



Swindon Safeguarding Adults Board

3-year Strategic Plan

2016-19

**It is everyone's responsibility to know about and report
Abuse of Vulnerable People**

Final

1. Introduction

1.1 Swindon Safeguarding Adults' Board produced its first 3-year strategy in 2015, in accordance with the Care Act 2014. The intention is for this to be a rolling 3-year plan with strategic priorities that emerge from available data and known patterns of practice, issues and areas for improvement. An annual Business Plan supports the delivery of the priorities and will be reviewed six monthly by the Board. The Annual Report will report on the progress made with these priorities and available outcomes so these two documents are strongly linked.

1.2 Last year's strategy rightly focused on ensuring Care Act compliance and the Board has worked throughout the year to achieve the agreed actions to implement this. The current strategic plan has focused more on priorities relating to effective governance; performance and quality; communication and engagement; and workforce development as being the four key areas partners have agreed need further development. This plan outlines specific issues within these priorities for the Board to work on over the next three years and the evidence base that informed them.

2. Strategic Context

2.1 The Borough of Swindon is largely urban with small pockets of rural areas. Within Swindon there are some deprived areas which can also impact on levels of vulnerability for some of those living there. In 2014/15 there was a drop of 1200 (2.2%) in the number of all reported crimes in Swindon and Wiltshire and overall it has one of the lowest crime rates in the country. There is still a good level of community involvement in many areas of the town and the Council and its partners continue to develop this involvement and encourage residents to support those who may need additional help and may be isolated or lonely so they can maintain their independence

2.2 A mid-2014 estimate indicated that Swindon had a population of 215,799. An increase is predicted with the 85 years and over age group having the largest growth rate. By 2031 the population aged 65 and over is projected to account for 46% of total population growth with the working age population (16-64) projected to make up approximately 39% of total population growth. Overall, then, the age structure of the population is projected to change with significantly higher growth in the older age groups than in the younger groups.

2.3 In 2014/15, 5,375 people were receiving services from adult social care broken down into client groups as follows:

Service User Group	Age Band 18-64		Age Band 65+	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Physical Disability	424	317	1871	951
Sensory	30	9	94	34
Mental Health	247	254	134	78
Memory & Cognition	6	6	107	65
Learning Disability	250	327	35	35
Total Clients	957	913	2241	1163

2.4 Comparisons are difficult with previous years regarding the individual service user groups as there were changes in the categories used in 2014/15 but there was an overall reduction of about 2% in the number of people receiving services.

Role of the Safeguarding Adults Board

2.5 The Care Act 2014 placed adult safeguarding on a statutory footing for the first time and required Local Safeguarding Adults' Boards (LSAB) to be in place. Swindon already had a Board so the legislation strengthened the partnership work already in existence and now has the authority to hold agencies to account.

2.6 As stipulated in the Care Act, Swindon's LSAB was set up with the primary purpose of protecting adults in need of care and support from abuse or neglect or the risk of it. The new definition of a vulnerable adult is
"An Adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it."

This means that the Board needs to ensure that its remit does not become so wide that it is unsuccessful in meeting its duties.

2.7 The role of an LSAB therefore includes:

- Co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of work undertaken by local individuals and organisations in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults. The Board is not accountable for their operational work as

each Board partner has their own existing lines of accountability for safeguarding. The Board does not have the power to direct other organisations so must work to identify and challenge areas of concern

- Ensuring that policies and procedures are in place and working
- Ensuring that where abuse or neglect is suspected (or where an adult in need of care support is at risk of abuse or neglect), local authorities 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 if so, what and by whom (section 42). The Board must be satisfied that enquiries take place in a proportionate way.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to carry out Safeguarding Adult Reviews when (for example) an adult in need for care and support dies in its area, and *"there is reasonable cause for concern about how the LSAB, members of it or other persons with relevant functions worked together to safeguard the adult"*.
- Publishing a Strategic Plan and an Annual Report

3. Principles

The Government set out six core principles in their Policy on Adult Safeguarding by which to measure existing adult safeguarding arrangements and future improvements. Swindon LSAB has adopted these as their own principles as follows:

3.1 Empowerment - Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent.

Swindon's approach:

3.1.1 In everyday life, all adults should be able to make informed decisions for themselves and where required, be supported in doing so. When there is a concern about an individual that requires an enquiry to be instigated, the views of the adult in need of care and support are paramount and there is a requirement for services involved in the management of such enquiries to ascertain the desired outcomes of the adult at risk and ensure these views will inform what happens. Where an individual has substantial difficulties in being able to express their views, they may be supported in doing so by an appropriate suitable person for example a family member, and where an appropriate person is not available, an advocate is engaged through the relevant services.

