in referrals remain the same as our previous Annual Reports, whereby trends reflect closely to the ethnic diversity make-up of our tenants.

We continue to monitor these trends to understand our tenants better, and to identify whether there are any developments in training or awareness for our safeguarding practitioners. Our focus is to compare safeguarding referrals and ensure there is no potential bias in any of the service provision we offer.

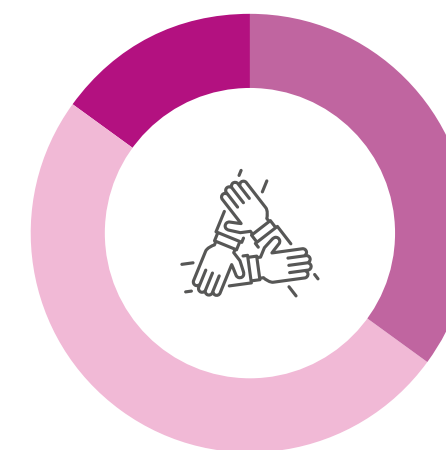
Gender

- Female 66%
- Male 34%



Ethnicity

- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) 35%
- Non BAME 50%
- Did not disclose 15%



Comparing the age of our tenants and concerns raised

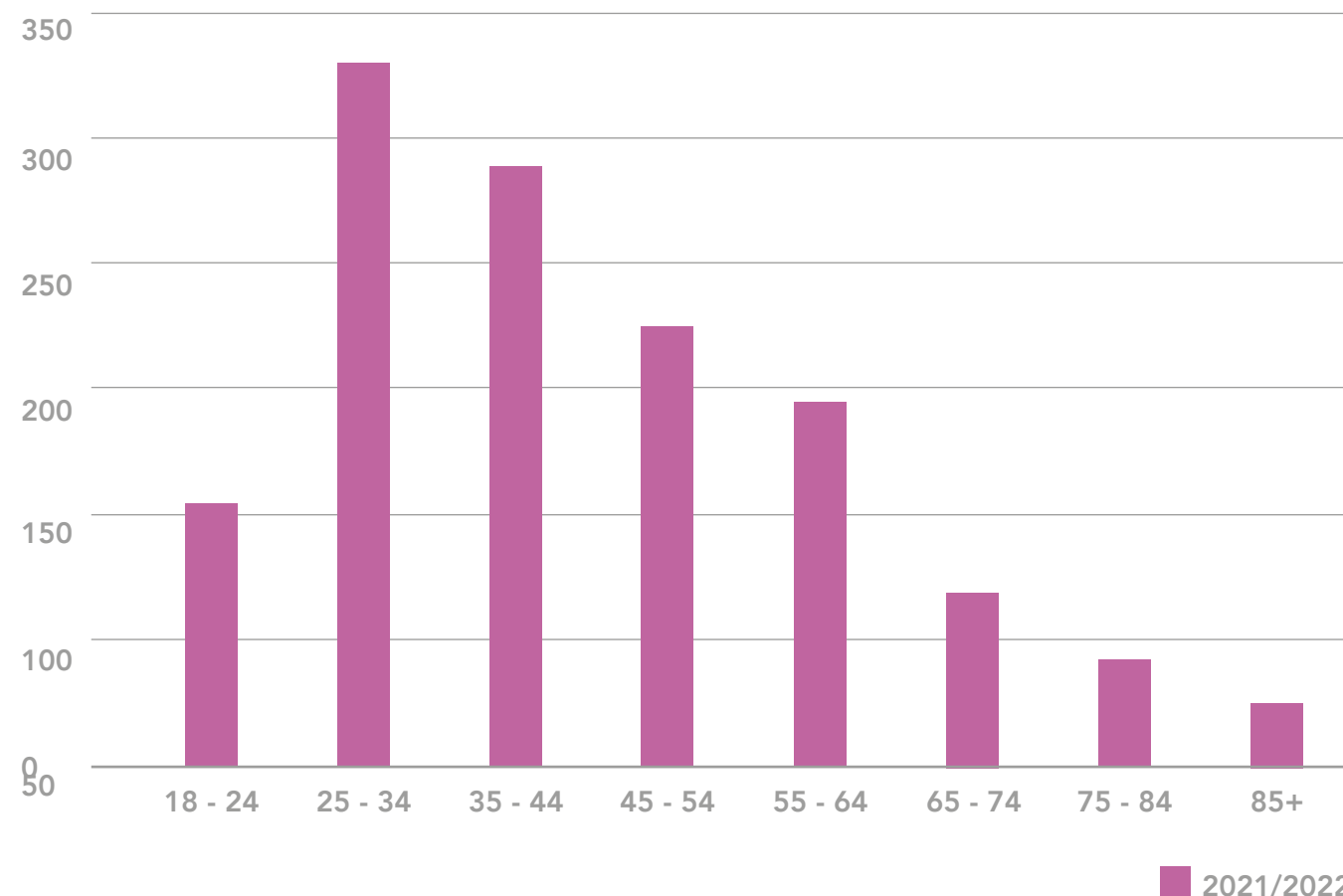
We receive reports of safeguarding concerns for tenants of all ages, including children living in the homes.

