

Involvement and Engagement Approach and Plan For Safeguarding Adults in Solihull 2022-2025



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Introduction

There are many different areas within Safeguarding Adults where active involvement or engagement should be everyone's day to day approach. It is important for individuals to be actively involved in their own safeguarding and to share their concerns and outcomes. It is essential to understand people's experiences and to provide appropriate and relevant information and advice about safeguarding. It is important to consult when producing strategies and policies and to communicate with the community about the work of Safeguarding Adult Boards.

Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) strive to improve and increase the involvement and engagement of adults experiencing the Solihull Safeguarding Adults process, to inform their work. We know that from speaking to people, they have really valued professionals who take the time to listen to them and to understand what has happened and to hear how this has made them feel.

2020 and 2021 was an incredibly difficult period for people due to Covid-19. We have been unable to involve and engage with adults as we had hoped during this time. We have had to change the way we communicate and interact with people, the pandemic has seen the increased use of digital platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Facebook, and Twitter. This has been positive for SSAB due to flexibility, however we would like to be able to return to more face-to-face engagement as well as combining this with digital approaches such as social media and online surveys to communicate with our community.

It's important that we understand the key safety concerns for our various communities in Solihull. We work with voluntary sector partners to capture information on how community members are feeling about Covid-19 and safety. We would like to be hearing from many more people about their experiences, and one of our goals this year is to explore how we can increase opportunities to hear feedback from those who have experienced the Solihull Safeguarding Adults process.

This document sets out the approach for involvement and engagement for the next three years.



Why Do We Involve and Engage with Our Communities?

Policy for Involvement and Engagement:

The Safeguarding Adults Boards (SAB) overarching purpose as defined by The Care Act 2014 is to safeguard adults with care and support needs. The Care Act 2014 makes it clear that people should be at the centre of the safeguarding process and that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome focused. This recognises the values and principles contained in [Making Safeguarding Personal](#) agenda. One of the requirements of Safeguarding Adults Boards is to develop and promote a culture that recognises the values and principles of the Making Safeguarding personal agenda.

The Making Safeguarding Personal approach is a national programme led by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and funded by the Department of Health.

Making Safeguarding Personal is a shift in culture and practice to enable safeguarding to be more effective from the perspective of the person being safeguarded. It is about:

- having conversations with people about how we might respond in safeguarding situations in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.
- seeing people as experts in their own lives and working alongside them. It is about collecting information about the extent to which this shift has a positive impact on people's lives.
- a shift from a process supported by conversations to a series of conversations supported by a process.

The Making Safeguarding Personal outcomes framework was developed to provide a measure of practice that supports an outcomes focussed and person led approach to safeguarding adults. This framework aims to enable councils and SABs to better identify how practice is impacting on outcomes, indicate areas for improvement, and share best practice and learning.

The six core principles to underpin all adult safeguarding work to ensure effective practice and user involvement and what we want to achieve for citizens in Solihull are:

- Empowerment - "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and this directly inform what happens."
- Prevention - "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is. I know how to recognise the signs, and I know what I can do to seek help."
- Proportionality - "I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest and they will only get involved as much as is necessary."

- Protection - “I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”
- Partnership - “I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”
- Accountability - “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

Caring for our future: reforming care and support (2012) Two core principles lie at the heart of this White Paper. The first is that we should do everything we can to prevent, postpone and minimise people’s need for formal care and support; promoting people’s independence and wellbeing. The second principle is that people should be in control of their own care and support providing clear, comparable information and advice, will empower individuals and their carers to make the choices that are right for them. This will encourage providers to provide high-quality, integrated services built around the needs of individuals. We need to listen to the voices of those using care and support their carers, their families and their friends. Their views and their insight will be vital if we want to get this right.

Making It Real (October 2011); with the wider **Think Local Act Personal agenda** 2011. Making it real is a framework which sets out what people who use services and carers expect to see and experience if support services were truly personalised.

