

Divisions Affected -

CABINET

21 December 2021

OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT – 2020-21

Report by Corporate Director for Adult and Housing Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED** to note the content of the report, particularly the findings of the Vulnerable adults Mortality group (page 15), the merging findings from the Homeless Mortality Review group (page 16) and the overall summary of progress during the year including the outstanding work (page 24).

Executive Summary

2. The OSAB report provides an overview of the work of the Safeguarding Board and its partners during 2020-21. It is a statutory requirement that an annual report is produced and shared with partners. Some partners, such as the Local Authority, have specific expectations placed upon them within the Care Act guidance about how they will respond to the report.

The local safeguarding partnership has continued to maintain a high standard of work during a difficult year that has affected all partner organisations. There has been no increase in safeguarding concerns that point towards any failings of organisations to work together. Despite difficult working conditions, levels of safeguarding work have been maintained during this year, with the number of concerns raised being similar to previous years. The significant rise in safeguarding enquiries is due to a change in process within the Local Authority rather than an indicator there are significantly more safeguarding issues.

The report notes three key areas of work going forward.

The Making Safeguarding Personal approach has been championed throughout the year and there has been an improvement in the number of people who have defined what they wanted to happen as a result of the safeguarding work and who were satisfied with the work that was undertaken. This is excellent progress during a difficult year and demonstrates professionals are continuing to keep the person at the centre of their work with

them, empowering them to make the decisions that are important to them and honouring that as much as they are able to whilst seeking to protect them.

The annual Practitioner survey of Frontline workers has indicated that the majority of workers have felt there was clear leadership in regard to safeguarding during the last year. Workers have valued the safeguarding consultation service and its use has risen over the period.

Most Organisations have maintained levels of safeguarding training amongst staff comparable with the previous two years. Health agencies have understandably reported under compliance due to their frontline role during COVID-19. The huge increase in training taken up by the voluntary sector during this period has been particularly welcome and we hope to maintain this level of interest and engagement with safeguarding training within voluntary and community groups.

The report highlights three key messages for local leaders that were relevant at the end of the year (31st March 2021). The County Council and the other statutory organisations have worked together to address all three areas. Below are the findings of the report as well as an update on the current progress with all three issues.

Leadership on homelessness – *“Organisations must come together to agree the governance of homelessness at a countywide level. Operationally partners are doing a lot of things to improve work within their own organisations, there are areas of multi-agency work underway and a countywide strategy has been produced however, the governance and senior strategic leadership across the county has yet to be agreed.”*

Update for CABINET – The OSAB and Countywide Homelessness Steering Group (CHSG) have worked together to develop terms of reference for the Homelessness Governance Board (HGB). The HGB had their first meeting in November 2021, chaired by Stephen Chandler. The purpose of the group is to oversee the implementation of the homelessness strategy and act as an escalation route for issues that cannot be resolved within the CHSG.

Working with complexity – *“the feedback from Board Members and frontline workers has highlighted for the last two years that the people that are being referred into services have increasingly complex issues. For some, these may not individually trigger a statutory response but when viewed holistically the issues clearly indicate there are risks. For others, they may trigger a response but are unwilling to engage with the services that could help them, thus leaving them at risk to themselves or from others. Multi-agency partnership work is underway to develop more integrated approaches and shared processes. It will require commitment from senior managers to enable frontline professionals to actively contribute provide their professional expertise, in order to support other teams develop skills and knowledge. The goal is to enable all services to work more effectively, proactively on improving outcomes for those they are working with.”*

Update for CABINET – The Safeguarding Board has developed the Multi-agency Risk Management (MARM) Framework which will look to address the risks inherent with the increasing levels of complex cases seen across organisations. Funding has been agreed for a post to support this process, learning from the experience of other areas who have already successfully embedded similar processes. The first MARM meeting was held in November 2021.

Refreshing the links between strategic partnerships – *“during COVID-19 the focus of organisations has rightly been diverted to ensuring those most vulnerable in our society are protected as much possible. This had the effect of reducing the focus on strategic partnership work during this period. The relationship between the strategic partnership groups within Oxfordshire (Children’s Board, Health & Wellbeing Board and the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership) needs to be reviewed and refreshed.”*

Update for CABINET – in June 2021 the Chairs of the partnership boards met for their first strategic partnerships conference, chaired by the Independent Chair of the OSCB. A follow-up meeting is being arranged and it is proposed that these conferences are held twice a year.