Understanding the types of concerns that each age group raise and how frequently referrals are made helps us identify how we can support our tenants better and which safeguarding concerns in particular we should be on high alert for.

Looking at the age range of our tenants, we continue to see that 25–34-year-olds are one of the most prevalent age groups presenting with safeguarding concerns. This remains to be largely attributed to our general needs' population and Independent Living schemes, where we see a younger tenant base.



Age Range of Customers



Nature of reports

A snapshot of the nature of reports raised in each of our business areas:

Top three concerns by business area - YTD

General Needs

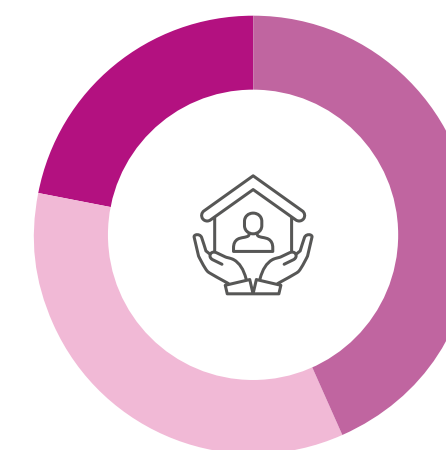
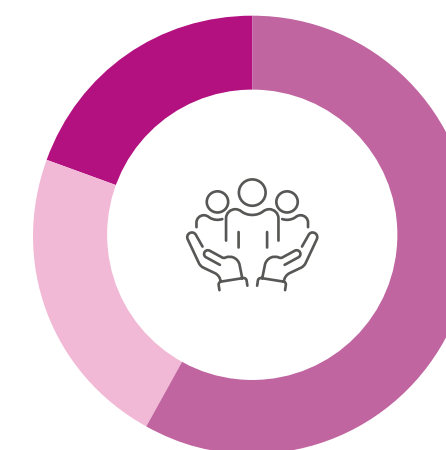
- Self neglect 244
- Domestic abuse 159
- Emotional/psychological abuse 152

Retirement Living

- Self neglect 18
- Neglect & acts of omission 7
- Emotional/psychological abuse 6

Independent Living

- Self neglect 10
- Emotional/psychological abuse 8
- Domestic abuse 5



Comparing our results to our peers'

When we compare the nature of concerns across 11 other organisations, we can see that the results reflect similarly to our own, with self-neglect consistently being the largest safeguarding concern presented.



Our four Strategic Aims and the actions taken

Our four strategic aims during 2022/23 are:



Good Governance



Strategic Development



Building Relationships



Learning and Development

Actions we've taken:

Take a look at some of the actions we have taken to achieve our aims.

- To ensure safe working practices, we have continued to work closely with care providers in our retirement living plus schemes to ensure consistency in safe working practices.

