

# ADULTS AND HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

10 May 2024

## ADULT SAFEGUARDING UPDATE



**Purpose of report:** To provide an update on adult social care performance for safeguarding adults.

### Introduction:

1. This report sets out Surrey County Council (SCC) adult social care performance in relation to the safeguarding adults duties as set out in the Care Act 2014.
  - 1.1 The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect and introduced new safeguarding duties to Local Authorities. They must lead a multi-agency local adult safeguarding system that seeks to prevent abuse and neglect and stop it quickly when it happens. They are required to make enquiries, or request others to make them, when they think an adult with care and support needs may be at risk of abuse or neglect, and they need to find out what action may be needed to safeguard the Adult at Risk.
  - 1.2 Local Authorities must establish Safeguarding Adults Boards, including the local authority, NHS and police, which will develop, share and implement a joint safeguarding strategy.
  - 1.3 Local Authorities are required to carry out Safeguarding Adults Reviews when someone with care and support needs dies or suffers serious harm as a result of neglect or abuse and there is a concern that the local authority or its partners could have done more to protect them.
  - 1.4 Local Authorities will also arrange for an independent advocate to represent and support a person who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or review, if required.
2. This report highlights areas of strength and areas of continuous improvement.
3. It describes our improvement activity in the context of the national picture of increased complexity and demand, which is reflected in our local system.
4. As part of our response to the introduction of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulation the report includes a summary of SCC ASC self-assessment against the key quality statements which will be used to assess our compliance with the Care Act 2014.

5. The assessment framework uses the quality statements from the overall single assessment framework. The assessment framework for local authorities comprises 9 quality statements mapped across 4 overall themes. For each theme there are 'I' statements and quality against which we will be assessed:
6. Quality statements are the commitments that local authorities must commit to. Expressed as 'we statements', they show what is needed to deliver high-quality, person-centred care. 'I' statements are what people expect.
7. Theme 3 within each quality statement is 'How the local authority ensures safety within the system' and includes Section 42 safeguarding enquiries, reviews, safe systems, continuity of care.

