

A Multi-Agency Prevention and Learning & Development Strategy to support Safeguarding Adults in Sandwell 2023– 2025

Safeguarding adults who are at risk of abuse or neglect is a key responsibility for society. Abuse and neglect happen both in the community and in care settings and needs to be prevented. This is both an individual responsibility of all citizens and a collective responsibility of the agencies concerned with working with adults with care and support needs.

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to work with partner agencies to promote wellbeing and aim to prevent abuse and neglect for people with care and support needs not just to respond to crises.

Why Prevention and Learning & Development?

One of the 6 principles of safeguarding, identified in the *Care and Support Statutory Guidance Support* document is Prevention.

'It is better to take action before harm occurs'

I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help

Safeguarding arrangements are in place in Sandwell to effectively react to protect individuals where allegations of abuse and neglect are made. However, it is equally important to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring in the first place. Early intervention and Learning & Development is paramount to preventative working, offers which we aim to develop.

The Safeguarding Adults Board

The Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board, consists of representatives from organisations who provide health, social care and public protection services in Sandwell, they also maintain links with other strategic forums in Sandwell as well as commercial, voluntary and community organisations.

Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board have a Prevention and Learning & Development Sub Group who hold a hybrid quarterly meeting to plan and implement the Prevention and L&D agenda/workplan in line with the boards strategic plan.

How can we improve how well people are safeguarded?

- Through greater safeguarding awareness and ensuring care services promote and respect people's dignity and provide high standards of care - it is essential that the focus is on continually raising standards.
- Build on early help partnership work to develop an early intervention offer for adults.
- Look at pathways to ensure that vulnerable adults are better safeguarded. Examples may include individuals who may be experiencing self-neglect and/or have fluctuating capacity or young adults who may present risks to themselves and others, or high risk to organisations with reference to defensible decision making and may need a clear multi-agency approach.
- Inform a place based understanding of issues with reference to adults with care and support needs – which will inform the priorities for the SSAB, give relevant key lines of enquiry across the partnership, to drive practice and aspirations contributing to a Safer Sandwell.

Strategic Priority 1 Listening to the voices of people who use services and front-line practitioners.

Ambition: That we promote co-produced solutions and work in partnership with adults with care and support needs and their families to support, enable and promote

Work Plan Priorities

How can we improve how well people are safeguarded?

How can we ensure people can remain independent and still be safeguarded, and to empower people to safeguard themselves and others?

To ensure the earlier identification of potential and actual abuse and neglect and to reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect and repeat episodes

How do we encourage, identify and embed learning?

How do we engage?

The Key Aims of the Strategy

1. Empowering people to safeguard themselves and others

- To ensure that people we serve are empowered to manage their own risks and safety as far as possible.
- To ensure that people know how to self-refer incidents of abuse and neglect through the provision of accessible information
- To ensure that people have confidence in reporting concerns and know that they will be protected through the process.
- To ensure that systems are in place to enable members of the public to report abuse and neglect of others.
- Information and advice about abuse and what to do needs to reach all sectors of the community - Roll out public awareness campaigns.
- Promote a partnership approach to prevention. Ensure that prevention and L&D is promoted through available media, networking and engagement

2. Earlier identification of potential and actual abuse and neglect

- To ensure the optimum amount of face to face contact between staff and users to increase opportunities for disclosure or identification of abuse and neglect.
- To ensure that adults with care and support needs have access to good quality communication, interpretation and translation services. Reduce social isolation via community links.
- To provide clear pathways to refer adults who have care and support needs to appropriate services, in line with the Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board procedures.

Reducing the likelihood of abuse and repeat episodes of abuse and neglect through continuous improvement in the quality of systems and services.

- To ensure that safeguarding training is embedded in line with the Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board Learning and Development Training Strategy. Agencies must have training programmes that address prevention and early intervention as well as core skills. Awareness training for the workforce.
- To lessen the likelihood of abuse and neglect in services by continuing to ensure that robust staff, supervision and personal development and training systems are in place for all staff, including managers.
- To ensure there are whistle blowing policies which are well promoted to staff and which effectively support staff who raise concerns at work.
- To support people to protect themselves through effective and supportive interventions (e.g., intermediate care, person-centred planning, access to advocacy and outcomes focused assessments).
- To reduce risk through ongoing assessment, and by professionals evidencing that discussions and considerations have taken place and that remedial actions have been put in place. Ensure the workforce is aware of information sharing arrangements.

How will the Board ensure that these Aims are realised and how will we know if prevention is working?

Multi-agency working is key to successful adult safeguarding work. The board should ensure consistent practices happen across all agencies with robust quality assurance. The board will include a summary of the progress that is being made in Sandwell in preventing abuse and neglect in its Annual Report. Governance will be directly through the SSAB Prevention and Learning & Development Sub Group. Success will be measured by the reduction in Safeguarding referrals.

Adults with care and support needs should expect to: Live lives free from harm, have their human rights acknowledged and supported, be listened to and shape solutions that are person centered and asset based