

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Scrutiny Review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home

**Final Report
December 2019**

Crime and Disorder Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
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Contents

Select Committee - Membership..... 4

Acknowledgements..... 4

Contact Officer..... 4

Foreword..... 5

Original Brief..... 6

1.0 Executive Summary..... 7

2.0 Introduction..... 10

3.0 Background..... 11

4.0 Findings..... 12

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations..... 30

Appendix 1: Crime data on victims aged 80+ (12 months to end of July 2019) –
Cleveland Police 33

Appendix 2: SBC OneCall – Information Leaflet 34

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Acknowledgements

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- Councillor Steve Nelson (Cabinet Member – Access, Communities and Community Safety) – Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC)
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Foreword

On behalf of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee, we are pleased to present the final report and recommendations following our review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home.

Supporting local residents who may be vulnerable due to their individual circumstances is a responsibility shared by the Council and many of its partners. This review sought to investigate local community infrastructure and determine whether more support was needed to help promote the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents. Whilst the focus was on those aged 80 or over, the Committee acknowledge that 'older' does not necessarily mean 'vulnerable' – a number of the findings and subsequent conclusions are therefore as relevant to those under 80 who could be considered vulnerable in some way.

The Committee welcomed the contributions from a wide variety of local organisations and groups, all of whom helped in enabling an assessment of current services and how they contribute to the protection of the vulnerable. We would like to thank everyone who attended Committee to provide information, and hope that the recommendations contained within the final report will continue to build on the measures in place to ensure the Borough's older population are safe and secure within and around their own homes.



Cllr Pauline Beall
Chair
Crime and Disorder Select Committee



Cllr Paul Weston
Vice-Chair
Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Original Brief

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The following Policy Principle is particularly relevant:

- Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

Concerns have been raised in relation to crimes in local neighbourhoods, specifically those against vulnerable older people living at home.

On 19th February 2019, the Executive Scrutiny Committee agreed to refer the issue to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee for further review.

It is proposed to undertake a review to understand:

- the wider context of crime data and police resources in the Borough;
- how key local service providers promote the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents living in their homes;
- the role of the voluntary and community sector;
- local community-based initiatives to promote community safety.

The review will use an evidence-based approach to assess the issues affecting more vulnerable older people (with a focus on those aged 80 and above), and identify where additional support can be provided, where appropriate.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What is the overall context in relation to crime data in the Borough?

In particular, what is the position in relation to crimes committed against more vulnerable older people (in the 80+ age group)?

What police and community safety resources are available? How have these changed over time?

How do local service providers, and the voluntary and community sector, work both individually and in partnership to promote and ensure the home safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people?

Do organisations have Vulnerable Customer registers in place? If so, how do these inform service delivery? How are residents added to the registers?

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

An assessment of local relevant public services and how they contribute to the protection of the vulnerable, and recommendations for improvement.

An assessment of local community infrastructure and whether more support is needed to help promote safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents.

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's scrutiny review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home.
- 1.2 Concerns have been raised in relation to crimes in local neighbourhoods, specifically those against vulnerable older people living at home. A specific incident occurred on the 16th February 2019 involving the burglary of an elderly woman in the Hardwick area of Stockton which, on the 19th February 2019, led the Council's Executive Scrutiny Committee to agree to refer the issue to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee for further review.
- 1.3 This review aimed to support local residents who may be vulnerable due to their individual circumstances, including age and housing arrangements. It undertook an assessment of local relevant public services and how they contribute to the protection of the vulnerable, as well as an assessment of local community infrastructure and whether more support was needed to help promote safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents.
- 1.4 The Committee found that the number of reported incidents in Stockton-on-Tees involving victims aged 80 or over had decreased over the last two years, though the reasons for this were unknown. Whilst concerns were raised around a potential lack of reporting which could be due to a number of factors such as the age of the victim, communication difficulties, or lower expectations of the Police, this reduction may also be a reflection of the proactive work being undertaken through the numerous partnerships that exist across the Borough to protect vulnerable older people.
- 1.5 Whilst noting the number and variety of crime prevention initiatives, and future commitments / plans, outlined by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cleveland Police in relation to the protection of older people, the Committee are well aware that this review comes at a sensitive time for both organisations following the recent HMICFRS PEEL assessment on Cleveland Police (published in September 2019). The poor grading around the effectiveness of the Force to reduce / prevent crime and protect vulnerable people is highly concerning, particularly in relation to the failure to identify vulnerable victims and failing to provide adequate safeguarding.
- 1.6 A key feature of Cleveland Fire Brigade's provision are the Home Fire Safety Visits – the Committee welcomed the high number of visits undertaken across the Borough during 2018-2019 which plays a significant role in identifying risk and preventing potential fire-related issues.
- 1.7 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council provides an array of Adult Social Care services which assist older people at home, ranging from early intervention to longer-term support. Responding to any safeguarding concerns underpins all services, and it is hoped that the introduction of a new information system will enhance data collection and sharing around vulnerability.
- 1.8 OneCall is the Council's assistive technology and response service, and the Committee recognised the positive work that had been undertaken in recent years, particularly in light of limited resources. The recent results of the service's first CQC inspection ('good' across all areas) is testament to the endeavours of the small but dedicated team. Continuing efforts to raise the

profile of this service (including via partner organisations) are to be welcomed, though considerations around resourcing is required to ensure that any increases in demand can be satisfied.

- 1.9 A key partner in terms of social accommodation, Thirteen Housing Group provide both Extra Care and Sheltered Housing schemes, as well as dispersed bungalows, across the Borough. With regards the Sheltered Housing service, the Committee felt that older residents and their families needed to be clear on the assessed level of contact they should be receiving, and that Thirteen should ensure a robust mechanism is in place to monitor if these contacts are occurring as required. Bearing in mind the reason this review was instigated, Thirteen should also provide clarity on the locking mechanisms fitted to some of their properties, as well as liaise with SBC Adult Social Care around the identification and provision of recognition equipment for vulnerable tenants, and consider specific training on dealing with older vulnerable people for its Neighbourhood Co-ordinators. Where possible, any learning from Thirteen should be cascaded to other Registered Providers / private landlords operating within the Borough to further the protection of vulnerable older people living at home.
- 1.10 Throughout the review, organisations stressed the importance of working in partnership, and that the relationships evidenced during the Committee's information-gathering were critical in protecting older people and promoting safety and wellbeing. To this end, more widespread buy-in of E-CINS (information / communication system used to support the management of vulnerable people) would enable key organisations to identify and share details of those older people who they consider to be 'vulnerable', and avoid people falling through gaps.
- 1.11 The review's focus on those aged 80 or over was queried by some contributors, as 'older' does not necessarily mean 'vulnerable'. The Committee also found inconsistencies over what different organisations constitute an 'older person' as, and the subsequent data that is (or is not) collected in relation to this cohort (some could not provide specific data on the 80+ age-group). It was noted that older people living at home may not want help (even though their families may want them to have help), and that organisations need to work sensitively to ensure any needs are identified and met, whilst maintaining, as far as possible, an older person's independence.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