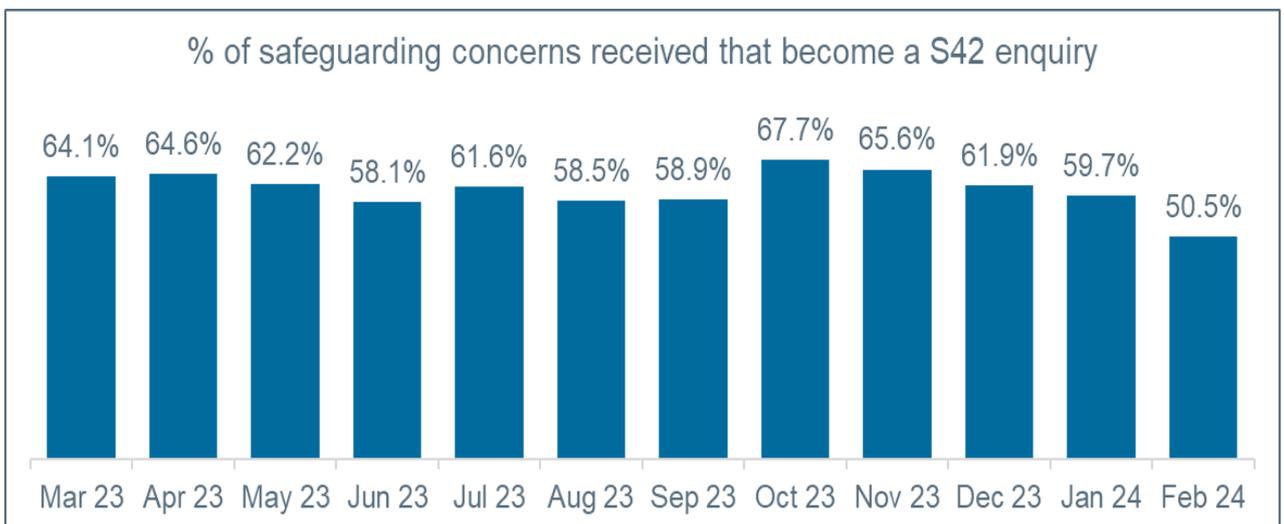
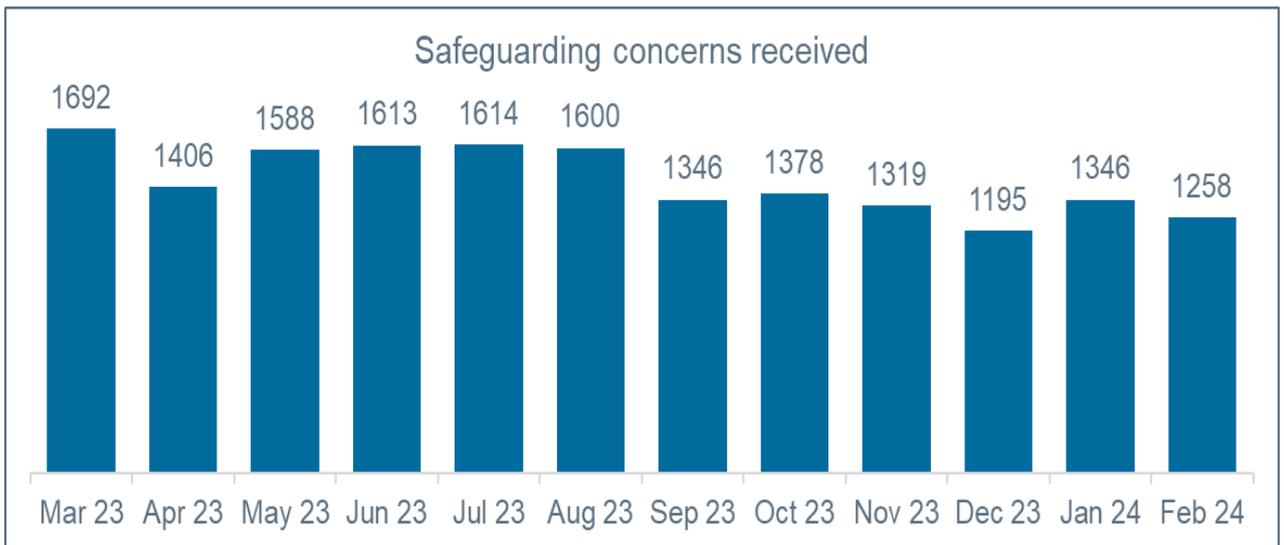
### **Current Position and challenges**

8. We have a good track record in Making Safeguarding Personal with our frontline staff consistently reflecting on people's wishes and supporting them to meet them. This is evidenced through benchmarking data across comparator local authorities,
9. We are an active strategic partner in Surrey's Safeguarding Adults Board. This is an effective multi-agency partnership delivered through a clear co-produced strategy. The Board effectively promotes the importance of safeguarding adults, signs of abuse and referral pathways.
10. We have invested in leadership and capacity for safeguarding adults, quality and assurance reflects our increasing demand and complexity in this area.
11. Providers' business continuity plans are scrutinised as part of onboarding for new contracts and quality assurance is an integral part of the commissioning and procurement process as part of our Provider Support and Intervention Protocol. We adopt a balance between supportive action and provider suspension through a provider concern process, always ensuring decisions are taken to mitigate risk and improve outcomes for people who draw on our services.
12. A new proportionate process for managing safeguarding concerns where a full s42 enquiry is not required was introduced in September 2023 and we manage the immediate risk, ensuring no individual vulnerable to abuse is left at risk. and people feel safe.

13. There has been a reduction in the number of outstanding enquiries - a decrease of 33% from 5,007 in August to 3,337 by March 2024. The number of safeguarding enquiries open for longer than 52 weeks has also dropped dramatically, down 80% over the same period.
14. We have recently introduced targeted audits using a LGA approved tool and part of our improvement programme entails reviewing our audit process across the county. For example ensuring staff write a safeguarding plan in response to enquiries and improving feedback to partners around safeguarding concerns and audit findings are reported into our Practice Assurance Board, which assures that learning from case audits, SARs and other learning opportunities are disseminated across the county. Further audits take into account the learning to ensure it has made a difference to practice.