- We continued specialist training from a national provider for appropriate staff (SCIE), empowering colleagues with the knowledge of spotting signs and escalating referrals when needed.

- We created bespoke audio e-learning for teams including our Customer Hub and income dialler teams to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding.

- We've promoted communications that are specific and include a range of topics made available in a variety of formats including easy read and audio formats.

Case study 1

Our first case study shares the story of a tenant who told us they knew, on some level, something was wrong, but did not know what to do to correct the situation. They felt if they spoke up and alienated the people around them, they would lose the support they had. This case is a great example of knowing our tenants and being empowered to intervene when something does not feel right.

Mr. R moved into one of our Retirement Schemes which better suited their physical health needs. Whilst Mr. R did not have any family ties, they were supported by an external Support Worker and made some friends at the scheme who supported them with tasks such as shopping and cleaning.

Over a period of time, our colleagues noticed a significant change in Mr. R's mental and physical health and colleagues intervened to ensure medical support was provided to Mr. R. Following regular visits to Mr. R's home, concerns were raised that they were struggling financially with bills. Through conversations with Mr. R, it was clear this was causing a lot of stress. Alarm bells were ringing for colleagues as this was not usual for Mr. R.

Using their empathy and professional knowledge, colleagues built their relationship with Mr R and found that they were being financially abused. Though they were fearful of speaking out against those who were financially abusing them, Mr R placed their trust in our colleagues and worked with us to make sure we could report all information to the police and social services.

Colleagues made it a priority to ensure that Mr. R was supported by both our teams and the NHS, and helped relocate them to a more suitable home setting as they remained unsteady on their feet. Mr. R has shared that they are enjoying their current living environment where they receive the right support, and they are keen to move to a permanent place so they can continue to benefit from the support.



Case study 2

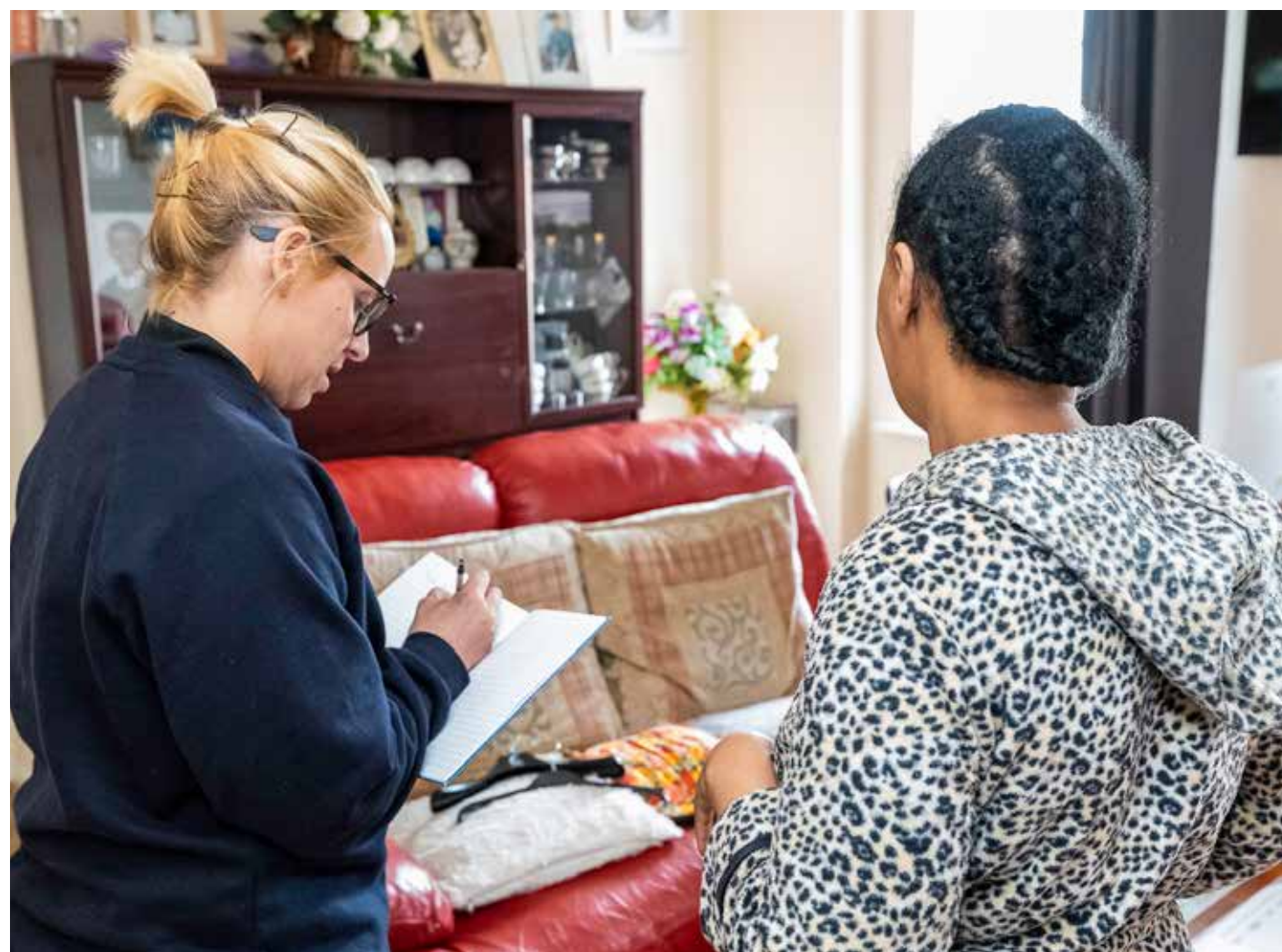
Our second case study highlights a good example of partnership working amongst our internal teams, as well as external agencies, to provide support and achieve a positive outcome to one of our tenants.

