

This document includes questions asked prior to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 12 September 2023, or where a response was required to be given after the meeting.

The agenda and recording of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 12 September 2023 can be accessed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 12th September, 2023, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#).

Item 10: Annual Safeguarding Report

Question from Councillor Ralph Muncer:

(1) Increase in children's referrals from YR21/22 to YR22/23

NHC has seen an increase in Children's referrals year on year, this is due to the amendment of the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021. The Domestic abuse Act 2021 identifies changes to the statutory definition of domestic abuse, which allows for wider recognition of crimes, victim/survivors, and perpetrators of domestic abuse. The new definition emphasises on non-physical forms of abuse, including economic abuse. The amendment also now recognises children as victims/survivors in their own right within the definition for the first time, rather than witnesses.

We have seen an increase in number of referrals from our housing officers, this is due to their duty to notify Children services when an Intentionally Homeless Decision is made/ or due to be made.

(2) Increase in adult's referrals from YR21/22 to YR22/23

NHC has seen an increase in adult referrals year on year, this is partially due to the amendments of the Domestic Abuse Act as outlined above, and the ongoing cost of living crisis. The cost of living crisis is fuelling a host of issues including poverty, debt, mental ill-health and domestic conflict.