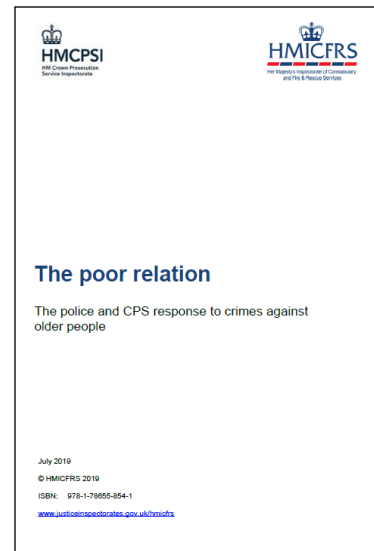
- 1) The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Cleveland Police provide assurance around the measures put in place to address the failings highlighted in the Force's recent HMICFRS PEEL assessment around identifying vulnerable victims and providing adequate safeguarding.**
- 2) Thirteen extend its older people support service to tenants in the Borough's dispersed bungalows on a needs basis (in line with neighbouring Local Authorities).**
- 3) Thirteen provide assurance around the provision and installation of robust locks that give its tenants adequate security in their own homes, and for any learning on the provision of locks to be cascaded to other local Registered Providers / private landlords.**
- 4) Thirteen provide further assurance around the mechanisms in place to monitor if the number of calls / visits to those tenants requiring support were being conducted.**
- 5) Thirteen liaise with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adult Social Care around the identification and provision of recognition equipment for vulnerable tenants.**
- 6) Thirteen consider specific training on dealing with older vulnerable people for its Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, in addition to more in-depth anti-social behaviour training.**
- 7) Catalyst collate a list of local befriending initiatives offered by the VCSE sector and partner organisations (including SBC OneCall, Thirteen and Cleveland Fire Brigade), for circulation to vulnerable older people living at home (which can also be advertised via Stockton Information Directory).**
- 8) OPCC and Cleveland Police consider and strengthen their partnership working with Age UK Teesside.**
- 9) SBC consider ways in which its current community transport can be used to facilitate access for older people to community-based activities / groups.**
- 10) Catalyst undertake an audit of VCSE organisations to establish transport capacity which may support greater accessibility for older people.**
- 11) SBC and Catalyst produce an easy-read document listing the main contacts for support / advice which can be circulated via Stockton News and by local VCSE organisations to older people living in their own homes across the Borough.**
- 12) There is a continued push for greater buy-in of E-CINS to foster a joined-up approach across all organisations in identifying and sharing details of those older people who they consider to be 'vulnerable'.**

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's scrutiny review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home.
- 2.2 The aim of this review was to understand the wider context of crime data and police resources in the Borough, and how key local service providers promote the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable older residents living in their homes. The role of the voluntary and community sector would be explored, as would local community-based initiatives to promote community safety.
- 2.3 The review used an evidence-based approach to assess the issues affecting more vulnerable older people (with a focus on those aged 80 and above), and identify where additional support can be provided, where appropriate.
- 2.4 The Committee took evidence from a range of organisations including:
- Officer of the Police and Crime Commissioner (including details of the Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS))
 - Cleveland Police
 - Cleveland Fire Brigade
 - Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)
 - SBC Adult Social Care
 - SBC OneCall
 - Thirteen Housing Group
 - Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commission Group (HaST CCG)
 - Catalyst
 - Age UK Teesside
 - Stockton-on-Tees Over 50's Forum
- 2.5 Recognising the increasing pressure on the Council's finances, it is imperative that in-depth scrutiny reviews promote the Council's policy priorities and, where possible, seek to identify efficiencies and reduce demand for services.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Concerns have been raised in relation to crimes in local neighbourhoods, specifically those against vulnerable older people living at home. A specific incident occurred on the 16th February 2019 involving the burglary of an elderly woman in the Hardwick area of Stockton which, on the 19th February 2019, led the Council's Executive Scrutiny Committee to agree to refer the issue to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee for further review.
- 3.2 The review aimed to support local residents who may be vulnerable due to their individual circumstances, including age and housing arrangements. It undertook an assessment of local relevant public services and how they contribute to the protection of the vulnerable, as well as an assessment of local community infrastructure and whether more support was needed to help promote safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents (making recommendations for improvement where identified).
- 3.3 Crimes against older people can take many forms, both inside and within the vicinity of their home. During the course of the review, both a Victims' Commissioner: *Anti-Social Behaviour – Living a Nightmare* (Apr 19) report and a HMI-CFRS: *The poor relation – The police and CPS response to crimes against older people* (Jul 19) report were published which raised further concerns around the experiences of older people.
- 3.4 As referenced within the HMI-CFRS: *The poor relation – The police and CPS response to crimes against older people* (Jul 19) report, some older people can experience a particular set of challenges that are not well understood. This can include a combination of:
- social isolation, and / or a lack of access to trusted people to tell;
 - not knowing how to report a crime;
 - not recognising that what has been experienced is a crime;
 - a perception of not wanting to be a burden or cause a problem (this came through very strongly in interviews with victims);
 - mental ill health or other cognitive problems;
 - fear of loss of their home or being placed into care;
 - fear of retribution, especially if the perpetrator is a carer;
 - shame, particularly if the perpetrator is a family member, or if they have been duped into giving away money or valuable possessions; and
 - not being believed, or a fear of not being believed.



4.0 Findings

Crime Context

- 4.1 The current population of Cleveland is approximately 564,300, with Stockton-on-Tees contributing the largest share (around 195,000). However, the population of the Borough aged 80+ was not known.
- 4.2 Cleveland Police provided data (see Appendix 1) that enabled the Committee to establish the position in relation to crimes committed against more vulnerable older people (in the 80+ age group). It was noted that there were no benchmarks with which to compare this information, and that data related to all victims aged 80+ whether living in their own home or within a care setting (this could not be separated). The data demonstrated that:
- There were significant offences within Stockton-on-Tees over the 12 months to end of July 2019 in relation to theft (58), violence against the person (34), criminal damage, including arson (31) and burglary (28).
 - Across Cleveland, the highest number of reported domestic incidents and crimes against those aged 80+ occurred in Stockton-on-Tees.

In addition, the Force handled 89 fraud offences, a number of which involved stolen bank accounts and the creation of catalogue accounts in the names of older people. Investigations take place but this is not a quick process.

- 4.3 As seen in the below table, the number of reported incidents in Stockton-on-Tees involving victims aged 80 or over had decreased over the last two years (from 406 in 2017 to 339 in 2019), though the reasons for this were unknown.

Where victim is aged 80 or over when reported	Stockton			Force		
	Year to end of July...					
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Incidents	406	374	339	1,517	1,603	1,345
Crimes	179	147	155	699	709	622
NFIB Fraud Crimes	13	34	8	29	11	32

Continuing issues around a lack of reporting was highlighted (the Force does not know what it does not know) – this could be due to factors such as age, communication difficulties, or possible lower expectations of the Police (people may think ‘why bother?’). The Committee later noted the concerns raised in the latest HMICFRS PEEL assessment of the Force around the way it handled incidents even when they are reported.

Resources to support older people living at home

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

4.4 The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was outlined, one element of which is their responsibility for commissioning victims' services. The Police and Crime Plan (produced by the PCC which sets the strategic direction and objectives for policing) includes objectives regarding a better deal for victims and witnesses, and working together to make Cleveland safer. PCCs are identified as local victim's champions and partnership figureheads, and this is delivered locally via:

- Commissioning of support services for victims of crime
- Speaking directly to victims to hear first-hand about their experience
- Co-chairing the Local Criminal Justice Partnership (LCJP)
- Bringing partners together to discuss areas of mutual interest (e.g. anti-social behaviour legislation)
- Effective collaborative and co-working

4.5 Co-commissioned with the Durham PCC, the *Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS)* provides free, independent and confidential support for individuals and their families, helping them to cope with the immediate impact of a crime and assisting in their subsequent recovery. The service has supported 92 victims of crime aged 80 years and over in the period 1st June 2018 – 31st May 2019, broken down as follows:

Crime Type	Number of Clients supported	Comments
Fraud	45	Scams, bogus callers / doorstep crime/ postal scams
Burglary	21	Dwellings as well as sheds, garages, etc.
Theft	11	
Criminal Damage	7	
ASB	6	
Violence	2	Including Robbery

A needs assessment for victims is undertaken, and a tailored support plan is devised for each individual. VCAS link into other services where appropriate (e.g. Age UK), and for those who may be socially isolated, direct them to other groups. Low-level crime prevention advice (e.g. dummy cameras / locks) is also provided, as well as a call-blocking system.