We became aware of the condition of Mrs. L's property following a high risk rating through our HomeChecker form which was reported by our contractor. An immediate visit was carried out by our Tenancy Services Officer and Technical Maintenance Surveyor. There were concerns around not only the disrepair of the property but the overall cleanliness of the property.

There were also children in the property who had developed infections, and the general disrepair alongside health and safety concerns within the property meant the team felt they needed to arrange an emergency temporary move for the family. During this time, we were also able to organise support for the family from the

children's school, Social Services, Midland Heart Money Advice Team, Tenancy Services Officer and Technical Maintenance Surveyor.

Once the repairs had been completed, the family were supported by our Estates Team to provide new furniture, to ensure the family were able to feel settled in their home. Furthermore, measures were agreed with the family and Tenancy Services Officer to ensure the family were managing within their home without any issues. As a result of our tenant and a multi-agency approach, the family were able to move into their home, with a more positive future ahead of them.



Key Strategic Aims for 2023/24

As we move into a revised regulation regime, we recognise the heightened need to ensure our most vulnerable tenants are protected from harm and abuse. Our strategic aims, delivered and monitored by our new independently chaired board will continue to embed our approach.

- **Good Governance** – We will build on the newly formed Board formation, deliver a revised policy and ensure assurance is provided that we are implementing our commitments. A particular focus will be on the new Social Housing Regulation Bill, consumer standards and ensuring we comply across our organisation.

- **Develop Our Customer Voice** – We will work with our tenants and colleagues to understand positive practice and areas we can improve across the safeguarding services we deliver.

- **Partnership Relationships** – As the Social Housing Regulation Bill becomes legislation, we will identify any opportunities or gaps to ensure we comply with the new consumer standards from our regulator.

- **Learning and Training** – We will develop new e-learning modules and toolbox talks across the year that captures any changes to the policy, learning from case reviews and raising awareness.



www.midlandheart.org.uk



20 Bath Row, Birmingham, B15 1LZ
0345 60 20 540