The full published report can be accessed here: [OSAB Annual Report 2020-21](#)

Exempt Information

3. None.

OSAB Report Summary

4. A summary of the full report is provided below, along with an update of the three key issues highlighted for further work. The published report can be accessed here: [OSAB Annual Report 2020-21](#).
5. The OSAB report provides an overview of the work of the Safeguarding Board and its partners during 2020-21. It is a statutory requirement that an annual report is produced and shared with partners. Some partners, such as the Local Authority, have specific expectations placed upon them within the Care Act guidance about how they will respond to the report.
6. The local safeguarding partnership has continued to maintain a high standard of work during a difficult year that has affected all partner organisations. There has been no increase in safeguarding concerns that point towards any failings of organisations to work together. Despite difficult working conditions, levels of safeguarding work have been maintained during this year, with the number of concerns raised being similar to previous years. The significant rise in safeguarding enquiries is due to a change in process within the Local Authority rather than an indicator there are significantly more safeguarding issues.

7. The Making Safeguarding Personal approach has been championed throughout the year and there has been an improvement in the number of people who have defined what they wanted to happen as a result of the safeguarding work and who were satisfied with the work that was undertaken. This is excellent progress during a difficult year and demonstrates professionals are continuing to keep the person at the centre of their work with them, empowering them to make the decisions that are important to them and honouring that as much as they are able to whilst seeking to protect them.
8. The annual Practitioner survey of Frontline workers has indicated that the majority of workers have felt there was clear leadership in regard to safeguarding during the last year. Workers have valued the safeguarding consultation service and its use has risen over the period.
9. Most Organisations have maintained levels of safeguarding training amongst staff comparable with the previous two years. Health agencies have understandably reported under compliance due to their frontline role during COVID-19. The huge increase in training taken up by the voluntary sector during this period has been particularly welcome and we hope to maintain this level of interest and engagement with safeguarding training within voluntary and community groups.
10. The report highlights three key messages for local leaders that were relevant at the end of the year (**31st March 2021**). The County Council and the other statutory organisations have worked together to address all three areas. Below are the findings of the report as well as an update on the current progress with all three issues.
11. **Leadership on homelessness** – *“Organisations must come together to agree the governance of homelessness at a countywide level. Operationally partners are doing a lot of things to improve work within their own organisations, there are areas of multi-agency work underway and a countywide strategy has been produced however, the governance and senior strategic leadership across the county has yet to be agreed.”*
12. **Update for Cabinet** – The OSAB and Countywide Homelessness Steering Group (CHSG) have worked together to develop terms of reference for the Homelessness Governance Board (HGB). The HGB had their first meeting in November 2021, chaired by Stephen Chandler. The purpose of the group is to oversee the implementation of the homelessness strategy and act as an escalation route for issues that cannot be resolved within the CHSG.
13. **Working with complexity** – *“the feedback from Board Members and frontline workers has highlighted for the last two years that the people that are being referred into services have increasingly complex issues. For some, these may not individually trigger a statutory response but when viewed holistically the issues clearly indicate there are risks. For others, they may trigger a response but are unwilling to engage with the services that could help them, thus leaving them at risk to themselves or from others. Multi-agency partnership work is underway to develop more integrated approaches and shared*

processes. It will require commitment from senior managers to enable frontline professionals to actively contribute provide their professional expertise, in order to support other teams develop skills and knowledge. The goal is to enable all services to work more effectively, proactively on improving outcomes for those they are working with.”

14. **Update for Cabinet** – The Safeguarding Board has developed the Multi-agency Risk Management (MARM) Framework which will look to address the risks inherent with the increasing levels of complex cases seen across organisations. Funding has been agreed for a post to support this process, learning from the experience of other areas who have already successfully embedded similar processes. The first MARM meeting was held in November 2021.
15. **Refreshing the links between strategic partnerships** – *“during COVID-19 the focus of organisations has rightly been diverted to ensuring those most vulnerable in our society are protected as much possible. This had the effect of reducing the focus on strategic partnership work during this period. The relationship between the strategic partnership groups within Oxfordshire (Children’s Board, Health & Wellbeing Board and the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership) needs to be reviewed and refreshed.”*
16. **Update for Cabinet** – in June 2021 the Chairs of the partnership boards met for their first strategic partnerships conference, chaired by the Independent Chair of the OSCB. A follow-up meeting is being arranged and it is proposed that these conferences are held twice a year.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

17. None.

Financial Implications

18. None

Comments checked by:

Danny Doherty, Finance Business Partner (Interim) Adult Social Care & Public Health

Legal Implications

19. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Staff Implications

20. None.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

21. The report highlights that the Board will be analysing equality and inclusion data as part of its future work to better understand the accessibility of safeguarding services.

Sustainability Implications

22. None.

Risk Management

23. None.

Consultations

24. None.

NAME

Stephen Chandler, Director Adult Social Care

Annex: Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2020/21

Background papers: N/A

[Other Documents:] N/A

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December 2021