Making it Real is built around six principles that can help an organisation to check how they are going towards transforming adult social care. [Six themes of Making it Real - About - Making it Real - Think Local Act Personal](#). The aim of Making It Real is for people to have more choice and control so they can live full and independent lives. Co- production is at the heart of the transformation in social care.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) The council as a whole has a duty to involve local people in its decision making and putting people’s decisions into practice. Local authorities will also have a more significant leadership role to play, shaping the local market and working with the NHS and others to integrate local services. This plan sets out Solihull’s intentions and support to such significant change in practice throughout its business.

The white paper '**Our health, our care, our say**' (2006) promised a 'strong voice for people using services and for local communities in the way in which the whole health and care system is designed and works'.



The Benefits and Challenges of Involving and Engaging with Adults and Carers for Individuals and for the Work of the Safeguarding Adults Board

There are many potential benefits for all concerned when there is active involvement and engagement with adults and carers. However, there are also challenges to being able to involve and engage which are noted further below.

The Benefits:

- Equality: treating people with lived experience as equal partners and with respect for their strengths, knowledge, and experience.
- People feel valued and empowered and more likely to have a positive experience which can improve their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- People feel in control and the safeguarding process is conducted at a pace they are comfortable with.
- Diversity: making sure the voice of all the different groups that make up a wide cross section of the community, can be heard.
- There is a positive recognition of carers roles.
- Active involvement reduces a person's feeling of shame, embarrassment and isolation as well as reducing a fear of danger.
- There is as much or as little involvement and engagement as the person would like.
- Accessibility:
 - Making the involvement process as simple and accessible as possible, with easy-to-understand information about what involvement entails and a clear understanding of the role.
 - De-mystifying safeguarding enables people to understand what is happening and the reason why. This may support people to identify what they want to happen (their outcomes).
 - Using either face-to-face contact or virtual contact through technology, ensures we put the person at the heart of the safeguarding process.
 - avoiding jargon where possible, being mindful of the language used, providing paper information where technology may not be easily accessible, using pictures which may support people who are visual learners, or information in an audio format.

- what time commitment might be required, practical arrangements required to gain access to the venue, travel considerations, consideration of a carer or support worker to be present to support the user to enable involvement without difficulties.
- Reciprocity: making sure that people's experience and knowledge is recognised and rewarded.
- Many people of all age groups want to engage and have a say in things that affect them to be part of their community.
- The Safeguarding Adults Board can learn from people who have been through the safeguarding process:
 - to ensure procedures and practices are fit for purpose.
 - Improved relationships with people in the community and community leaders.
 - by demonstrating its closeness to the people we support, the reputation and influence of a Safeguarding Adult Board can be enhanced.
 - Awareness of the purpose of the work of a Safeguarding Adults Board and how this can positively impact on individuals and the community

The Challenges:

- There may be concerns about risk to the people we support or others. People may fear causing harm, increasing harm, or have a fear of coercion.
- People may feel embarrassed and ashamed to discuss such a sensitive subject.
- Achieving fair representation of user groups as safeguarding adults has a wide remit.
- A need for more diverse approaches to support active engagement
- Managing people's expectations of what can be achieved.
- Communication difficulties:
 - in relation to disclosure or being believed when there may be capacity issues
 - Consideration of information that is accessible; Easy Read formats, Braille, sign language videos, translated information.
- People don't want to identify as a "victim" or do not realise they are a victim even though the signs may be there.
- People don't always want to revisit a stressful or crisis experience.
- People don't always know they have been through a safeguarding process.



Solihull's Approach for the Next 3 Years

1. Involving People in Their Own Safeguarding

The Multi-agency policy and procedures for the protection of adults with care and support needs in the West Midlands are followed by all partner agencies, and it is really important to ensure person centred and outcome focused practice. The key points for practitioners to enable this include:

- Individuals must be informed a safeguarding concern is being raised or has been made and what will happen. If for reasons of mental capacity, the individual is unable to understand then their next of kin or representative must be informed. Where an individual does not have a next of kin or representative then an Advocate or Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) must be instructed.
- Individuals or those representing them must be asked what outcomes they want as soon as it is practical to do so, in the safeguarding adults process.
- Individuals or those representing them must have access to information throughout the process so they can make informed choices.
- Individuals or those representing them must be enabled and empowered to participate in all aspects of the safeguarding adults processes, for example in meetings, case conferences, protection plans etc. These processes may need to be adapted to enable involvement.
- The outcomes identified by the individuals or those representing them must be reviewed at the end of the process to identify if they have been met, partially met or not met.