4.6 The Cleveland PCC has provided additional investment to Cleveland Police for Crime Prevention Officers (with a focus on vulnerability), though the Committee later queried whether this was in response to the initial findings of the Force's latest HMICFRS PEEL assessment which coincided with the duration of this review. The Committee was also made aware of *Friends*

Against Scams, a National Trading Standards initiative which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand.

- 4.7 The Cleveland PCC is a 'SCAMBassador' (raises awareness of scams and aims to prevent them), and has supported the delivery of Fraud Prevention presentations in the form of monthly drop-in sessions at the Cleveland Police Community Safety Hub in Hemlington, Middlesbrough. In addition, there are over 2,700 SCAMchampions (someone with access to *Friends Against Scams* resources in order to hold their own awareness sessions within their community or workplace) across the Cleveland area.
- 4.8 The OPCC highlighted a number of other initiatives involving vulnerable older people across Cleveland, including:
- *Police Cadets Programme*: A uniformed personal and social development and community volunteering programme for young people aged 13-17 years, it includes support for elderly and vulnerable groups in the community. One example is gardening for vulnerable residents who have been targeted by rogue workers.
 - *Safe Places Scheme*: Locations in the community where people who need some extra support can go if they need some sort of help. Aimed at vulnerable groups, it can range from a call home, or help with directions.
 - *Empowering Communities Inclusion & Neighbourhood Management System (E-CINS)*: Live-time multi-agency information-sharing / communication system used to support the management of vulnerable people (and repeat victims) within the community. The Cleveland PCC funds a Project Co-ordinator, and there is a drive (via the Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP)) to get more partners on board so information can be shared in a timelier manner.
 - *Criminal Justice Process*: Support for victims at Court, including involvement of VCAS, Witness Care / Witness Service (commended by the Ministry of Justice), and remote evidence links (becoming more common to reduce victim anxiety). Registered intermediaries are also used as part of Achieving Best Evidence (ABE).
- 4.9 Regarding future plans, the Committee was informed of several aspects ranging from reacting to any changes to the Victims Code of Practice (currently under review, with the OPCC feeding into consultations) and understanding what this means for older people who experience crime, to seeking assurance from the Police and other agencies regarding recommendations from the HMICFRS: *The poor relation – The police and CPS response to crimes against older people* (July 2019) report (circulated to the Committee for information). Further embedding of E-CINS (Project Manager in place to drive this forward and discussions taking place at Safer Stockton Partnership) and prevention work was also highlighted, with Elected Members encouraged to contribute to the joint PCC and Police consultation in relation to neighbourhood policing during October 2019.
- 4.10 Reflecting on the information provided, the Committee queried if VCAS' call-blocking system was free-of-charge, and was advised that VCAS provide this for free on a short-term basis, and can offer it for longer periods at a reduced cost. The Committee asked if action is taken to identify numbers that are blocked – it was confirmed that information is shared with the Cyber Crime

team, though numbers are often from overseas or are pre-recorded messages, therefore are difficult to trace.

- 4.11 Although Elected Members have had previous concerns around information-sharing, E-CINS has provided the first opportunity to pool resources through all involved agencies via one intelligence picture and has led to reduced duplication.
- 4.12 Committee sought clarification over how grants were allocated to groups. Applications have to align with one of the Police and Crime Plan (PCP) priorities, and although nothing directly to the 80+ age range is funded, other grants awarded have included people who are of the older generation (including some individuals who are over 80). The Committee was directed to the OPCC website for details of successful 2018-2019 applications - <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/Financial-Information/PCC-Initiative-Allocation-201819.aspx>).

Cleveland Police

- 4.13 The Force's current delivery plans that supported the protection of older people were outlined, including:
- Each service of Call is subject to THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation opportunities, Vulnerability of the victim and the Engagement level required to resolve the issue) to assist in the initial stages to identify vulnerable victims or vulnerability within the victim. The Committee was reminded that any information the Police obtain is reliant on the ability of the call-handler. It was also noted that some people do not see themselves as vulnerable, even though they are older.
 - Enquiries / investigations are allocated appropriately to specialist teams for ownership and responsibility.
 - Collecting evidence in various ways – intermediaries to support interviews / Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) in suitable places (e.g. taking mobile equipment into victims' own homes) / via Adult Services (Strategy Meetings).
 - Support from VCAS for Fraud Offences – *Friends Against Scams*.
 - Herbert Protocol – a national scheme introduced by the Police in partnership with other agencies which encourages carers of elderly and dementia patients to compile useful information which could be used in the event of a vulnerable person going missing and has proven beneficial.
 - E-CINS: communication system between the Police and other agencies, in particular Local Authority / Housing – used regarding vulnerable persons within the community.
 - Neighbourhood Teams – identify vulnerable victims within their area, call backs, PCSO re-visits.
 - Crime Prevention Officer – assists proactive and reactive work, re-visits and crime prevention support, with additional work and input to agencies (NHS / Age UK).
 - Public Protection Notices (PPNs) – Officers can submit PPNs if they encounter a vulnerable person, then refer to other services if required.
 - Media releases – national updates regarding Action Fraud / significant reactive information / local scams. Can be challenging to capture an elderly audience, so need to be mindful about the appropriate mediums (e.g. via community groups, churches).

- 4.14 Crime Prevention provide support across the Force to promote safety and wellbeing – this is done with the elderly community in, for example, church halls. There is input into Dementia Friends support groups and established referral pathways (though the Police do not chase referrals up in terms of what has happened to it).
- 4.15 Protecting vulnerable older residents cannot be done in isolation, and the Police’s predominant partnership is with the Local Authority (Social Care). The Police have an established multi-agency approach when dealing with vulnerable victims of crime, and safeguarding is a primary role in policing – without the support of the statutory and third sector agencies, protecting the community would not be possible. Vulnerability is not only supported by organisations, it is also required from neighbours / support groups.
- 4.16 Future plans for service delivery were highlighted, including:
- Long-term plan to involve Adult Services into the Police’s Children’s HUBS for a multi-agency approach which has proven to work for children.
 - Revisit training around Herbert Protocol.
 - Education around identifying vulnerability – need to re-educate continually as not fully understood.
 - Raising investigative standards – links with the CPS need to be stronger.
 - Consideration for Nominated Neighbour Scheme – would require people to buy into this via the Local Authority and community groups.
- 4.17 There is wide acknowledgement that an increasing number of elderly people remain in their home due to a lack of facilities in hospitals / care homes / finances, and also because they want to (older people do not see themselves as vulnerable).
- 4.18 During the course of this review, the latest HMICFRS PEEL assessment on Cleveland Police was published in September 2019 – this rated the Force as inadequate across the three main inspection areas, highlighting significant deterioration in how the Force prevents crime and anti-social behaviour, and serious concerns that it is not adequately protecting vulnerable people.

Recommendation 1

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Cleveland Police provide assurance around the measures put in place to address the failings highlighted in the Force’s recent HMICFRS PEEL assessment around identifying vulnerable victims and providing adequate safeguarding.

