

Bolsover District Council

Executive

27th February 2017

Vulnerable Adults Risk Management (VARM) Policy

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To agree to the Joint Vulnerable Adult Risk Management (VARM) Policy and guidance to implement the existing Derbyshire wide VARM policy framework.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 In January 2014, Bolsover District Council (BDC), North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC), and Rykneld Homes Limited (RH) adopted the wider Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board's (SAB) Vulnerable Adult Risk Management (VARM) policy which provides a framework for professionals to facilitate effective multi-agency working with vulnerable adults who are deemed to have mental capacity and who are at risk of serious harm or death.
- 1.2 BDC's and NEDDC's Housing and Economic Development Strategies highlight the commitment to help vulnerable people. To help with this commitment it has been acknowledged that an internal VARM Policy is required to ensure risks to vulnerable adults are minimised, therefore in conjunction with the Joint Executive Director for Transformation (the Safeguarding Lead Officer) a draft VARM policy has been developed.
- 1.3 BDC, NEDDC and RH have taken a partnership approach to provide a policy with guidance for employee's, elected members, board members and the public of the VARM process and to create awareness of how we implement the Derbyshire wide policy framework, and who to contact should a case need to be reported. It is designed to complement the existing Derbyshire wide framework and practice already in place.
- 1.4 The vulnerable adult must not be eligible for any other primary processes and it is not a substitute for these, which includes the existing Safeguarding, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC which is part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse), Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA which are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders and the Mental Health Act's policies and procedures currently in place.

- 1.5 Each VARM will be assessed on a case by case basis and individual action plans formulated to identify the appropriate agency/department's responsibility to alleviate the risk, therefore the guidance in the policy should be used flexibly to achieve the best outcomes.
- 1.6 Each organisation has identified VARM champions who will be the relevant point of contact, including the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue, Derbyshire Constabulary, Environmental Health Officers, Housing, Probation, Alcohol and Drug Services. For BDC, NEDDC and RH the VARM Champions are:
- Joint Senior Environmental Health Officers (Housing and Pollution)
 - Joint Environmental Health Officer
 - NEDDC Housing Options Team Leader
 - RH Community Sustainment Manager
 - BDC Housing Needs Manager
 - BDC Housing Enforcement Manager
- 1.7 The policy is in line with the existing Derbyshire wide policy framework and will be amended accordingly should this change.
- 1.8 VARM cases will continue to be monitored internally using the existing format through PEFORM via the Housing Strategy Team on a quarterly basis and reported to Cabinet periodically.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 In conclusion the policy shows how BDC, NEDDC and RH implement the Derbyshire wide policy VARM framework and will create awareness for employees, Elected Members, external agencies/organisations and the general public.
- 2.2 The policy also includes practical guidance for any person/agency that is concerned for or suspects an adult is at risk of harm and how they can refer for help through this process and the appointed VARM Champions.
- 2.3 The policy also shows a commitment to partnership working to keep vulnerable adults safe who are not eligible for any other primary process.
- 2.4 The recommendation is for Cabinet to agree the policy based on the reasons from 2.1 to 2.3 as stated above.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 Consultation has been carried out with the following:

VARM Champions:

- The joint Environmental Health Service – Senior Officers
- BDC Housing Needs Manager
- Rykneld Homes – Community Sustainment Manager
- Joint Housing Strategy Manager.

3.2 A joint Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed in line with the corporate policy.

3.3 A VARM panel is a multi agency group to ensure that the right agencies are engaged in preventing serious harm to vulnerable adults in the district.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 An option not to have a policy in place was rejected as internal structures on VARM, and the work we do surrounding vulnerable adults that are not eligible for Safeguarding or any other primary process, may not be widely known, therefore this bridges the gap.

4.2 Also there have been recent internal monitoring failures with collating the number of VARM cases that the LAs and RH are involved with, therefore the policy will make the monitoring procedure more robust, again another reason for rejecting the option of not having a policy in place.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

5.1.1 The policy is to complement the existing practice/procedures that are already in place therefore there is no financial risk to implementation; however not having adequate VARM information in place could put potential adults at risk of harm or even death.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

5.2.1 BDC, NEDDC and RH have signed up to the Derby and Derbyshire Partnership Forum Sharing of Information Protocol, which allows each organisation to share information on adults at risk. The Data Protection Act 1998 does not preclude the sharing of information to provide an effective service or protect a person from harm, danger and abuse.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

5.3.1 Leading and attending VARM meetings can be time consuming, however as the VARM procedure is already in place there are no Human Resources implications at this time, however the continuous monitoring of VARM cases will show any need for further future resources.

6 Recommendations

6.1 That Executive agree to the joint VARM policy and agree to it being implemented at BDC.

7 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is an executive decision which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Affected	There could be a VARM meeting instigated on any tenant or residents from any ward.
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing our Customers with Excellent Service • Supporting Our Communities to be Healthier, Safer, Cleaner and Greener • Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people • Increasing customer confidence and satisfaction with our services • Contributing to improving health and well-being

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Joint VARM Policy
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
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