2. Understanding People's Experiences

In 2013 The Association of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association said *"Unless people's lives are improved, then all the safeguarding work, systems, procedures and partnerships are purposeless"*.

We can improve procedures and services by understanding the person's view and perceptions of the process and how involved they were or wanted to be if we ask them. In practice this means:

- Individuals who have been through the safeguarding adults procedures should be asked for qualitative feedback for example – do they feel safer, did they feel in control etc. Safeguarding Adults Board Performance Dashboard will demonstrate this feedback.
- Individual's feedback will inform policies, procedures, practice, training and the work of the Board.
- The Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report will report on what adults who have experienced the process say and the extent to which the outcomes they wanted have been realised.
- The SAB's Strategic Plan will be informed by consultation with Healthwatch and will involve the local community.

- The experience of carers who are supporting people through the safeguarding adults process, will inform policies, procedures, practice, training and the work of the Board.

3. Information, Advice, and Advocacy

The Local Government Association states:

Adult safeguarding needs to be as empowering as possible. It is vital that people have as much control and choice as possible, that their preferred outcomes are addressed and that the pace, meetings and protection plans are guided by their needs and circumstances. Accessible information, advice, support and good advocacy are essential components to this.

In practice this means:

- Good quality information will be available to adults, their family and friends so they are clear about safeguarding.
- Information will be available in an Easy-to-Read Format and other formats on request.
- An advocate will be appointed for adults who have substantial difficulty in being involved in their safeguarding process or in expressing their views.
- An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) will be appointed for all adults who lack mental capacity where safeguarding measures are being put in place to protect them from abuse. People who lack capacity and who have family and friends can still have an IMCA to support them through the safeguarding process.
- Information will be available on the Safeguarding Adults Board's website and accessible formats can be made available upon request.
- Joint working with partners will be able to demonstrate community awareness of safeguarding adults.
- Where safeguarding activity is not the most appropriate action to be taken, people will benefit from relevant and appropriate signposting and support.

4. Involving People/Communities in the Work of the Safeguarding Adults Board

Safeguarding Adult Boards have a duty to consult and involve people when developing their strategic plan. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care act 2014 states Safeguarding Adults Board should “*establish mechanisms for developing policies and strategies for protecting adults which should be formulated, not only in collaboration and consultation with all relevant agencies but also take account of the views of adults who have needs for care and support, their families, advocates and carer representatives*” (14.139).

An important element in Solihull Safeguarding Adults Boards work is to enable people who have experienced the safeguarding adult's process to be involved in the work of the Board. Involvement can be achieved in a number of ways and in practice this means:

- The sub committees will receive feedback from the community via representatives from organisations who regularly engage with communities in Solihull.
- The Safeguarding Performance and Development Lead will make visits to local community groups to seek feedback.
- The work of the Board will be informed by service users' experiences.
- Each year the Strategic Plan will be reviewed and refreshed to share our priorities for the coming year and the actions we are taking to support this, in consultation with Healthwatch and the local community.
- SAB Development days includes consideration of the experiences of people who use services and their families, to ensure this remains a priority.
- The SABs Annual Report shares feedback on our progress with adults who have experienced the safeguarding process and the extent to which their outcomes have been met.

5. Training, Learning and Development

Taking part in learning and development is crucial to enabling practitioners to undertake their role effectively. Training supports practitioners to keep up to date with legislation, policy, procedures, and guidance to protect adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect. Training supports practitioners to be professionally curious when working with vulnerable people, to ensure we work with dignity and in a respectful manner which in turn has a positive impact on people's lives, families, and communities.