Cleveland Fire Brigade

- 4.19 Cleveland Fire Brigade outlined their strategic approach to managing risk involving *Community Risk Profiles* which use a variety of data sets (e.g. age, rented accommodation, smoker, drinking / substance misuse, area of deprivation) to identify those people who the Fire Brigade deem more at risk from fire, and a *Community Safety Strategy* focusing on the high risks within local communities. An integrated and targeted approach is adopted to focus on vulnerability, with services delivered (often in collaboration with other partners) to reduce risk and change people’s behaviours.

- 4.20 Examples of managing risks within the home (*Safer Homes: reducing accidental fires*) and in neighbourhoods (*Safer Neighbourhoods: reducing arson and anti-social behaviour, and the consequential impacts (personal and economic loss)*) were provided, including advice, education and intervention delivered in collaboration, partnership or the Fire Brigade themselves. 2018-2019 was Cleveland Fire Brigade's best ever performance for accidental dwelling fires (ADFs), and the Cleveland area has the lowest rate of ADFs nationally (per 10,000 population) – this is testament to the strong local partnership-working.
- 4.21 Stockton-on-Tees data was presented to the Committee (though unable to provide specific statistics in relation to those aged 80 and above) which showed that from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019:
- Life Risk: Accidental dwelling fires decreased by 8% (48 to 44).
 - Economic Risk: Calculable costs from arson increased by 32% (£3.4m to £4.5m).
 - Crime-Related Incidents: Arson has increased by 46% (548 to 801), though this is the lowest rate per 10,000 people across the four areas that constitute the Cleveland Fire Brigade patch (equates to 22% of the total deliberate fires). Violence towards Fire Brigade staff has increased by 40% (10 to 14).
- 4.22 In terms of efforts to reduce accidental fires in the home (*Safer Homes*), the Fire Brigade continually refine their proven risk assessment which contributes to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) process in identifying those most at risk. Another key element involves Home Fire Safety Visits – 6,508 were delivered across the Borough during 2018-2019, the most in any of the four district areas (it was noted that a larger proportion of people are considered to be at risk in Stockton-on-Tees, and there are more Fire Stations in the Borough, hence more visits).
- 4.23 Work with Safer Partnerships and local partners helps resolve safeguarding and complex needs (e.g. self-neglect, fuel poverty, hoarding, vulnerable person referrals) when identified, and the Fire Brigade continue to liaise with other agencies to develop a multi-agency online tool for self-assessment. Other work relevant to this scrutiny review includes the piloting of a befriending service in Hartlepool to identify, socially mobilise and empower lonely or isolated people (the intention is to secure funding and expand this into Stockton-on-Tees), and the expansion in the use of E-CINS which should strengthen the identification of vulnerable people, risk premises (void / derelict) and arson hotspots.
- 4.24 Attempts to reduce arson (*Safer Neighbourhoods*) are addressed in the new *Arson Reduction Strategy 2019-2022*, as well as through the introduction of domestic arson advice as part of the Safer Homes visits. New initiatives to enable and empower local people (e.g. Fix My Street) are being implemented, and an arson conference is being considered bringing key stakeholders together to further tackle this multi-agency issue.
- 4.25 In response to Committee queries, the Fire Brigade confirmed that fire education packages are delivered for community groups, and fire alarms are installed in homes (but not carbon monoxide detectors as these are not a requirement under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005).

SBC Adult Social Care

4.26 A variety of Early Intervention teams / services are in place supporting older people at home, including an Early Intervention Social Work Team, Reablement Services (Home Care-type provision which aims to work with people to avoid long-term personal care), Occupational Therapy (providing adaptations), and a Multi-Disciplinary Service (involving Social Workers, Physios, Occupational Therapists and Nurses).

- Reablement for up to six weeks in own home (as stipulated by the Care Act 2014, but can be extended slightly if required)
- Telecare equipment free for up to 6 weeks
- Equipment to maintain safety within own home (e.g. grab rails, bath, chair-raisers to prevent falls)
- Sensory support equipment (e.g. vibrating pillow pads with smoke alarms)
- Community Services (generic, community link to support groups – can prevent people becoming dependent on Adult Social Care)

Between 1st July 2018 and 30th June 2019, short-term support was provided for 2,053 individuals (791 people aged 80-84; 1,125 people aged 85-94; 137 people aged 95-103 (eldest 103)).

4.27 Longer-term provision is via the Assessment and Support Planning Team and Older People Mental Health Team. Services include:

- Home Care (a statutory assessment is required to determine if a person is eligible)
- Day Care – Halcyon Centre
- Community Services
- Telecare
- Equipment (can be recycled for use by others)
- Adaptations (e.g. lift in property)
- Direct Payments

Between 1st July 2018 and 30th June 2019, long-term support was provided for 1,009 individuals (362 people aged 80-84; 560 people aged 85-94; 87 people aged 95-103).

4.28 Safeguarding is everyone's business, and the Local Authority has a statutory duty to undertake an enquiry in response to a concern (for those with care and support needs). Multi-agency safeguarding partnerships (through the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)) were highlighted, as well as Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP), a light-touch personalised approach that enables safeguarding to be done with, not to, people.

Between 1st July 2018 and 30th June 2019:

- 155 safeguarding concerns reported (49 in relation to those aged 80-84; 106 for those aged 85+)
- 105 s42 enquiries (32 in relation to those aged 80-84; 75 for those aged 85+)

4.29 SBC Adult Social Care engages with partners including the NHS (nurses, hospital, therapy staff), Fire Brigade, Third Sector organisations, Telecare,

Yorkshire Housing (who provide a handyman service – SBC-commissioned and free to customers), and the Police.

- 4.30 The Committee asked about staff retention across Adult Social Care services, and was assured that retention was healthy, with people tending to only leave due to retirement. There is also a casual register to cover annual, maternity and sickness leave. An apprenticeship scheme to grow the Council's own Social Care staff was also noted. Staff training in relation to older people support is available through the department's induction process, the Council's safeguarding team, and TSAB (free-of-charge).
- 4.31 Regarding Direct Payments, the Committee sought clarity on safeguards against financial abuse. Officers advised that a Suitable Persons scheme was in place incorporating a pre-paid card system that Adult Social Care can keep track of at any time to see what has been paid for, and identify any abnormal spend.
- 4.32 The Committee queried how the Local Authority identifies vulnerable residents living at home. Whilst the Council is reliant on individuals or their families approaching Social Care for support in the first instance, proactive campaigns around safeguarding have been undertaken on a regional basis (not Stockton-specific) to showcase available support.
- 4.33 Referencing the statistics presented, it was noted that due to technical difficulties with the current information system, data could not be broken down per Ward. However, a new case management system is in the process of being commissioned, and the Committee was later informed that SBC Adult Social Care had agreed to incorporate E-CINS within their existing operating model (not full buy-in as yet).

SBC OneCall

- 4.34 Based in the Security Centre, OneCall, previously Care Call and Telecare Services (and before that Warden Call), is the assistive technology and response service for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (see Appendix 2). Accredited through the Telecare Services Association (TSA) that audits yearly and compares service against best practice, OneCall are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to provide personal care. During the course of this review, OneCall underwent its first CQC inspection and had been rated as 'good' across all categories.
- 4.35 There are two main services offered:
- *OneCall (£3.92 per week)*: Basic package lifeline unit and pendant – the lifeline plugs into a telephone connection or works with a sim card to raise an alert from the client's property. Funding is available if the client is over 55 and on housing benefits. If the client is under 55, has a debilitating illness, and is on housing benefit, they would get the service free. The weekly cost includes equipment, call handling and emergency responses.



