

Cabinet

18 November 2015



Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report

Report of Corporate Management Team.

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Purpose of Report

- 1 To present the Annual Safeguarding Adults Report to Cabinet and in doing so provide information on the current position of the County Durham Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and outline achievements during the year 2014/15.

Background

- 2 There are a number of specific areas covered by the Annual Report which are as follows:
 - Safeguarding in its current context.
 - Achievements during the year 2014 /15 from the Board's subgroups.
 - The Strategic Plan for 2015/18.
 - Perspectives of the partners.
 - Key data on safeguarding activity in County Durham.

Safeguarding in its Current Context

- 3 Much of the work of the Board in 2014/15 has focussed on preparing for the implementation of the Care in April 2015. The Act places adult safeguarding on a statutory footing and implements changes to the way in which safeguarding enquiries are managed. If not already in place, the local authority **must** also set up a Safeguarding Adults Board to provide assurance that local safeguarding partnership arrangements act effectively to protect adults in its area.
- 4 The Care Act requires the SAB to fulfil three core duties;
 - It **must** publish a strategic plan for each financial year that sets how it will meet its main objective and what the members will do to achieve this. The plan should be evidence based and make use of all available evidence and intelligence from partners to form and develop its plan.
 - It **must** publish an annual report detailing what the SAB has done during the year to achieve its main objective and implement its strategic plan, and what each member has done to implement the strategy.
 - It **must** conduct any Safeguarding Adults Review in accordance with Section 44 of the Act.

- 5 In addition to these legislative changes, the work described in this year's annual report has continued to take place against a backdrop of austerity. As in the previous year, our public services have continued to rise to the challenge and the SAB partners have continued in their commitment to prioritising safeguarding activity. This is reflected by the achievements outlined in the annual report which remain significant.
- 6 While not a primary responsibility of SAB, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) has received much attention over the period of this Annual Report. A ruling by the Supreme Court in March 2014 significantly lowered the threshold to what constitutes a deprivation of someone's liberty. Under DoLS local authorities must assess whether people who lack capacity to consent to their care arrangements are being deprived of their liberty in care homes or hospitals and, if so, whether this is in their best interests and necessary to protect them from harm. The DoLS are designed to provide independent scrutiny, by social workers and health professionals, of these care arrangements. There were a total of 1416 such applications in 2014/15. This represents an 8 fold increase from the previous year, with the figure set to rise to approximately 2500 applications in 2015/16.

Key Achievements from the Annual Report 2014/15

- 7 All reported safeguarding concerns have risen from 2153 in 2013/14, to 2502 in 2014/15. This continues to demonstrate the effective promotion of safeguarding adult's issues across the health and social care economy resulting in low thresholds for reporting concerns to the local authority.
- 8 The overall number of multi-agency investigations has reduced from 502 to 375 over the same period. This reflects successful changes to procedures and operating practices. A more thorough risk assessment of reported concerns is undertaken early in the process, resulting in a more proportionate response. Full multi agency investigations are reserved for the high risk cases.
- 9 The SAB website and all of the associated leaflets, publicity materials, procedures and guidance have been revised to ensure they are Care Act compliant. The website usage has had a 50% increase in page views when compared to the previous year.
- 10 The appointment of Jane Geraghty, an independent chair to both the Adult and Children Board was complete in October 2014. Jane took over the chair of SAB from Lesley Jeavons, head of Adult Care in January 2015. SAB appointed Susan Harrison, a lay member at the same time. Together, these two roles provide an enhanced level of independent scrutiny of the work of the Board and its partners.
- 11 In February 2015, the SAB commenced development work with the support of two Local Government Association consultants to transform its business planning and performance management processes. This has resulted in the formation of a 'Plan on a Page' and a new outcome focussed performance framework.

The Strategic Plan 2015-18 (Plan on a Page)

- 12 This plan is shaped by the following vision:

“We will support adults at risk of harm to prevent abuse happening; when it does occur, we will act swiftly to achieve good outcomes.”

13 The plan will shape the strategic priorities of the SAB for at least the next 3 years. The priorities focus on the following seven areas;

- Performance
- Legislative Compliance
- Prevention
- User/Carer Voice
- Awareness
- Partnership Engagement
- Learning Lessons and Improvement

14 Each of these priorities will be aligned to a sub group of the SAB. The sub group will then oversee the development of associated practice and service delivery. To strengthen our governance arrangements a new performance framework has been devised to focus on the same priority areas. The development of these key documents will focus much of the work of SAB in strengthening its multi-agency collaboration from 2015/16 onward. It is envisaged that a self/ peer audit tool will be devised covering the same strategic priorities; again to bring greater cohesion to the development of this vital partnership arrangement.

Perspectives of the Key Partners

15 In addition to the local authority, the annual report features update summaries from Durham Constabulary, North Durham and Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Groups, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. These summaries bare testimony to the ongoing commitment of these key partners in prioritising training and development work to further the development of safeguarding standards across County Durham.

Key Data on Safeguarding Activity in County Durham

16 In addition to the performance information featured earlier in this report under key successes; the Annual Report continues to feature data on trends pertaining to safeguarding adults investigations. It is reassuring to note that the vast majority of this data remains consistent with previous years. This perhaps illustrates a maturity in our reporting processes and provides some scope to predict the nature and prevalence of safeguarding concerns when developing our future plans.

Recommendations

17 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Approve the content of the Annual Report.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Ongoing pressure on public service finance will challenge all agencies to consider how best to respond to the safeguarding agenda.

Staffing – The sustaining of adult safeguarding activities requires continued priority to staffing to ensure adequate resources are maintained. The continued contribution to staffing from partner agencies determines the sustainability of dedicated safeguarding adults posts/ functions.

Risk – The risks associated with not appropriately managing responses to safeguarding are extremely high and include risks of ongoing abuse and neglect and the risk of serious organisational damage to statutory and non-statutory agencies in County Durham. The Safeguarding Adults Board puts considerable effort into training and awareness-raising to ensure that abuse and neglect recognised and reported. All reports of concerns are screened and directed so they receive the most appropriate response.

Equality and Diversity – Adult safeguarding is intrinsically linked and this is covered in the SAB policies and procedures.

Accommodation – N/A

Crime and disorder - Adult safeguarding is intrinsically linked and this is covered in the SAB policies and procedures.

Human rights - Adult safeguarding is intrinsically linked and this is covered in the SAB policies and procedures.

Consultation – Report available for all partner agencies.

Procurement – The adoption of safeguarding principles in the procurement of health and social care services is essential.

Disability issues – Safeguarding Adults procedures apply to ‘adults at risk’ who are adults that are deemed eligible for social care services.

Legal implications – While there is no legal requirement for an Annual Report at present, however there will be a statutory requirement to produce an annual report from 2015 when the Care Act 2014 comes into force.