3.1.2 Individuals should also be provided with the means to recognise abuse and take action whereby they can prevent future harm or be able to report abuse or neglect themselves but be able to obtain support if needed. As there is a clearer

emphasis that safeguarding enquiries may need to be instigated when there is a concern that someone is at risk of abuse (not just experiencing it) a consideration needs to be given to someone's life choices and informed decisions made. As well as taking into account the level of harm any perceived risk may present, how someone may react to risk could have an effect their well-being and require help and support to manage their risk so as not to impact on their independence (for example). This culture, which is reinforced by the Board's adoption of Making Safeguarding Personal, must be at the heart of the Board's decision making.

3.2 Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need

Swindon's approach:

3.2.1 Processes need to be in place to manage risk and help people to manage their own risks. Local safeguarding procedures need to be accessible and people need to understand how key agencies work and know how to make contact with them. When there is a safeguarding concern, the individual (s) needs to be protected from abuse or if there is a concern that they may be at risk of it, action is taken to minimise the possibility of harm or further harm.

3.2.2 It is acknowledged that there may be times when it is necessary to take action to protect individuals that may be at odds with their views. This could be because there could be a wider public interest or a crime committed or because the person is believed to be under duress and not able to make informed choices. Strategies need to be in place to act appropriately on these occasions but ensure the individual is involved, informed or supported at the earliest opportunity.

3.3 Prevention - It is better to take action before harm occurs

Swindon's approach:

2.3.1 Key agencies and Board members need to take action that prevents harm from occurring in the first place. Staff working with adults in need of care and support receive training in the signs of abuse and know how to take action to prevent it from occurring. Public awareness needs to be in place to inform members of the community about how to report signs of abuse and report criminal activity.

2.3.2 Care services need to be delivered in such a way that standards of care prevent harm and that there is a culture of openness within services meaning poor practice can be challenged and changed. Agencies that commission services need to have procedures in place that can check the quality of the services they have procured and ensure action is taken to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring.

2.3.3 The Board needs to be aware of initiatives, organisations and preventative services that are in place in Swindon that support adults in need of care and support particularly where these needs do not require a particular service, but could still present some risks to individuals. For example, someone who may have limited mobility, but is fully self-caring could be isolated. The Swindon Circles of Support

scheme which links volunteers with older people living in the community may be able to provide help. Or, where someone with a learning disability who is quite independent experiences difficulties whilst using the community, can get immediate help by using The Safe Places Scheme where shops and businesses display a window sticker that indicates available support in these circumstances. Information on support available may be obtained from the "My Care My Support" website at <http://www.mycaremysupport.co.uk/>.

3.4 Proportionality - Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented

Swindon's approach:

3.4.1 Where abuse or neglect is suspected or there is a risk of it, action is taken that is proportionate to the circumstances. Any intervention must (unless in exceptional circumstances where it would be unsafe to do so) ensure that the person who is subject of the safeguarding concern is engaged throughout the process and as far as possible work to achieve that person's desired outcome(s). Any response should not be at such a level that the individual feels at a greater disadvantage following the safeguarding process than they did before the concern was raised. *What good is it making someone safer if it merely makes them miserable?* (Lord Justice Munby).

3.4.2 The Policy for Safeguarding Adults at risk has been revised to include requirements in the Care Act and its guidance. It also highlights the requirement to determine the most appropriate people from the most appropriate agencies to carry out an enquiry. This does not always mean the police, or the local authority (or SEQOL and AWP), as it may be a more proportionate response for an enquiry to be carried out by an employer, the risk team in a hospital or a registered professional.