Lifeline Unit



Pendant

- *OneCall Enhanced (£12.66 per week)*: Includes the lifeline unit as well as a range of sensors and alarms in a tailored packaged designed to promote independence and keep the client living independently and safely at home. Peripherals include falls detectors, purposeful walking alerts, door sensors, epilepsy alerts, PIR's for inactivity monitoring, smoke, heat, CO2 alarms, medication prompts and carousel and a gas shut of system. If the client is active to social work, this cost would become part of the client's social care package. Again, the cost covers all equipment, calls handling, visits and response.



Falls Detector



Bed Sensor



Smoke Alarm



Heat Detector

If a client is self-referring into either of the above services and wanting to pay, they would be charged VAT for the service unless they have a chronic illness or long-term disability that effects their everyday life. There is also an installation fee of £72.00 for all self-funding clients which can be spread over three months.

- 4.36 OneCall currently provides service to approximately 4,998 dwellings throughout the Borough, with 2,425 of these properties housing clients who are 80 years or above. 75% of these clients have a basic package of a lifeline unit and pendant installed, whilst the other 25% have an *Enhanced* package to meet their needs and promote their independence. An annual review of every client is undertaken.
- 4.37 Between 1st January 2019 and 30th June 2019, OneCall attended 1,372 call-outs to over 80 clients in response to assistive technology alerts, of which 1,264 were classed as an urgent response (667 of these urgent responses were for clients that had fallen). Only 37 of these clients needed a hospital admission (reduction in hospital admissions is a key part of the service), with OneCall lifting and ensuring the wellbeing of the remaining clients.
- 4.38 Other OneCall activity has included contacting the Fire Brigade and attending the properties of clients for kitchen fires, attending and requesting ambulance services for clients with breathing difficulties, chest pains, injuries, mobility issues and showing signs of stroke, and returning clients to their home address (and contacting families) who had left their property at a time deemed to be unsafe. Assistance with personal care, including needs outside a clients' general care package, and taking calls from clients who are anxious or just wanting someone to talk to, is also part of the service.

- 4.39 Further details of OneCall involvement were provided in relation to a TeleAssist pilot replacing some 15-minute Care Company visits with assistive technology (which would also address concerns around older people not wearing their pendants), falls prevention in care home settings (over 250 clients living within the Borough's care homes receiving a falls prevention package in their rooms), and long-term housing related support comprising an out-of-hours response service for 550 scheme properties within 23 housing schemes across the Borough. OneCall key performance indicators demonstrated extremely high call handling response rates during May and June 2019, exceeding industry standards.
- 4.40 OneCall has previously tried a targeted marketing campaign to advertise its services, but older people often do not want help (as opposed to their family members who think they need it) and can feel that requesting support may impinge on their independence. The service has also worked closely with Social Care to inform their staff of OneCall and become more efficient (e.g. only conducting one client assessment, not a separate Social Care and OneCall assessment). In addition, OneCall are working more with Health agencies to provide cover.
- 4.41 The Committee expressed concern regarding OneCall costs for those above the threshold for financial support, but was assured that the more expensive service (OneCall Enhanced) was often provided as part of a care package for those referred through Social Care (32 clients pay for this service themselves).
- 4.42 Clarification was sought around staffing levels, particularly since calls come in at different times / rates. OneCall involves a small team, with four Officers operating during the day and three at night. Call handling statistics are reviewed monthly, and whilst staff are currently very busy, response times remain good – however, if standards slip, the service will react and support accordingly. There is the capacity to grow the service.

In terms of evidence-gathering capability, all calls to the service are recorded for three years, and OneCall has previously worked with the Police in relation to financial theft cases.

- 4.43 Reflecting on those clients who contact OneCall just to talk to someone, the Committee asked if any befriending service to reduce vulnerability was available. Some are offered through the voluntary sector (Catalyst), and OneCall are looking at the possibility of taking on volunteers for this purpose too.
- 4.44 The service is based in the Security Centre for a reason – the Emergency Duty Team and Enforcement are based in the same building and this reinforces partnership-working and integrates support for older people.

Thirteen Housing Group

- 4.45 Thirteen Housing Group hold 11,729 housing units in Stockton-on-Tees; this includes specific housing for vulnerable older residents. There are two *Extra Care Schemes* (Meadowfield House in Thornaby and Winford House in Billingham) involving large purpose-built sites with self-contained apartments and on-site year-round care and support to help maintain independence – this is delivered by external companies who are CQC registered, and is

commissioned by the Local Authority. Referrals for Extra Care are presented at a panel made up of Local Authority Social Care and Thirteen representatives – an individual must be aged 55+ and have been assessed as requiring a care package to be eligible.

- 4.46 Thirteen have a number of *Sheltered Housing Schemes* across the Borough (High Grange House and Eden House in Billingham, Lauder House and Cedar House in Elm Tree, and Ewbank Gardens in Stockton Centre. In addition to these, Thirteen deliver the support contract in Hackworth Court, owned by Railway Housing, in Stockton Centre). These comprise self-contained apartments and a communal gathering space, but carers are not on-site 24/7. Access to the Sheltered Schemes is currently via Thirteen's Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) process (a new CBL platform is being launched in the near future) – individuals need to be aged 55+ and require a level of support.
- 4.47 In addition to the Extra Care and Sheltered Housing schemes, Thirteen has 1,229 one-bed and 739 two-bed *dispersed bungalows* in Stockton-on-Tees (over 700 tenants aged 71-80 and over 450 tenants aged 81+ are living in these bungalows as of July 2019). In surrounding Local Authorities, Thirteen are able to extend its housing for older people support service to tenants in dispersed bungalows on a needs basis – this is not deliverable in Stockton-on-Tees as no Local Authority funding is available.

Recommendation 2

Thirteen extend its older people support service to tenants in the Borough's dispersed bungalows on a needs basis (in line with neighbouring Local Authorities).

- 4.48 Within the Extra Care and Sheltered Housing Schemes, there are a number of initiatives to promote safety and wellbeing in addition to the support activity already outlined above:
- Monthly tenant meetings where safeguarding, health and safety, and fire safety are discussed (schedule, including times and venues, regarding tenant meetings for the wider community also circulated to Committee).
 - Noticeboards displaying safeguarding information, bogus callers' awareness, Thirteen's complaints procedure and hot and cold weather awareness / alerts.
 - Secure door entry systems covered by on-site CCTV.
 - All staff wear ID badges and are trained as dementia friends.
 - All tenants receive an evacuation plan in event of fire, which can lead to aids such as vibrating pillows and flashing lights for hard of hearing.
 - Adaptations can be carried out by Thirteen's in-house team to aid independence (work closely with SBC regarding how this is funded).
 - Fire Risk assessments are carried out annually on the building.
 - Help and advice on low-level anti-social behaviour; more serious incidents are raised to Thirteen's neighbourhood team who liaise with the Police.
- 4.49 Separate to any domiciliary / personal care that individuals may require, Thirteen deliver housing support in both the Extra Care and Sheltered Housing Schemes. This includes:

- Assessing needs, risk assessing, and support planning (assisting tenants to get the most benefit from living in Thirteen's schemes and to promote independence).
- Help in setting-up and maintaining home or tenancy, and advice / assistance in liaising with statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Safety and security of accommodation, assistance in becoming familiar with safety procedures, establishing security routines in the home and managing health and wellbeing, and security support relating to harassment.