### Challenges

15. According to NHS Digital (the name of the national Health and Social Care Information Centre), the complexity and national demand for safeguarding adults has continued to increase year on year. The most common type of risk in Section 42 enquiries that concluded in the year was Neglect and Acts of Omission, there were an estimated 587,970 concerns of abuse raised during 2022-23, an increase of 9% on the previous year. The number of enquiries that commenced under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 during the year increased by 7%.
16. In Surrey, when adjusted by population, the number of concerns received per 100,000 is towards the top of our comparator. In 2022/23, we received 17,785 new safeguarding concerns (a 4.5% increase on the previous year), of which 12,335 met the s42 threshold, the majority of which followed the national pattern (Neglect and Acts of Omission).



17. In July 2023, an audit was undertaken to establish the workforce's level of understanding of risk assessments and their application in practice. The audit report recommended training in risk assessment, re-launching our risk assessment form and guidance, and improving management oversight and responsibility.
18. In February 2024, 80.5% of Surrey care homes reported 'outstanding' or 'good' safety rating, above the national average of 77.7%. Where homes are rated anything less than good overall, support is targeted at specific areas within homes by our Quality Assurance team. Risks are assessed and actions are agreed to mitigate any risks and to support the home to improve. We continue to remain ahead in the ratings within the Southeast and nationally. That said, we recognise the need to continue to improve our processes and risk

management approach to ensure that the care market remains vibrant, safe, and stable.

## Improvement Plans

19. We have reviewed our Care Act training to expand the content on 'risk' in our current training offers. We anticipate a greater understanding of proportionate risk management as a result. In addition, we are actively sourcing and developing training modules for both registered and unregistered staff focusing on 'identifying risk', 'defensive decision making' and 'risk assessment'. We will continue to review our training offer to ensure it meets the needs of the workforce, at the same as delivering the best outcomes to our residents.
20. We have developed a new Safeguarding Improvement Group whose purpose is to oversee and drive continuous improvement in safeguarding practice and to ensure staff have the skills and resources required to fulfil our statutory safeguarding duties and to keep residents safe.
21. In response to the risk audit, our Principal Social Worker is leading work to revise our risk assessment tool and ensure it is embedded into practice.
22. Our improvement work continues with processes, systems and practices being reviewed to better manage demand and to improve the outcomes for adults at risk, further expanding choice and control.
23. Whilst Safeguarding audits are undertaken locally with a view to disseminating the learning from them. We recognise that we need to further develop our case auditing, including our safeguarding practice and more opportunities for team based reflective learning. To that end we are developing a review of our audit process in order to ensure best practice is applied consistently across SCC.
24. We have established a Commissioning and Provider Concern Improvement Group. Specifically, this group will own the development and delivery of relevant strategies, programmes, and systems (including MPS's, focus groups etc.). Review the monitoring of provisioned services to ensure we are actively and effectively assessing impact. Work closely with providers to ensure provisioned services deliver the best value for money, are of a high quality, and meet demand. Resolve specific provider quality concerns. Review national guidelines and best practice guidance and ensure that these are incorporated into day-to-day practice.

### **Conclusions:**

25. We have made some good progress in improving outcomes for adults at risk. As evidenced by several performance measures including the improvement in our safeguarding data and Making Safeguarding Personal.
26. Whilst we recognise the challenges, we have a number of improvement plans specifically developed to improve the lives of Adults At Risk.

### **Recommendations:**

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

### **Next steps:**

28. We will review the SAB training offer to partners to ensure that carer concerns are appropriately dealt with, and safeguarding alerts raised as appropriate.
29. We recognise we are on a continuous improvement journey and will keep our improvement work under review. We will also focus on our performance trends; particularly the referral data and timeliness responses to ensure that the improvement measures are being fully implemented and effective.
30. We will offer additional Adult Safeguarding Training to elected councillors

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### **Report contact**

Luke Addams, Interim Director, Practice, Assurance, and Safeguarding.

### **Contact details**

Telephone: 07866 994945

E mail: [luke.addams@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:luke.addams@surreycc.gov.uk)

### **Sources/background papers**

[Safeguarding Adults, England, 2022-23 - NHS England Digital](#)

Appendix 1 Surrey SAB Annual Report 2022-23 Final

Appendix 2 How To Report Concerns Guidance

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