

**Report to:** East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**By:** Independent Chair, East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board

**Title of report:** East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report 2020 - 2021

**Purpose of report:** To present the SAB Annual Report as required in the Care Act

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note the report.**

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### **1. Background**

1.1 East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report 2020 - 2021 (**Appendix 1**) outlines safeguarding activity and performance in East Sussex between April 2020 and March 2021.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 The format of the report is structured against the SAB priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2018 – 21, and also links with the new Strategic Plan 2021 – 24. As in last year's report the data section has been enhanced to include contributions from a number of partner agencies in addition to the core data from the local authority.

2.2 Inevitably this year a key focus of the report is on the impact of Coronavirus on adult safeguarding, in outlining the unprecedented challenges and areas of concern in relation to abuse and neglect, the impact on SAB activity and how work continued to meet our statutory requirements, and the opportunities and innovations that have arisen.

2.3 Highlights in the report are as follows:

#### **Strategic Theme 1: Accountability and Leadership**

- Work has begun across the Sussex SABs to plan for this year's self-assessment process and peer challenge event which will take place in October 2021.
- Links with the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) have been strengthened and oversight maintained of the work of the Sussex Strategic Homelessness Group.

#### **Strategic Theme 2: Policies and Procedures**

- The Sussex SABs have worked together to develop a number of protocols, including the information Sharing Guide and Protocol and the Sussex Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Protocol.
- The Sussex Adult Death Protocol, a recommendation from the Adult B SAR was launched in November 2020. This pan-Sussex protocol provides a mechanism to ensure a rapid coordinated multi-agency response to unexpected adult deaths. The protocol has received national attention and will be adopted in a number of other police forces across the country

and will also be considered by the National Police Chiefs Council later in 2021 for national implementation.

- Eight SAR referrals were made in 2020 – 21, a notable rise in comparison to the previous year when four referrals were received. The referrals involved a range of issues, including mental ill health, domestic abuse, self-neglect, substance misuse, homelessness, and working with multiple complex needs and trauma. In addition, the impact of Covid-19 in these cases was evident in relation to risks of self-harm and suicide as well as challenges in service provision. From these referrals, four cases will be examined in a thematic review and two other cases will progress to SARs. Work to progress these reviews will be taken forward over 2021.

### **Strategic Theme 3: Performance, Quality and Audit and Organisational Learning**

- The SAB published the Adult C SAR in December 2020, a review which covers a number of safeguarding themes including domestic abuse, homelessness and housing, substance misuse, mental ill health and criminality. Work to embed the learning commenced with the development of an action plan, which was agreed by the SAB in April 2021.
- A multi-agency audit was undertaken in November 2020 also in relation to the topic of self-neglect, focusing on the effectiveness of the procedures and the extent to which these are embedded in practice. The audit reflected strengths in initial responses to identifying risk, the use of multi-agency meetings to support effective communication and information sharing, and overall a good knowledge and application of the self-neglect procedures.
- Audit activity has also focused on evaluating the impact of the pandemic to date and assurance has been sought from partner agencies regarding their responses to Covid-19 and work undertaken to ensure services continue to be responsive to safeguarding concerns.

### **Strategic Theme 4: Prevention, Engagement and Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)**

- MSP Guidance and a new MSP leaflet was published to assist practitioners and providers to understand how to apply MSP effectively in safeguarding situations, including when someone cannot be seen alone and there is a concern, they may be experiencing undue influence or coercion.
- The SAB has made a number of gains in terms of our communications strategy in launching a new website in August 2020, significantly increasing our Twitter followers over the past year, and producing quarterly newsletters to share news about the work of the Board and safeguarding adults issues.

### **Strategic Aim 5: Integration, and Training and Workforce Development**

- The Training and Workforce Development Subgroup updated the SAB's multi-agency training programme for virtual delivery remotely via MS Teams.
- Work commenced in 2020 – 21 to plan to host a safeguarding conference jointly with Brighton and Hove SAB. The event was cancelled on two occasions due to surges in coronavirus but took place in May 2021. The event was a huge success and attended by over 200 staff across both SABs. The conference covered a range of themes from multi-agency reviews including trauma-informed practice, professional curiosity, mental capacity and inherent jurisdiction.

## **3. Conclusion and recommendations**

3.1 The annual report shows despite the challenges created by the pandemic that the Board has continued to make significant progress in adult safeguarding activity and in delivering the aims set out in both the SAB Strategic Plans 2018 – 21 and 2021 – 24, reflecting the hard work and commitment shown by partner agencies. The SAB will progress work in relation to the newly commissioned SARs in 2021 and seek assurance to ensure that the learning and recommendations from previous SARs continue to be embedded in practice. We will also continue to monitor and evaluate the ongoing impact of, and response to, COVID-19.

**GRAHAM BARTLETT**  
**Independent Chair, East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board**

Background documents:

None