

## **Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2016/17**

Lead Officer: Richard Crompton, Independent Chair - SSAB

Author: Niki Shaw, Strategic Manager – Quality & Performance

Contact Details: [NXShaw@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:NXShaw@somerset.gov.uk)

Cabinet Member: David Huxtable, Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care

Division and Local Member: All

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1.** The Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB or “the Board”) is required by The Care Act 2014 to produce and publish an Annual Report each year. The report must set out what has been done to help and protect adults at risk of abuse and neglect in Somerset during that timeframe. It offers an opportunity to both reflect on achievements over the past year and to formally identify priorities for the year ahead. It also provides a chance to demonstrate the Board’s fulfilment of its role and ongoing commitment to safeguard vulnerable adults in the county.

### **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

- 2.1.** The Scrutiny Committee to review and consider the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board’s 2016/17 Annual Report (Appendix 1), and pay particular attention to the contained information regarding Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) p31
- 2.2.** The Scrutiny Committee to note progress highlights during 2017/18 to date
- 2.3.** The Scrutiny Committee to continue to promote adult safeguarding across the County Council and in the services that are commissioned

### **3. Background**

- 3.1.** The SSAB operates as an independently-chaired, multi-agency body under The Care Act 2014. It became statutory from April 2015. Its main objective is to seek assurance that local safeguarding arrangements and partner organisations act to help and protect people aged 18 and over who:
- have needs for care and support;
  - are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation;
  - are unable to protect themselves from the risk of, or experience of, abuse or neglect as a result of their care and support needs.
- 3.2.** Safeguarding is everybody’s business, and the Board has a strategic role that is greater than the sum of the operational duties of the core partners. It means protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- 3.3. Key Achievements 2016/17**  
During 2016/17 the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board concentrated its efforts on improving its overall effectiveness in order to better coordinate activity, learn from events, and raise its local profile and the value of what it offered through

high quality communications with both professionals and the public. Particular highlights worth noting during the year are as follows:

- a) We have published and promoted a range of documentation and guidance to help strengthen safeguarding responses. This includes the production of:
  - an Adult Safeguarding Risk Assessment tool to assist practitioners in considering the vulnerability of an adult at risk and the seriousness of the abuse that is occurring, against the impact of the abuse and risk of it recurring. The tool is now used within training and by frontline staff to assist them in robust decision-making.
  - self-neglect practice guidance, informed by learning and research to emerge from a regional conference.
- b) We have re-invigorated our public-facing 'Thinking it? Report it' campaign to coincide with the annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day each June. In 2016/17 this included the development of a short animated film to raise awareness of abuse and neglect, and how individuals can seek help and support. This has been viewed hundreds of times. The Board also launched an appeal for interested individuals to publicly pledge their support to safeguard vulnerable adults, which continues to gather signatures.
- c) We have strengthened ways to promote learning from serious cases, through the development and wide distribution of Practice Briefing Sheets and through hosting our first multi-agency Learning Event to over 100 frontline professionals to communicate the themes and lessons learnt from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs). 97% of attendees reported feeling confident about taking the learning from the event and applying it to their own role and practice. Overall attendees particularly valued the opportunity to hear first from service users and family members, and learning from their experiences.
- d) We have bolstered links and opportunities for closer engagement with other existing partnerships and Boards to improve join-up, reduce duplication and develop collaborative ways to improve outcomes for local residents. This has included the production of a Joint Partnership Protocol and the hosting of six monthly Partnership Chairs meetings, as well as specific work around safeguarding transitions and supporting vulnerable care leavers. The SAB Manager is also an active member of the national SAB Managers' Network, sharing good practice, research and ideas.
- e) We have launched our own dedicated website which has helped provide a platform to promote our work and direct interested parties to information or resources. Over 3,600 individuals accessed the website during 2016/17, 40% of which were returning visitors. The Board is also now on twitter which has enhanced its reach and influence, and offered new engagement opportunities. Visit: [www.ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk](http://www.ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)
- f) Board Members contributed to the second annual SSAB Effectiveness Survey in the autumn of 2016, with results revealing improved performance against all 12 quality standards when compared with the previous year's figures. Key strengths were identified in relation to the Board's leadership and coordination of adult safeguarding policy and practice across agencies, and the sense that partners work in an atmosphere of cooperation, mutual assurance, accountability and ownership of responsibility:  
*"The Board is able to engage in challenging discussions but operates in a respectful and cooperative environment. The impact of having a dedicated Business Manager has been significant in strengthening Board relations and driving progress over the past year".*