3.5 Partnership - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse

Swindon's approach:

3.5.1 Agencies, Board members and partners need to work together to prevent abuse or neglect, protect adults from harm and respond proportionately. They also have a part to play in ensuring adults in need for care and support are able to take informed risks and are enabled to make decision for themselves. Local communities also have a part to play in preventing abuse and neglect and members of the community need to be aware of what they should do to report concerns to enable a timely response.

3.5.2 Information needs to be supplied by all agencies in the interests of safeguarding adults and to ensure the LSAB is able to fulfil its responsibility. This is a requirement to enable enquiries to take place unhindered or to enable an accurate safeguarding adult's review or to assist in the management of risks to minimise harm

and help to empower people. Agencies, particularly Board members will need to adopt an information sharing protocol and promote its use to their staff.

3.5.3 Whilst there has been considerable activity with regards to investigating incidents of alleged abuse, further work is required to prevent abuse or neglect from taking place. Partnership working will contribute to these areas of work particularly when it relates to matters outside the direct remit of adult social care services – for example the Community Safety Partnership.

3.5.4 Some of the issues to consider include:

- *Domestic Abuse* (Including Honour Based Abuse) In appropriate cases, domestic abuse may require a safeguarding response and safeguarding concerns relating to abuse in domestic settings may be best dealt with under the Domestic Abuse Framework.
- *Hate Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour* Are safeguarding concerns being recorded as hate crimes where appropriate? Are ASB teams being consulted when anti-social behaviour is impacting on adults in need of care and support? Where this is identified, a wider range of agencies may need to respond to reduce and remove incidents of harassment/bullying within (for example) specific communities, and prevent incidents impacting on other vulnerable people who may become victims in the future
- *Human trafficking / modern slavery / sexual exploitation* Although abuse relating to these matters may well have been dealt with under the established categories of abuse, Care Act guidance includes *Modern Slavery* as a specific abuse type. Awareness is increasing with regards to this and it is recognised that it is a complex area that requires input from the National Crime Agency. Nationally some of the concerns that have been raised include forced labour and vulnerable people being forced into domestic servitude. There is an assumption that the main victims of modern slavery are likely to be immigrants or refugees in the UK. Whilst this is a concern, often people targeted may be adults in need for care and support and there have been incidents (not locally) where people have been “trafficked” from within the same community
- *Bogus callers, financial scams, distraction burglaries, dangerous drugs gangs* Criminals responsible for such areas of concern often target vulnerable people who may require support of the safeguarding process. Agencies outside adult services already engaged in these issues need to be available to support safeguarding procedures but also provide advice guidance and training to social care staff who need awareness of this and will be able to help with prevention. Recent Care Act Guidance has reinforced the need to consider on line (or electronic) fraud and exploitation.

3.6 Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Swindon's approach:

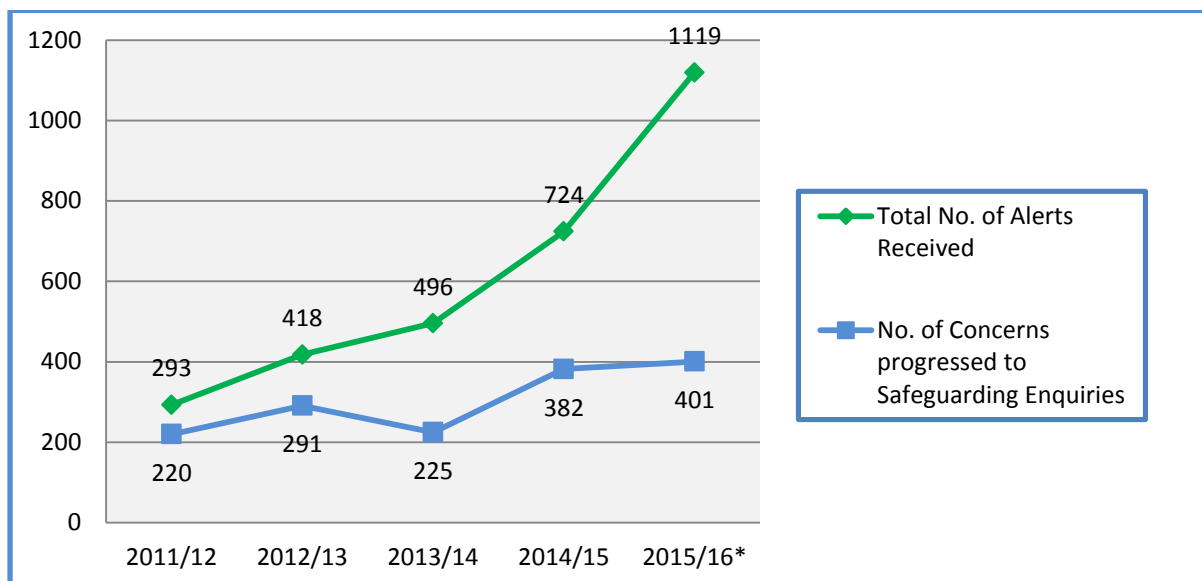
3.6.1 In the past, one of the criticisms of safeguarding procedures in many local authority areas is the secrecy of the process, excluding the adult and at times (as reinforced by recent judgements) making unlawful decisions with the intention of making someone safe. Making Safeguarding Personal will help to alleviate this perception and the team managing safeguarding cases need to be able to account for their actions, ensure that information is shared within a legal framework and that nothing should take place that is not in the best interests of the adult. Everyone involved in the safeguarding process needs to be clear about their specific roles and duties. Procedures and practice now includes the need to communicate appropriately with the adult or their representative to ensure clarity and transparency, obtaining desired outcomes at the beginning and during the process. And at the end check if the desired outcomes have been met.

4. Evidence Base

4.1 During the first year of operating under the new statutory framework, Swindon Safeguarding Team received 1119 concerns about adults where abuse or neglect (or the risk of it) was suspected. Although this appears to be a significant increase on previous years (a 53% increase) it is not possible to attribute this increase to the Care Act coming into force in April 2015, as previously safeguarding cases were not managed directly by the local authority. What may also be significant is that there has not been a major increase in the number of cases that required a full enquiry (Section 42 enquiry)

4.2 Of the 1119 cases, only 417 required an enquiry. The LSAB are concerned about the large number of referrals that do not lead to an enquiry as the work required to deal with such cases is significant. The Board has also expressed concerns as to whether unnecessary referrals could lead to serious concerns being missed or the seriousness of other concerns being underestimated.

4.3 In 2014/15, 381 cases progressed beyond an initial screening decision. This may indicate a level of anxiety on the part of those raising a concern believing that however minor, a safeguarding referral is required. Below is a graph that shows the gap between alerts or concerns and the number of enquiries needed.



4.4 Of the 1119 concerns raised, 176 were in relation to "*self-neglect*" (previously not a matter dealt with under safeguarding). Of these, 23 required an enquiry with the remainder indicating that either a service or an assessment for services was required or in some cases the concern did not meet the criteria for safeguarding. As this has also been experienced in other areas, a review of the Care Act Guidance has been undertaken so more clarity on self-neglect has been provided. This makes clear that under normal circumstances self-neglect would not need a section 42 enquiry so an assessment should be made on a case by case basis.

5. Current Position

5.1 The Care Act has been in force for 12 months now and its main requirements have been implemented. *Making Safeguarding Personal*, where the person who is subject of the concern about abuse or neglect needs to be central to the safeguarding procedures, continues to be reflected in practice. In addition to embedding this approach with practitioners, Swindon has two response officers to assist with this, particularly where someone is not known to services or if there is going to be a delay in allocating the case to a care manager. They are able to make early contact with the adult and begin a conversation that will assist in deciding how best to proceed with a case.

5.2 There is now a requirement to ensure that an *advocate* is allocated to individuals who are the subject of a safeguarding concern where they have a substantial difficulty in engaging with the process and have no one else to help them such as a relative or a friend. Initially those managing enquires may not have routinely considered this requirement but this has improved over the year. Also it has become apparent that some individuals subject of abuse may initially have been assessed as not requiring advocacy but later have been found to have engagement

difficulties. Procedures were updated to guide managers to continually assess the need for advocacy as the case progresses. Swindon Advocacy Movement has been commissioned to provide advocacy in the Local Authority area and have since joined the LSAB and are able to provide updates to the Board on take up and address any operational difficulties.

