

ADULT CARE AND WELL BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 15 MARCH 2022

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

Summary

1. The Independent Chair and Board Manager of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) have been invited to discuss progress and developments in safeguarding vulnerable adults in Worcestershire. This will include the Board's Annual Report 2020/21.
2. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care has also been invited.
3. Safeguarding vulnerable adults is an important and ongoing part of the work of the Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel and an annual update on the work of the Safeguarding Board is provided to the Panel. The minutes of the Panel's previous discussion on 28 January 2021 are available here: [agenda and minutes of previous discussion](#)

Background

4. The WSAB is an independent board, which seeks to promote wellbeing and reduce the risk of harm for people with care and support needs. Statutory partners include Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, National Health Services and West Mercia Police.
5. Safeguarding in Worcestershire has a dedicated website: www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk which includes useful information, definitions, information about who does what, newsletters, leaflets, the Board structure and Board papers.
6. The Care Act 2014 placed safeguarding adults on a statutory footing for the first time and made safeguarding boards a legal requirement, although Worcestershire's Board has been in place for several years. Keith Brown, the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board took up this role in April 2021.
7. The Care Act states that the main objective of a Safeguarding Adults Board is to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults in its area who:
 - have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
 - are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
 - as a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

8. Regular meetings have taken place between the Panel and the WSAB Chair since the Panel's more in-depth scrutiny review of safeguarding adults in 2011, which recommended regular dialogue between this Panel, the WSAB Chair and the Director and Cabinet Member, as part of the Panel's monitoring role.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2020/21

9. The WSAB Annual Report 2020/21 is available at Appendix 1 and on the Safeguarding Worcestershire website: [Link to WSAB Annual Report 2020/21](#)

10. The Annual Report provides an overview of the activity of the Board during the year. This includes the safeguarding activity that took place to protect people in Worcestershire with care and support needs at risk of harm during this period.

11. The guidance provided by the Care Act clearly sets expectations for the minimum content for Safeguarding Adults Boards (SAB) and Annual Reports (Schedule 2.4 (1) a-g). Early in the COVID-19 pandemic the Department of Health and Social Care contacted all SABs in recognition of the impact that it might have in meeting its statutory duties, including Annual Reports. The letter stated, given that local challenges may vary each SAB should decide on whether to delay or reduce the coverage of the report. Whilst the WSAB produced an Annual Report to its normal timescale there has been a slight reduction in the level of data available for this report.

12. Whilst some progress was made against the objectives for the year against a background where statutory partners not only continued to face significant funding pressures and increased workloads, but also when they had to adapt services to meet the demand and needs of COVID-19.

13. For the first six months of the year some areas of work the WSAB undertook were suspended to ensure that Health and Social Care services had capacity to respond to the demands on their services. This resulted in some objectives being carried over to the following year.

14. Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) continued throughout the year. During 2020/21 there were 8 referrals requesting consideration for a SAR to be undertaken. SARs were commissioned for 2 of these. Of the remaining 6 referrals, 2 resulted in single agency actions being recommended; 3 required no additional actions and 1 decision was pending with the scoping meeting being held in April 2021.

15. A total of 6 SARs were completed and signed off by the Board during the year. Some of these were commissioned in previous years, but not completed. All the SARs which were published can be found by following this link. [Safeguarding Adults Reviews](#).

16. Whilst achievements were limited, due to the pandemic, progress was made on key areas. During the initial stages of the COVID-19, the Board took a proactive role in ensuring safeguarding information was circulated across statutory and non-statutory organisations on a regular basis. This included the publication of a monthly newsletter. A virtual learning event was also held to share the findings from the Thematic Review into Rough Sleeping, which was signed off during this year. To

support this work, links were built with the Strategic Housing Partnership to ensure the delivery of the recommendations.

17. Cross cutting work continued to evolve. A Task and Finish group set up to take forward work on exploitation produced a research project by the University of Worcester which informed future work areas. The WSAB, South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership and Public Health also agreed to fund an Exploitation Co-ordinator for two years.

18. Representatives from the reference groups became more engaged in the work of the Board, including supporting a review of the SAR process to improve communication and working closely with the Learning Development Practice and Communication (LDP&C) sub-group to provide advice on information which goes out to the public.

19. Activity data saw a slight decrease in the number of concerns reported compared to the previous year. (Table 4.1). However, the percentage of concerns reported which met section 42 criteria increased significantly to 27%, indicating that the level of awareness around what constitutes a safeguarding concern has improved. In addition, the number of cases that don't meet criteria, but where some level of enquiry has taken place is also now recorded.

20. The Annual Report includes contributions from each of the key partner agencies of the Board. These illustrate the work that is taking place across the County by the partner agencies to protect adults at risk from harm.

21. Discussion of the Annual Report provides the Panel with an opportunity to verify that systems across Worcestershire, including those of the County Council, are working well to safeguard Worcestershire's vulnerable adults. Discussions also enable the Panel to keep up to date with safeguarding statistics and trends, and to explore any issues identified through serious case reviews, and also through the Panel's own scrutiny work.

22. The WSAB Annual Report is also presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Purpose of the Meeting

23. The Panel is asked to:

- Consider and comment on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Annual Report
- understand and discuss key safeguarding statistics from the WSAB Annual Report 2020/21
- identify any further information needs or potential areas for scrutiny.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2020/21 [Annual Report](#)

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agendas and minutes of the Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 28 January 2021, 6 November 2019, 12 September 2018, 27 September 2017, 21 November 2016, 22 January and 13 October 2015 and 5 September 2013

All agendas and minutes are available here: [agendas and minutes](#)