

ADULTS AND HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

7 December 2023

ADULT SAFEGUARDING UPDATE



Purpose of report: To provide an update on adult safeguarding.

Introduction:

1. This report explains the role of the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board and the dedicated safeguarding roles in Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AW&HP).
2. It describes the increase in safeguarding concerns and enquiries in recent years, the improvement plan underway to manage these numbers and our work with strategic partners to ensure our decision making is in line with legal duties, best practice and guidance and is applied consistently.
3. Work to strengthen how we embed learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) is set out, together with a short update on Modern Slavery. The report finishes by outlining work on information sharing and awareness raising.

What is Safeguarding and Why it Matters

4. Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, covers safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect and includes the following sections:
 - S42. Enquiry by local authority
 - S43. Safeguarding Adults Boards
 - S44. Safeguarding adults reviews
 - S45. Support of information
 - S46. Abolition of local authority's power to remove persons in need of care
 - S47. Protecting property of adults being cared for away from home
5. S42 enquiry by local authority is defined in the Care Act as follows:
 - (1) This section applies where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there)
 - (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
 - (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
 - (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

- (2) The local authority must make (or cause to be made) whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether any action should be taken in the adult's case (whether under this Part or otherwise) and, if so, what and by whom.
 - (3) "Abuse" includes financial abuse; and for that purpose "financial abuse" includes:
 - (a) having money or other property stolen,
 - (b) being defrauded,
 - (c) being put under pressure in relation to money or other property, and
 - (d) having money or other property misused.
6. An adult at risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support. Where someone is over 18 but still receiving children's services and a safeguarding issue is raised, the matter should be dealt with as a matter of course by the adult safeguarding team.

Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board

7. Teresa Bell is the new independent chair of Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) and has taken over from the previous long serving incumbent. SSAB is a multi-agency partnership with representation from organisations that support adults who have care or support needs. The partnership contributes to the development and delivery of the Board's strategic plan, helping to deliver activities that promote adult safeguarding across the county and hold partners to account. AW&HP safeguarding policy and procedure sets out how we apply the SSAB's framework, including roles and responsibilities for safeguarding adults, children and protecting people from the risk of being drawn into terrorism. The partnership recognises the need in Surrey to strengthen Making Safeguarding Personal with an outcome focus and support for people to improve or resolve their circumstances.

Leadership

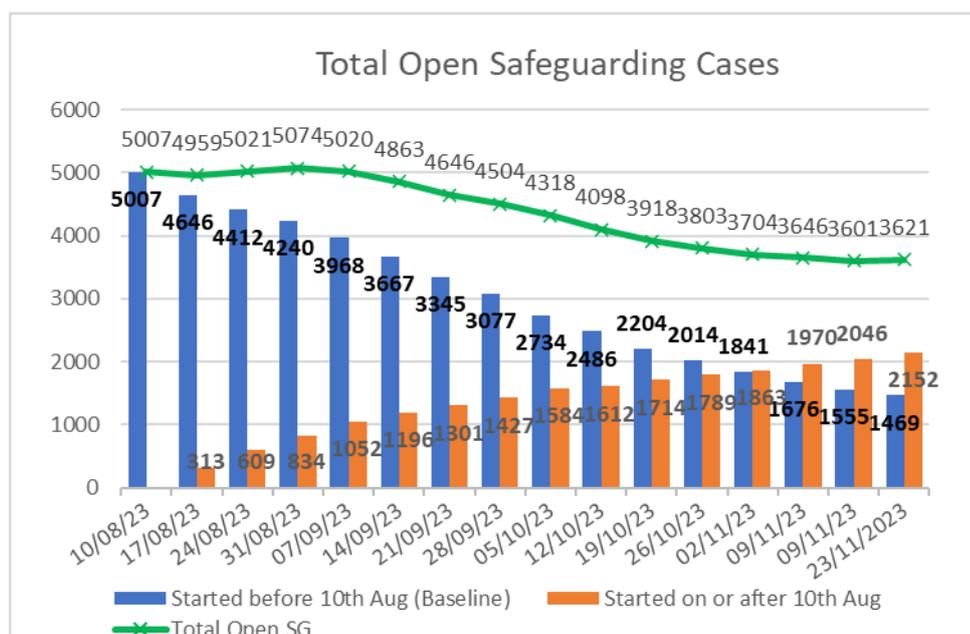
8. Our Head of Adult Safeguarding has recently left to take up a post in a neighbouring local authority. Recognising the need to strengthen the leadership in this area, a decision has been made to reshape this role and recruit an Assistant Director, Adult Safeguarding, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and Quality Assurance who will be a member of the AW&HP Senior Leadership Team.
9. We have Safeguarding Advisors within our locality teams and our specialist services who provide local leadership to improve adult safeguarding work.