4.50 Thirteen has an in-house Tenancy Support team that provides support to customers who are victims of anti-social behaviour, crime and victims of domestic abuse. This team also offer a 'safe at home' provision to make customers feel safer within their homes which can include additional locks to doors and windows, cactus strips along fencing, and the provision of anti-vandal paint if the walls or roof are high enough. Thirteen's Enforcement team can also provide support to this client group by taking enforcement action against those who are perpetrating the behaviour, whether they are a Thirteen tenant or not.

Recommendation 3

Thirteen provide assurance around the provision and installation of robust locks that give its tenants adequate security in their own homes, and for any learning on the provision of locks to be cascaded to other local Registered Providers / private landlords.

4.51 The principle behind Thirteen's operational model places neighbourhoods at the heart of its delivery, meaning the service provided in neighbourhoods is more intensive and staff are aware of their customer needs within each patch.

4.52 For the Sheltered Housing service, tenants are assessed on the level of support they require as either 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low' (these are Thirteen assessments which are shared with the Local Authority, and individuals may move between levels if their needs escalate). All Extra Care tenants are automatically categorised as 'High'. Tenants receive the following service depending on their need:

- *High* (Level 3): Daily call five times weekly, plus one visit / face-to-face. Emergency response via Support Officer (working hours); Assistive Technology (out-of-hours). Six monthly review.
- *Medium* (Level 2): Two calls a week or one call, one visit. Emergency response via Support Officer (working hours); Assistive Technology (out-of-hours). Annual update of records.
- *Low* (Level 1): Low level support, emergency response only. No contact except annual review / change in medical circumstances.

As of July 2019, within the Sheltered Housing service, 62% of customers are accessing high-level support, 14% medium-level, and 24% low-level.

4.53 Support is enabled through a mixture of Local Authority funding and service charges. A financial means test will determine whether residents are eligible for Housing Benefit to cover service charges and Local Authority funding. There has been no increase in funding for a long time; services operate on a tight budget.

- 4.54 In terms of partnership-working, within the Sheltered Housing Schemes, Stockton OneCall respond on Thirteen's behalf to emergencies within the building out-of-hours, and now also monitor and respond to the Extra Care Schemes too. There is close working with the Fire Brigade who regularly visit Thirteen's sites to keep themselves familiarised with the buildings, and staff liaise with hospitals during the week to check on discharges to ensure tenants safety.
- 4.55 Thirteen has volunteers working across the schemes and are in the process of advertising / recruiting more; this is arranged through Thirteen's in-house service. To build on this, Thirteen are currently working with Age UK to increase befriending services in schemes.
- 4.56 There is a close partnership with the Local Authority regarding safeguarding. Q1 (Apr-Jun) 2019-2020 figures from Thirteen's Safeguarding Concern logging system was provided to the Committee (this information is shared with the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) as well as the North and South Tees Children Safeguarding Partnerships) – 22 safeguarding referrals were made to the Local Authority during this period, including one financial / material abuse case involving a 70-84 year-old, and one domestic abuse case involving an individual over 85.
- 4.57 Both Neighbourhood teams and Enforcement teams work closely in partnership with the Police and various Local Authority departments to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) that could be affecting this client group. Thirteen is represented at many strategic and operational groups to work on preventing and tackling ASB, crime, domestic abuse and hate crime. Thirteen attend JAGs and multi-agency meetings that explore safeguarding / capacity / mental health / ASB and crime, exploring what each agency can do and agreeing Action Plans to tackle crime and ASB, as well as the safeguarding of vulnerable victims.
- 4.58 Regarding Thirteen's contact time with residents based on their assessed level of need, the Committee asked what mechanisms were in place to monitor if the required calls / visits were actually happening. Thirteen confirmed that they carry out regular audits and satisfaction tests.

Recommendation 4

Thirteen provide further assurance around the mechanisms in place to monitor if the number of calls / visits to those tenants requiring support were being conducted.

- 4.59 For vulnerable individuals, the idea of fitting some form of recognition equipment to properties for when people knock on tenants' doors was suggested. Thirteen confirmed that they are looking into such technology, though this would have cost implications. It was also noted that recognition devices are provided to vulnerable people through SBC Adult Social Care.

Recommendation 5

Thirteen liaise with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adult Social Care around the identification and provision of recognition equipment for vulnerable tenants.

- 4.60 Praise was forthcoming for Thirteen's new operational model involving Neighbourhood Co-ordinators and the way this had strengthened the partnership between Thirteen and Elected Members. However, concern was expressed that ASB enforcement between Thirteen and the Local Authority still needed improvements. The Committee was informed that Thirteen are now involved in all operational and strategic meetings, though it was acknowledged that relationships between Officers on the ground could be better. Sessions have been arranged to increase information-sharing between SBC, Thirteen and the Police.
- 4.61 Basic (low-level) training regarding ASB is available for new Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, but there is still work to do to upskill staff. Training around dealing with older vulnerable residents (i.e. 80+) was also suggested.

Recommendation 6

Thirteen consider specific training on dealing with older vulnerable people for its Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, in addition to more in-depth anti-social behaviour training.

Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commission Group (HaST CCG)

- 4.62 HaST CCG provided a summary of their safeguarding role which supports how older people are protected at home, highlighting their statutory duties and the need to be assured that organisations from which it commissions have effective safeguarding arrangements in place. The CCG works with the Local Authority and Police as key stakeholders to ensure access to community resources that can reduce social and physical isolation for adults.
- 4.63 *Health Initiative* funding (which has since ceased) was an initiative the CCG agreed and was hosted by Catalyst in Stockton to provide the voluntary sector with support for their activities through a grant agreement. By giving grant funding, the CCG are not commissioning services from the organisation, but rather supporting its existing activities, and is therefore not a contract for services. Grants traditionally come to the end of a term agreement, normally a year, whilst the organisation develops itself to self-support activities, and it is unusual that ceasing an element of grant funding would result in a loss of the activities supported. The Committee queried if there had been any impact assessment around this funding no longer being available – however, it is not usual practice that, when a grant agreement ends, the CCG would continue to monitor the impact of funding being stopped.

Role of the voluntary and community sector

Catalyst

- 4.64 Catalyst support a large number of organisations, from micro groups to larger one like British Red Cross, within the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector – they do not deliver services, but instead look after those VCSE organisations who do. Over 70% of these are smaller organisations (turnover less than £100k), but all are 'doing something', and in a recent survey, over 50% stated their focus was on 'older people' or

'community'. It is Catalyst's belief that the work of the VCSE define us as a society.

- 4.65 Support is provided in a variety of ways, for example help with governance, funding advice (Grantfinder database), bid writing support, training and development, networks and forums (quarterly Safeguarding Forum – focus on vulnerability at November meeting), and representation on policy-making bodies (e.g. Safer Stockton Partnership).
- 4.66 Services commissioned and paid for by the Local Authority and delivered by the VCSE include Dementia Friends (Alzheimer's Society), Home Care (Five Lamps), and ARC (via Better Health programme funding). Other services paid for by Health (CCG) and others include Heart Support (promotes social life and network of support), dementia allotments project (Thornaby), Peer Support Groups (Age UK Teesside), and Sporting Chance (Volunteering Matters). Community-based activities for older people run by volunteers include faith organisation lunch clubs, walking groups, clubs and societies (bridge, chess, flower-arranging), and the University of the Third Age. However, there was a question to be asked as to whether these initiatives really help the most vulnerable, or if they only engage people who are motivated and able to socialise rather than those 'stuck at home'.
- 4.67 Community development work regarding neighbourliness and befriending services that encourage people to help those living nearby was noted, including the RSVP Project (Volunteering Matters), Age UK Befriending, and Billingham Environmental Link Programme (BELP). The importance of people taking responsibility in their local communities was highlighted.