5.3 The revised national guidance removed the requirement for agencies to have a Designated Adult Safeguarding Manager but requires member agencies of the Board to have a *lead officer for safeguarding* and key agencies to have a *designated professional lead*.

6. Strategic Priorities

6.1 The Swindon LSAB held specific discussions about the priorities required over the coming period based on performance data and experience of key issues across the year. From these discussions, actions that reflect the issues, concerns and areas for improvement, were formulated. Overall there is a need to improve the effectiveness of Swindon's LSAB, and to identify progress and outcome measures. The following are the agreed strategic priorities for the coming three years (**the link with the Care Act principles are in bold after each action point**)

Strategic Priority 1

Effective Governance

We will develop the capacity of Swindon LSAB and its infrastructure to effectively deliver the core functions of the Board to help keep adults with care and support needs in Swindon safe

We will do this through:

- Developing links with other key partnerships and identifying areas of commonality and governance arrangements - particularly the Health and Well-Being Board, the LSCB, and the Community Safety Partnership **(Partnership)**
- Ensuring the Board is sufficiently resourced to undertake its responsibilities **(Partnership)**
- Introduce an induction programme for new Board members **(Partnership, Accountability)**
- Develop a risk register for the Board **(Accountability, Prevention, Protection)**
- Review the membership of the Board and its sub groups, and monitor attendance at Board meetings **(Partnership, Accountability)**

Strategic Priority 2

Performance and quality

We will ensure that there are effective multi agency quality assurance and performance management processes in place which will promote the welfare of adults with care and support needs and will hold partners to account

We will do this through:

- Explore the safeguarding risks in Swindon relating to known vulnerability particularly learning disabilities, self-neglect, domestic abuse, radicalisation, hate crime, and trafficking/modern slavery **(Empowerment, Protection, Prevention, Proportionality)**
- Developing a multi-agency quality assurance process and reporting system to the Board **(ALL priorities)**
- Commissioning a thematic review of inappropriate referrals by QA Sub-group with a view to increasing the proportion of enquiries that lead from concerns **(Proportionality, Protection, Accountability)**
- Identifying from audits and available data trends and research of adults in need for care and support who are or have been experiencing abuse or neglect (increase in physical abuse and abuse in people's own homes) **(Protection, Prevention, Proportionality)**
- Learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews **(ALL priorities (depending upon the circumstances))**
- Collecting service user experience, particularly in respect of making safeguarding personal **(Empowerment)**, and using this to drive practice improvements **(Empowerment, Proportionality Protection Prevention)**

Strategic Priority 3

Communication and engagement

We will ensure there is a consistent and co-ordinated approach to how the safeguarding message for adults is disseminated to all groups and communities in Swindon, and we will ensure that we engage adults and communities of all backgrounds and make up in the work of SSAB

We will do this through:

- Developing the website **(Empowerment, Protection, Prevention)**
- Increasing community awareness including using available opportunities to increase public involvement, and to engage media interest **(Empowerment, Protection, Prevention, Partnership)**
- Gaining, listening to and making use of the voice of service users and carers by acting on their suggestions **(Empowerment)**

- Developing the use of a safeguarding story at the start of Board meetings

Strategic Priority 4

Workforce development

We will ensure the workforce of all partner agencies has access to and has undergone robust training relevant to their role, and understand how to apply it to their role

We will do this through:

- Training particularly in respect of a consistent training package for providers **(Protection, prevention, partnership, proportionality, accountability)**
- Using feedback from referrals data with agencies to inform them of areas for improvement in understanding and safeguarding practice **(Protection, partnership, proportionality, accountability)**

7. Next Steps

7.1 The Board will draw up an annual business plan for 2016/17 that outlines how the strategic priorities will be delivered and the outcomes required to measure progress. This will be monitored during the year and will inform the Annual Report.

7.2 The Board will also produce a business risk register to underpin this strategic plan that will identify the key risks that have the potential to prevent its delivery