In practice this means:

- There will be a comprehensive training offer from Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board to support partner agencies training programmes.
- Trainers will include the experiences, views and wishes of people experiencing or at risk of abuse and neglect in the sessions they deliver.
- An effective evaluation process will inform training programmes.
- Safeguarding Adults Board training will be informed by people with direct experiences and MSP feedback.
- Partners will be able to evidence safeguarding adult's training attendance and competency of their staff, through SSAB Performance Dashboard.

6. Policies, Procedures, Guidance, and Protocols

Strategies, policies and procedures provide the direction and scope of our work and the ways and means to do it, therefore peoples involvement and engagement is essential.

In practice this means:

- What people want to see and experience will be an integral part of all local policies, procedures and guidance.

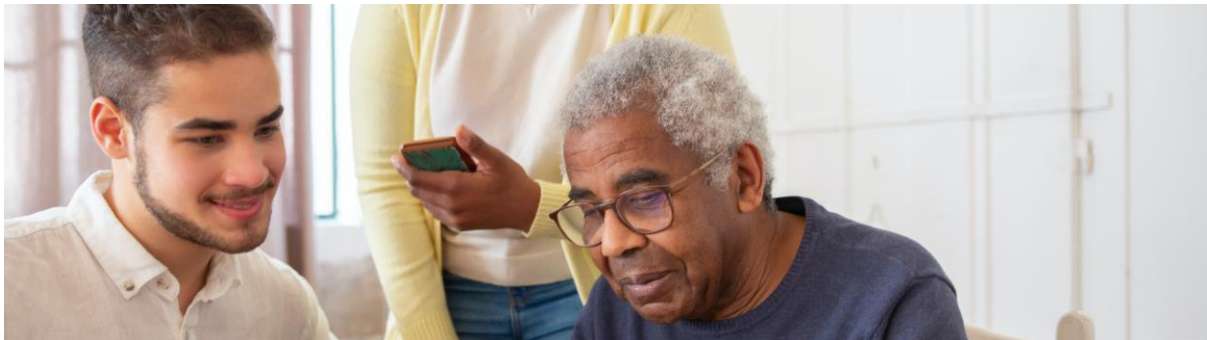
- Strategies, policies, and procedures will involve adults and will be informed by wider engagement
- Strategies, policies, and procedures will have an effective review timetable to ensure they are up to date.
- Wherever possible West Midlands Regional policies, procedures and guidance will be adopted to support a consistent approach across the region.
- Strategies, policies, and procedures will be available to the public on the SSAB website.

7. Strategic Plan and Annual Report

The Care Act 2014 s43 (5) Schedule 2-s3 & s4 requires Safeguarding Adults Board to publish each year an Annual Report and Strategic Plan. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 by the Department of Health sets out how these documents should be developed and what they should include.

In practice this means:

- The SABs Annual Report will report on what adults who have experienced the process say and the extent to which the outcomes they wanted have been realised.
- An accessible Executive Summary of the Annual Report will be published.
- The Safeguarding Adults Board's Strategic Plan will be informed by consultation with Healthwatch and will involve the local community.



Glossary

Adults with care and support needs are people who receive or are eligible to receive social care services and includes older people, adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or mental health needs.

Carers are people who provide unpaid care to a family member or friend.

Advocates can help the person to understand the process, their rights and what is happening, think about the choices they might have and what decisions they would like to make, help them to communicate their views and feelings to others and challenge decisions if the person wants them to.

Adult Safeguarding is the term used to cover all work undertaken to support adults with care and support needs to maintain their own safety and wellbeing. It describes the preventative and responsive actions undertaken to support adults who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted.

Empowerment - give (someone) the authority or power to do something, presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.

Involvement is a broad term that has been used to cover the whole spectrum ranging from giving information to service users; requesting specific contributions through surveys, panels etc.; two-way sharing of opinions to jointly develop options; responding to views from service users; shared planning and decision making with service users; to devolved decision-making to local groups and networks. Organisations and local authorities define the term according to the level of power sharing they decide to aim for.

Engagement refers to the many different ways in which a community is involved in, or participated in, aspects of an organisation's activities. This can be at various levels, ranging from being consulted about a plan or community needs to very high levels of involvement, such as decision making and agenda-setting.





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