Recommendation 7

Catalyst collate a list of local befriending initiatives offered by the VCSE sector and partner organisations (including SBC OneCall, Thirteen and Cleveland Fire Brigade), for circulation to vulnerable older people living at home (which can also be advertised via Stockton Information Directory).

- 4.68 Members acknowledged that Catalyst's networks and forums seemed to work well. Further interaction was fostered by signposting organisations to others that are similar, and Catalyst's e-bulletin also helps to promote what is going on across the Borough. A note of caution was expressed around individuals / groups becoming competitive when funding is made available – it is Catalyst's remit to try to get the best out of people by working together, not against each other.

Age UK Teesside

- 4.69 For the past five years, Age UK Teesside has been funded by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to deliver a project called *Better Health Better Wealth* which provides targeted and sustained interventions for people over 65, and engages with those who are less likely to access primary care services and who may be socially isolated and or at risk of dementia. The project takes a holistic and preventative approach, and supports clients with self-directed care.
- 4.70 Promotion of safety and wellbeing is at the heart of all services. All staff and volunteers undertake safeguarding training as part of their induction, as well

as annual refresher courses. Managers attend safeguarding meetings in the Borough, and any issues are reported to the Safeguarding Team at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

- 4.71 Doorstep crime is prevalent as well as telephone and online scams. Older people report that they are frightened to go out after dark for fear of being attacked, and therefore will only attend daytime activities unless they are accompanied by a friend or family member.
- 4.72 A gap was noted in support partnership with the Police, Safe In Tees Valley / Crime Commissioner – whilst all of these organisations have information on the work that Age UK Teesside do with older people, they never receive any referrals or engagement from them (except Community and Neighbourhood talks), and this is a concern as Age UK Teesside do not know how much protection the Borough's older population are receiving (note: this conflicts with evidence provided by the Police who stated that their Crime Prevention Officers provide input to other agencies including Age UK (see para 4.13)). Also, some parts of the Borough have less coverage in terms of support groups, and there is a desire to level this up.

Recommendation 8

OPCC and Cleveland Police consider and strengthen their partnership working with Age UK Teesside.

- 4.73 Successful partnerships include the *Safe and Well Project* in partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade who whilst conducting home visits alert Age UK Teesside to any older person who may appear lonely and isolated in their community. The organisation also works in conjunction with the Local Authority and other voluntary agencies to ensure that an older person's needs are met if Age UK Teesside cannot assist – an older person is never left to struggle on their own once identified. Its social groups have guest speakers, with topics on crime, fraud (online / telephone) and available support.
- 4.74 The Committee highlighted the transport challenges that older people face – although a number of activities / groups exist across the Borough, they struggle to access them (difficulties with getting in and out of vehicles was also noted). A community transport service exists, but this is mostly used around school drop-off / pick-up hours – however, could buses be used more effectively outside these times, and are there any VCSE organisations who may own their own transport which could be better utilised to widen accessibility?

Recommendation 9

SBC consider ways in which its current community transport can be used to facilitate access for older people to community-based activities / groups.

Recommendation 10

Catalyst undertake an audit of VCSE organisations to establish transport capacity which may support greater accessibility for older people.

Stockton-on-Tees Over 50's Forum

- 4.75 Forum members are mainly 70-80 years-old, though age is not necessarily an indicator of vulnerability. The Forum has hosted speakers from a range of organisations such as SBC, Cleveland Fire Brigade and from the VCSE – information from these sessions are then cascaded by members to other groups they are involved with.
- 4.76 Advice on house security via Neighbourhood Watch was a great benefit for older people in the past, but in recent years the information given by the Police has decreased. Catalyst provide lots of material at Forum meetings – leaflets are better as most people over 80 do not have internet access, and these could be provided when services access older people in the community who need help. The provision of simple security measures such as adequate locks on doors, safety chains and better lighting around properties would all help too.
- 4.77 In October 2019, the Forum discussed this scrutiny review and provided the following feedback to the Committee:
- One member did not know where they would go to find out more information about home security, and another wanted to know more about how to better secure their home – would be good if the Forum organised a speaker to come and talk about safety and being secure in the home and what to do to make it safer.
 - One member noted their experiences of being burgled, and the security measures they had put in place since.
 - Some members had received emails through from Cleveland Police (Crime Prevention) about scams and crimes that are taking place in the area.
 - One member suggested a card with emergency contact numbers for older people.
 - Some members were aware of the support and advice available from the Police, Fire Brigade, Thirteen (handyperson service) and Local Authority.
 - A central point for information and making that known to people via Stockton News would be helpful, as would giving leaflets to all voluntary groups containing information on who to contact for security advice / support.
 - One member had an alarm with a function (panic alarm) that, if they felt unsafe, allowed them to set it off by pressing a button to try and scare people away with the noise.
 - One member suggested that having a checklist at the door to remind people what to do, if a stranger calls, would be beneficial (this would help people with early dementia), and also felt that having reminders for people that crimes took place in their area would keep encouraging them to secure their homes.

Recommendation 11

SBC and Catalyst produce an easy-read document listing the main contacts for support / advice which can be circulated via Stockton News and by local VCSE organisations to older people living in their own homes across the Borough.

Safer Stockton Partnership

4.78 The Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP) operates as Stockton-on-Tees' statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and consists of statutory and voluntary organisations who work together to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. The partnership is responsible for the delivery of a wide variety of strategies and plans, with the overall aim of improving the safety of the community in Stockton-on-Tees. It support the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and produces a Community Safety Plan every three years (monitoring of performance on the identified priorities is undertaken on a quarterly basis).

Stockton Home Safety Association

4.79 A Committee led by the current Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, it meets four times annually and receives updates from the Council's Children's Services, Community Protection, Trading Standards and OneCall departments, as well as wider partners including the Fire Authority. An annual event is held in October which is used to engage, promote and share information about these services with the public.

Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)

4.80 TSAB provided details of their role in collating safeguarding data (relating to concerns and enquiries rather than crimes) from the four Tees Local Authorities and other key partners, the prioritisation of prevention, and the Board's Communication and Engagement Strategy. Recent older person-specific work was also noted with Age UK, domestic abuse of older people research presentations, and the consideration of the HMIC Crimes against Older People report.

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

- 5.1 This review, initiated following a specific criminal incident against an older person living in their own home within the Borough, gave the Committee an opportunity to understand, and seek assurance from, the broad range of local organisations who play a vital role in protecting vulnerable older residents within their own homes.
- 5.2 The number of reported incidents in Stockton-on-Tees involving victims aged 80 or over had decreased over the last two years, though the reasons for this were unknown. Whilst concerns were raised around a potential lack of reporting which could be due to a number of factors such as the age of the victim, communication difficulties, or lower expectations of the Police, this reduction may also be a reflection of the proactive work being undertaken through the numerous partnerships that exist across the Borough to protect vulnerable older people.
- 5.3 Whilst noting the number and variety of crime prevention initiatives, and future commitments / plans, outlined by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cleveland Police in relation to the protection of older people, the Committee are well aware that this review comes at a sensitive time for both organisations following the recent HMICFRS PEEL assessment on Cleveland Police (published in September 2019). The poor grading around the effectiveness of the Force to reduce / prevent crime and protect vulnerable people is highly concerning, particularly in relation to the failure to identify vulnerable victims and failing to provide adequate safeguarding.
- 5.4 A key feature of Cleveland Fire Brigade's provision are the Home Fire Safety Visits – the Committee welcomed the high number of visits undertaken across the Borough during 2018-2019 which plays a significant role in identifying risk and preventing potential fire-related issues.
- 5.5 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council provides an array of Adult Social Care services which assist older people at home, ranging from early intervention to longer-term support. Responding to any safeguarding concerns underpins all services, and it is hoped that the introduction of a new information system will enhance data collection and sharing around vulnerability.
- 5.6 OneCall is the Council's assistive technology and response service, and the Committee recognised the positive work that had been undertaken in recent years, particularly in light of limited resources. The recent results of the service's first CQC inspection ('good' across all areas) is testament to the endeavours of the small but dedicated team. Continuing efforts to raise the profile of this service (including via partner organisations) are to be welcomed, though considerations around resourcing is required to ensure that any increases in demand can be satisfied.
- 5.7 A key partner in terms of social accommodation, Thirteen Housing Group provide both Extra Care and Sheltered Housing schemes, as well as dispersed bungalows, across the Borough. With regards the Sheltered Housing service, the Committee felt that older residents and their families needed to be clear on the assessed level of contact they should be receiving, and that Thirteen should ensure a robust mechanism is in place to monitor if these contacts are occurring as required. Bearing in mind the reason this review was instigated, Thirteen should also provide clarity on the locking