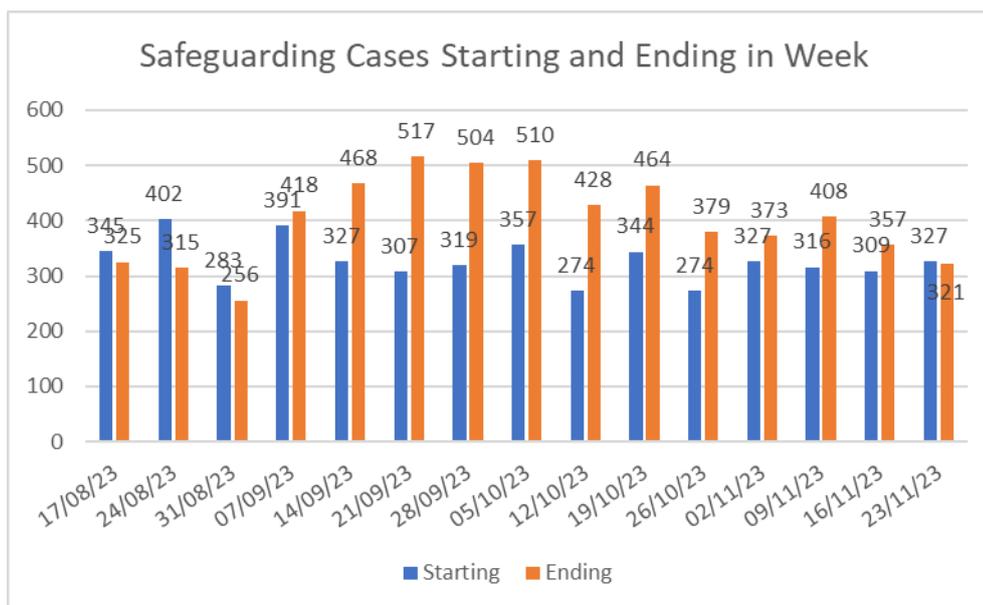
Rate of Increase

10. AW&HP has seen a year on year increase in safeguarding concerns and enquiries. When adjusted by population, the number of concerns received by AW&HP per 100,000 is towards the top of our comparator group. The rate of increase in safeguarding concerns per 100,000 adults accelerated from 2018/19 and in 2019/20 overtook the national average. The number of section 42 enquiries is the highest of our comparator group. During this period, the service continued to operate with the same resource levels.
11. We triage promptly, manage the immediate risk and people feel safe (74.3% in Surrey compared to 69.2% England in 2020/21) but the growing number of safeguarding concerns and enquiries has led to an increase in time taken to process referrals. In response, an external safeguarding consultant was commissioned to conduct a deep dive into the referral route for receiving safeguarding concerns (May - July 23). Feedback from practitioners and partners also supports the case for change - for a customer focussed journey where Making Safeguarding Personal is better embedded in culture and practice.

Rapid Improvement Plan

12. A rapid improvement plan commenced in August 23 with the diversion of internal resources to support safeguarding. Changes to our LAS system support a more proportionate approach and as a result, the improvement plan has had a significant and positive impact on the number of open safeguarding enquiries. There has been a reduction in the total number of outstanding enquiries from 5,007 on 10 August to 3,621 on 23 November - this is an overall reduction of 1,386 (28%). The graphs below illustrate the impact of the rapid improvement plan over the last 3-months.





13. As part of the rapid improvement plan, there has been a focus on reviewing and closing safeguarding enquiries open >52 weeks. These have reduced from 442 on 10 August to 106 on 23 November - this is an overall reduction of 336 (76%). Enquiries can remain open for long periods of time whilst we wait for information from other partners, but also the complexity may mean that it is not immediately clear what the level of risk is. Issues of Mental Capacity, consent and sometimes barriers to sharing information also may cause delays. In addition, due to the volume we have been working hard to ensure that data quality is also not impacting on our timeliness to resolving enquiries. Adult safeguarding procedures do not set definitive timescales and should be case specific reflecting the ethos of Making Safeguarding Personal. However, best practice suggests enquiries should take no more than 3 months. The table below, illustrates open enquiries open >9 months and which are the focus of improvement work.

	Open SG Cases by Duration					Total
	0 - 9 months	9 – 10 months	10 – 11 months	11 – 12 months	12 months +	
Total	3,355	83	57	20	106	3,621
%	92.7%	2.3%	1.6%	0.6%	2.9%	100%

Strategic change

14. Work is also underway with strategic partners across the Surrey system to ensure our decision making in applying the s42 Care Act statutory criteria is in line with legal duties, with best practice and guidance and is applied consistently. It is accepted that change needs to happen across the system and conversations with our strategic partners and the SSAB are underway. This includes how we work strategically, but also safeguarding pathways for people

with care and support needs, and how we provide information and support for providers of care, the police and other agencies when they are concerned about an individual. We are also looking at when we might be raising something as a safeguarding issue, when it might be better described as a quality concern for example medication errors in a care home.