Areas requiring our continued attention centred on the use of data, information and intelligence to identify risks and trends, and ensuring mechanisms are in place to ensure the views of people at risk of abuse and their carers inform the work of the SSAB.

### **3.4. Key Progress to date, 2017/18**

Our priorities for the year continue to centre on prevention, making safeguarding personal, adopting a Think Family approach, and enhancing the Board's effectiveness. Of particular note so far this year:

- a) The Board has created a new multi-agency sub-group (Mental Capacity Act) to enhance local understanding and application of the Act. This was in direct response to learning to emerge from recent case reviews and audits.
- b) We have implemented a Safeguarding Experience service user/carer feedback form to help ascertain the effectiveness of safeguarding responses and support. Feedback to date has been overwhelmingly positive, including the following response: *"From initial referral to response, the communication from the safeguarding service was understanding, informative and thorough. The timeframe of response was exceptional, questions were answered and advice was thorough"*. We have also invited service user stories to inform the Board's understanding and appreciation of people's journeys through the process.
- c) We have worked closely with the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board, Children's Trust and other agencies to support the development of a shared Think Family Strategy for Somerset, which will be published by the end of the financial year, and have strengthened links between both Safeguarding Boards on matters of shared interest, including transition and tackling sexual exploitation.
- d) We have commissioned a Safeguarding Adults Review following the closure of a Somerset Care Home following a large-scale safeguarding enquiry into the abuse and neglect of its residents. A workshop is scheduled for late October 2017 to extract the recommendations and formalise the report. The review process is being independently led and overseen by Dr Margaret Flynn.
- e) Local Policy and Procedures are being updated in partnership with regional colleagues to ensure standards are clarified and refreshed in light of more recent statutory developments or good practice; these will be made more easily accessible on the Board's website through interactive access.
- f) A new, full-time Business Manager has been appointed to support the Board's on-going development and activity. Stephen Miles will take up post in the Autumn and is looking forward to supporting the SSAB on its onward journey.

## **4. Implications**

**4.1. Legal implications** The Care Act 2014 represented the most significant change to adult social care in more than 60 years, putting people and their carers in control of their care and support. For the first time the Act placed Safeguarding Adults, and the role and functions of a Safeguarding Adults Board, onto a statutory framework from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

**4.2. Financial implications** The majority of the Safeguarding Adults Board funding is provided by Somerset County Council, with contributions from Avon & Somerset Constabulary and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group. Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) are resourced by the partnership as and when required.

The number of safeguarding concerns received by Somerset County Council remains high, impacting on Adult Social Care resources. Work is being taken forward across the Service to better manage demand and ensure people receive the appropriate help at the right time, from the right service. DoLS continues to be extremely challenging, both locally and nationally, consequent to the considerable increase in referrals following the outcome of Cheshire West in March 2014.

The SSAB continues with its decision not to professionally print the Annual Report to save on costs. Reports are publically available on the website [www.ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk](http://www.ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)

- 4.3. Risk implications** Safeguarding activity by its nature is an inherently risky area and has the potential to bring a Council's reputation and rating into discredit and the wider safeguarding system into question. The Annual Report, a legal requirement by the Care Act 2014, provides partner agencies and the public with assurances that adult safeguarding is being monitored and scrutinised in Somerset. The Board also has a robust risk register in place which identifies and tracks risk.
  - 4.4. Partner organisations** Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board benefits from strong partnership commitment. Agencies represented on the Board had the opportunity to detail their achievements and contributions in 2016/17 and all Board members are encouraged to take the Annual Report through their own internal governance routes.
- 5. Background papers**
- 5.1.** Appendix A – Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2016/17