mechanisms fitted to some of their properties, as well as liaise with SBC Adult Social Care around the identification and provision of recognition equipment for vulnerable tenants, and consider specific training on dealing with older vulnerable people for its Neighbourhood Co-ordinators. Where possible, any learning from Thirteen should be cascaded to other Registered Providers / private landlords operating within the Borough to further the protection of vulnerable older people living at home.

- 5.8 Throughout the review, organisations stressed the importance of working in partnership, and that the relationships evidenced during the Committee's information-gathering were critical in protecting older people and promoting safety and wellbeing. To this end, more widespread buy-in of E-CINS (information / communication system used to support the management of vulnerable people) would enable key organisations to identify and share details of those older people who they consider to be 'vulnerable', and avoid people falling through gaps.

Recommendation 12

There is a continued push for greater buy-in of E-CINS to foster a joined-up approach across all organisations in identifying and sharing details of those older people who they consider to be 'vulnerable'.

- 5.9 The review's focus on those aged 80 or over was queried by some contributors, as 'older' does not necessarily mean 'vulnerable'. The Committee also found inconsistencies over what different organisations constitute an 'older person' as, and the subsequent data that is (or is not) collected in relation to this cohort (some could not provide specific data on the 80+ age-group). It was noted that older people living at home may not want help (even though their families may want them to have help), and that organisations need to work sensitively to ensure any needs are identified and met, whilst maintaining, as far as possible, an older person's independence.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Cleveland Police provide assurance around the measures put in place to address the failings highlighted in the Force's recent HMICFRS PEEL assessment around identifying vulnerable victims and providing adequate safeguarding.**
- 2) Thirteen extend its older people support service to tenants in the Borough's dispersed bungalows on a needs basis (in line with neighbouring Local Authorities).**
- 3) Thirteen provide assurance around the provision and installation of robust locks that give its tenants adequate security in their own homes, and for any learning on the provision of locks to be cascaded to other local Registered Providers / private landlords.**

Recommendations (continued)

The Committee recommend that:

- 4) Thirteen provide further assurance around the mechanisms in place to monitor if the number of calls / visits to those tenants requiring support were being conducted.**
- 5) Thirteen liaise with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adult Social Care around the identification and provision of recognition equipment for vulnerable tenants.**
- 6) Thirteen consider specific training on dealing with older vulnerable people for its Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, in addition to more in-depth anti-social behaviour training.**
- 7) Catalyst collate a list of local befriending initiatives offered by the VCSE sector and partner organisations (including SBC OneCall, Thirteen and Cleveland Fire Brigade), for circulation to vulnerable older people living at home (which can also be advertised via Stockton Information Directory).**
- 8) OPCC and Cleveland Police consider and strengthen their partnership working with Age UK Teesside.**
- 9) SBC consider ways in which its current community transport can be used to facilitate access for older people to community-based activities / groups.**
- 10) Catalyst undertake an audit of VCSE organisations to establish transport capacity which may support greater accessibility for older people.**
- 11) SBC and Catalyst produce an easy-read document listing the main contacts for support / advice which can be circulated via Stockton News and by local VCSE organisations to older people living in their own homes across the Borough.**
- 12) There is a continued push for greater buy-in of E-CINS to foster a joined-up approach across all organisations in identifying and sharing details of those older people who they consider to be 'vulnerable'.**

APPENDIX 1: Crime data on victims aged 80+ (12 months to end of July 2019) – Cleveland Police

Victims aged 80+ (12 months to end of July 2019)	Force	Hartlepool	Redcar & Cleveland	Middlesbrough	Stockton
Incidents	1345	231	414	414	339
Incident rate per 1,000 pop	47	47	52	67	36
ADMIN incidents	100	13	31	22	30
ASB incidents	111	16	35	22	36
PUBLIC SAFETY/WELFARE incidents	390	72	141	74	86
TRANSPORT incidents	61	13	12	8	16
CRIME incidents	672	114	190	176	170
OTHER incidents	11	3	5	112	1
Crimes	622	109	174	168	155
Crime rate per 1,000 pop*	22	22	22	27	17
Violence Against The Person crimes	98	11	33	16	34
Sexual Offences	16	2	8	2	2
Burglary crimes	157	27	44	58	28
Robbery crimes	5	2	0	1	2
Theft and Handling Stolen Goods crimes	237	48	58	62	58
Criminal Damage crimes	107	18	29	28	31
Other Offences	2	0	0	1	1
Crimes with positive outcome	27	11	4	4	9
Concluded crimes	567	95	161	155	143
- Crimes where victim declines/withdraws support - named suspect identified	67	13	20	10	24
Crimes still live	28	2	7	9	4
Domestic Incidents	60	10	17	8	23
Domestic Crimes	35	5	7	7	16

OneCall

Information on the services we provide.

What is OneCall?

OneCall can provide a variety of sensors placed around the home linked to a unit which is monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by our staffed customer support centre, allowing swift action to be taken should an incident occur.

A wide range of sensors are now available that manage risks within the home enabling people to live safely and independently for longer in their own home. The range of sensors provide greater reassurance and protection of users by managing a diverse range of risks.

What are the benefits?

Instant response - Our skilled operators respond to your call and get you the help you need, when you need it. We are one of the few community alarm providers who will respond with trained officers to incidents that don't require medical attention.

Personal Service - We offer a friendly, helpful and dignified bespoke service.

We won't leave you - Our staff will stay on the line with you until help arrives.

Complete reassurance - We offer assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



How can OneCall help you?

The OneCall service makes a real difference to people's lives, not only for those using the service to maintain their independence, but also to their families and loved ones.

The service is available for anyone of any age who would like to feel safer, more protected and independent in their own home, including;

- Anyone living with specific long term conditions such as dementia, heart failure and those who have suffered a stroke.
- Anyone at risk of falling at home or at risk from other household dangers such as fire or flood.
- Anyone requiring rehabilitation and/or reablement care services to enable them to return home successfully.
- Anyone with learning difficulties or cognitive impairment.
- Anyone with sensory or physical impairments.
- Carers, both formal and informal.
- Family members and friends of people living independently in their own homes.

For a free demonstration or to get OneCall Service installed please complete the online form at www.stockton.gov.uk/onecall

To find out more about the OneCall service contact us on:

Telephone: 01642 524000

Press 1 for Referrals and Payment Press 2 for Operational Issues

Email: onecall@stockton.gov.uk or onecall@stockton.gcsx.gov.uk