

Safeguarding

Indicative score:

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

What people expect:

"I feel safe and am supported to understand and manage any risks."

The local authority commitment:

We work with people to understand what being safe means to them and work with our partners to develop the best way to achieve this. We concentrate on improving people's lives while protecting their right to live in safety, free from bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, avoidable harm and neglect. We make sure we share concerns quickly and appropriately.

Key findings for this quality statement

Hoarding was a key emerging issue that had been identified by senior staff, and a decision had been taken to refer for a Safeguarding Adults Review so a co-ordinated approach could be taken. Staff talked positively about the hoarding panel that had been set up, which meant the development of a multi-agency approach to this alongside housing, police, fire, health, and mental health. The purpose of the panel was to share information about vulnerable adults and present solutions with a focus on prevention and using a strengths-based approach. Since July 2021, 25 cases had been discussed, with hoarding reduced in 40% of cases and risk reduced in 44%.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) assessment waiting lists were triaged and managed by teams, with higher risk cases being seen straight away. Oversight of the people waiting was reviewed and prioritised by senior staff along with any impact on the person from any delays. Staff vacancies in this team affected this work further.

Staff had been surveyed to assess their confidence with 'Making Safeguarding Personal', which is an approach to safeguarding that aims to ensure the person and/or their advocate are fully engaged and consulted with throughout with their views and wishes remaining central. Responses were positive overall with staff being aware of training available and the majority being confident in identifying indicators of abuse and asking people about their preferred outcomes. Staff mostly felt the training met their learning needs and this covered case examples, case law, risk management and positive risk taking. However, it was identified that a high percentage of staff had not had any safeguarding training within the last 3 years so an action from this was a safeguarding training plan was implemented.

Staff who told us about safeguarding were very passionate about the work despite having some higher caseloads, which could mean at times prioritising the more serious safeguarding cases over others. Positive risk taking was felt to be a strength of the team. They told us team management was fantastic with good opportunities to reflect and learn, and the skills of their colleagues helped them develop. Feedback was that training and supervision was very good and a debrief was offered when they had worked on difficult cases. However, issues with accommodation could affect the ability to move people's cases on, for example people fleeing domestic abuse when they could not always find a place of safety for them.

Preventative work in relation to transitional safeguarding was being developed and this was described as the need for "an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across development stages." This was in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

The Safeguarding Adult's Board annual action plan 2022 to 2023 focused on 3 main areas: prevention, assurance, and engagement. Prevention was to increase public and professional awareness of safeguarding, reducing abuse in specific risk areas and sharing and embedding learning from case reviews. Assurance was to receive assurances from partner agencies on the effectiveness of their safeguarding adult arrangements, and a plan to develop additional assurance by improving the range and quality of data available to the board by developing a data dashboard. The chair of the board told us they would like to see an improvement of qualitative data to better incorporate people's views. Engagement was to ensure there remained a strong commitment to 'Making Safeguarding Personal' across the partnership and in local safeguarding practice. Also, that referrals to local advocacy services continued to be promoted.

The Safeguarding Adults Board provided oversight of care providers and health partners investigations, when they were asked to carry out delegated section 42 safeguarding investigations. Local authority policies and procedures had been reviewed to include senior responsibilities and better oversight including audits of cases and supervision of staff. The aim was to get more consistency across other teams that carried out safeguarding work, using the safeguarding team to support with this.

Partners told us about good preventative work happening, that they had good links with safeguarding teams and an open relationship with the local authority leadership team, who they described as being open, transparent, and willing to discuss issues. They described good learning from regional and national Safeguarding Adults Reviews. Where there were delays in publishing these, actions were checked to ensure staff had implemented them, and families were kept up-to-date with progress. Care providers told us they felt safeguarding investigations were thorough, but sometimes there could be delays in referrals or triage of these.

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