

# Performance Scrutiny – 7 January 2016

## OSAB Annual Report for 2014-15

Report by OSAB Independent Chair, Sarah Mitchell

### Summary

1. The attached annual report from the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board provides an independent analysis of the safeguarding services provided to the County's adults with care and support needs during 2014/15, and outlines the challenges ahead over the next year.

### Introduction

2. This report presents the 2014/15 Annual Report endorsed by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) in September 2015.
3. This report identifies the progress made by the County Council's Adult Social Services Department and partners across the NHS and Thames Valley Police during 2014/15 to improve the protection of adults with care and support needs. It also identifies areas of vulnerabilities and outlines what action is being taken to address challenges where they remain.
4. There are larger numbers of older adults coming into the adult safeguarding system than any other age group (nearly 135% increase in alerts for those aged 85 and over since 2012/13). As the report indicates, there has been just over a 101% increase in overall activity in this same period, placing pressure on front line services across all sectors.
5. There are a number of significant external national changes that have influenced the safeguarding agenda in 2014/15, most notably the Care Act 2014 and the Cheshire West ruling in March 2014. The Care Act has brought in key changes which include the ethos of safeguarding, so that work is person centred and makes safeguarding personal, that human rights are respected and responses are proportionate, timely, professional and ethical. The language of safeguarding has also changed and there are notable changes in representation and advocacy, changes to the categories to include modern slavery and self-neglect and changes to the duty to investigate. The key principles of prevention, protection, empowerment, partnership, proportionality and accountability now govern our practice.
6. In addition there is clear guidance on the core duties of the Safeguarding Adults Board to publish its strategic plan for each financial year, to publish an annual report and to conduct any Safeguarding Adult Reviews in accordance with section 44 of the Care Act 2014. Locally these changes are being introduced across the workforce and led to the peer review of OSAB and a new action plan to implement the findings.
7. The Cheshire West ruling resulted in a revised test for deprivation of liberty and how deprivation of liberty can be assessed in 'domestic' settings, which has implications for resources and volume of Deprivation of Liberty Assessments undertaken locally which have risen from 232 in 2013/14 to 1,424 in 2014/15. There are local plans in place to integrate

health and social care services which are anticipated to improve safeguarding arrangements.

8. It is recognised that 2014/15 has been a developmental year for the board and priorities for 2015/16 must reflect the commitment to change. The partnership will strengthen the role and strategic functioning of the board, its governance arrangements, its strategic vision and overall grip on the safeguarding agenda from a multi-agency perspective. The Board needs to ensure that quality assurance and performance management processes are in place so that the board can assess need and clearly identify gaps in services and address current and emerging safeguarding themes.
9. The Board are committed to ensuring that service users, carers, care providers and the voluntary sector are able to inform the board about key safeguarding concerns and influence and shape the safeguarding agenda. The Board will also work to raise its profile and the understanding of its role at the heart of safeguarding vulnerable adults in Oxfordshire and to support the multi-agency workforce to improve practice and learn from findings from Safeguarding Adults Reviews and quality assurance processes.
10. The partnership is committed to working closely with other the key safeguarding partnerships in Oxfordshire and in particular to work closely with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board (OSCB), Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership and district Community Safety Partnerships.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

11. The Care Act has placed Safeguarding Adult Boards on a statutory footing and with clear functions and duties equivalent to the Children's Boards. As such, the Board requires the member agencies to resource the Board appropriately, both in terms of finance and human resource, to ensure it can meet its statutory functions. The budget for 2015/16 is currently being discussed with Members.

### **Equalities Implications**

12. There are no additional equalities implications that are not covered in the report

### **Conclusions**

13. Oxfordshire agencies are working hard to ensure that the adult safeguarding system is working. However, challenges remain to ensure that there is a multi-agency strategic response to the increased activity and complexity of cases within the adult safeguarding arena; that people who use health and social care services and their families are at the centre of any decisions about their care and support; that there is a clear multi-agency protocol developed on Provider mergers and significant changes which will ensure agencies manage provider change safely; that the Peer Review Action Plan is fully implemented in a timely fashion; and that the Board is sufficiently resourced to deliver its ambition and its duties under the Care Act.

## Recommendations

14. Members of the Performance Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:
- Note that the adult safeguarding partnership is working across Oxfordshire but there are severe pressure points in relation to the increased complexity of cases and activity in the system.
  - Consider the implications for the partnership in relation to increasingly fewer resources being made available due to budgetary considerations.

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Independent Chair OSAB

Background papers: Annual report 2014-15

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December 2015