15. Within the council through adult social care we are also reviewing our resources, business process and work across operational and commissioning teams to ensure we have a consistent safeguarding and quality assurance pathway, but also that we have the right capacity in the right place to respond to increasing complexity of demand. Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)
16. We have seen a significant increase in the number of SARs and joint Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)/SARS being commissioned within Surrey – there are approximately 35 currently in progress. This is a trend that is happening elsewhere in the country, and is reflective of the increasing complexity of demand and level of vulnerability that people are coming into contact with services. We have used the learning from SARs to inform improvements to practice, processes and systems. We develop the content and deliver our adult safeguarding training in-house which allows us to rapidly update it with learning from SARs in progress and where learning has been published. We are also working with our statutory partners to ensure we are learning lessons and reflecting on practice improvement together.
17. We have governance in place to make sure we are learning from our safeguarding and quality work, which also ensures we have refreshed reporting to the Senior Leadership Team, Council Leadership Team and Cabinet Member briefings. Our newly appointed Principal Social Worker (PSW), along with our AD Safeguarding when they start, will be reviewing further how learning is fed through supervision at an individual and team level. For recently published SARs and DHRs in Surrey, we have supported the work of SSAB to put learning into practice across agencies. For example, we gave a presentation at a learning event following publication of the SAR / DHR regarding ‘Mary’. We need to strengthen how we share learning from SARs and how we know that the learning has been taken on board by staff and is being reflected into practice.

Audit

18. We carry out an audit of a sample of our adult safeguarding work across all teams four times a year, which helps us to check our practice is in line with the expectations we have set for ourselves. We share the learning from those audits across the organisation to help drive continuing improvements. We are looking to develop our feedback from people and their families about their experience of safeguarding practice. We will also be looking at how we can develop with partners, providers and organisations such as Healthwatch a systematic way of understanding their feedback about the safeguarding pathway

to improve practice and to take forward the learning from audits, SARs and other sources.

19. As part of our preparation for CQC we will be undertaking further work on case tracking, which is where we follow a persons experience with adult social care, understand the workers perspective and decision making, and also with consent explore with the person, and where appropriate their family how it felt for them. We will use this process to further understand how effective our safeguarding practices are and where we need to improve.

Modern Slavery or Human Trafficking

20. We carry out adult safeguarding enquiries regarding modern slavery or human trafficking where the s42(1) Care Act criteria are met.

Information Sharing

21. The framework for information sharing in our adult safeguarding work comes from the Surrey Multi-Agency Information Sharing Protocol, S28 of SSAB's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. We also have some purpose-specific arrangements, such as a memorandum of understanding with the South-East region counter-terrorism Police team for handling prevent referrals. Our audits of adult safeguarding work give us assurance that there are no widespread issues with information sharing affecting the quality or timeliness of this work. Whilst there are isolated instances, we are able to resolve these through good relationships with our partners and SSAB.

Raising Awareness

22. SSAB ensures that knowledge and awareness of adult safeguarding in Surrey is raised across community settings through the use of campaigns, leaflets, social media and links to Community Safety. AW&HP has a Safeguarding Adults page on the Council's website which explains what abuse is and how to make a referral with a link to an online referral form. We have worked with SSAB to produce information for the public, including Keeping you safe from abuse; A guide to reporting abuse and safeguarding enquiries; Are you being provided good care at home that keeps you safe?
23. Each year we support SSAB's awareness raising for Safeguarding Adults Week as an opportunity to remind residents, staff and partners that safeguarding is everyone's business, for example through videos with our Cabinet member, social media and articles in our resident newsletter and staff intranet. Working with partners, the Council launched a domestic abuse campaign in winter 2022/23 which included three impactful videos designed to help people recognise themselves as a victim of domestic abuse or see abusive behaviour in themselves. The campaign is targeted at the lesser reported groups who are victims of domestic abuse.

Conclusions:

24. The Senior Leadership Team in AW&HP continues to work hard to ensure our decision making is in line with legal duties, best practice and guidance and is being applied consistently. We strive to ensure people in Surrey feel safe.

Recommendations:

25. The report to be noted by all members of the Select Committee.

Next steps:

26. Appointment of an Assistant Director, Adult Safeguarding, DoLS and Quality Assurance.
27. Invite Member of Adults & Health Select Committee to a Learning Space on 'Counter Terrorism and Prevent Awareness Moving into 2024' which is being held virtually on 17 January and will be led by Claire McDonald, Counter Terrorism Policing South East.
28. Arrange safeguarding training for Member of Adults & Health Select Committee to build understanding and confidence.

Report contact

Liz Uliasz, Chief Operating Officer, Adults Wellbeing and Health Partnerships

Contact details

Tel: 07792 681386

Email: liz.uliasz@surreycc.gov.uk

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