

# Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board

## Strategic Plan 2024-2025



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## Purpose of this Report

The Care Act (2014) says that we must develop and publish a strategic plan to say how we plan to prevent abuse and neglect and help protect people with care and support needs at risk of abuse and neglect. This report sets out who we are, what we plan to do between April 2024 and March 2025, and how we will know we are making a difference.

## About the Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board

The Care Act 2014 makes a Safeguarding Adults Board a legal requirement. The job of Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) is to make sure that there are arrangements in Solihull that work well to help protect adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect. Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board needs to ensure that safeguarding practice continues to improve the quality of life of adults in Solihull.

The Board is led by an Independent Chair. By law, the Board must have three members which are: Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, West Midlands Police and Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board.

Solihull SAB also has the following partners represented on its board representing our inclusive approach and long history of partners wanting to work together:

Age UK Solihull  
Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust  
Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust  
Care Quality Commission  
Healthwatch Solihull  
Private Care Sector  
Probation Service  
Solihull Action through Advocacy  
Solihull Carers Trust  
Solihull Community Housing  
University Hospitals Birmingham  
West Midlands Fire Service



# Governance Structure

The diagram below sets out the agreed way of working and outlines the joint responsibility across the lead statutory safeguarding partners, including the governance and accountability lines. The lead agency with responsibility for coordinating adult safeguarding arrangements is the local authority, but all the members of the SAB should designate a lead officer. The lead statutory partners for safeguarding adults' oversight are the Chief Executive for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, the Chief Constable for West Midlands Police, and the Accountable Officer for Integrated Care Board. These functions can be delegated to Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board Members but lead statutory safeguarding partners remain ultimately accountable.

**Safeguarding Adults in Solihull – Multiagency Governance Map**



\*The statutory DASS also has defined safeguarding responsibilities as part of the statutory DASS guidance.

The Safeguarding Adults Board meets quarterly to consider key areas of safeguarding practice and performance, oversight of risk and to horizon scan for matters of regional and national importance which will require a local response.

The Board has five subcommittees each leading on an area of safeguarding practice:

- Performance, Quality and Audit
- Learning and Development
- Policies and Procedures
- Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- Engagement and Prevention

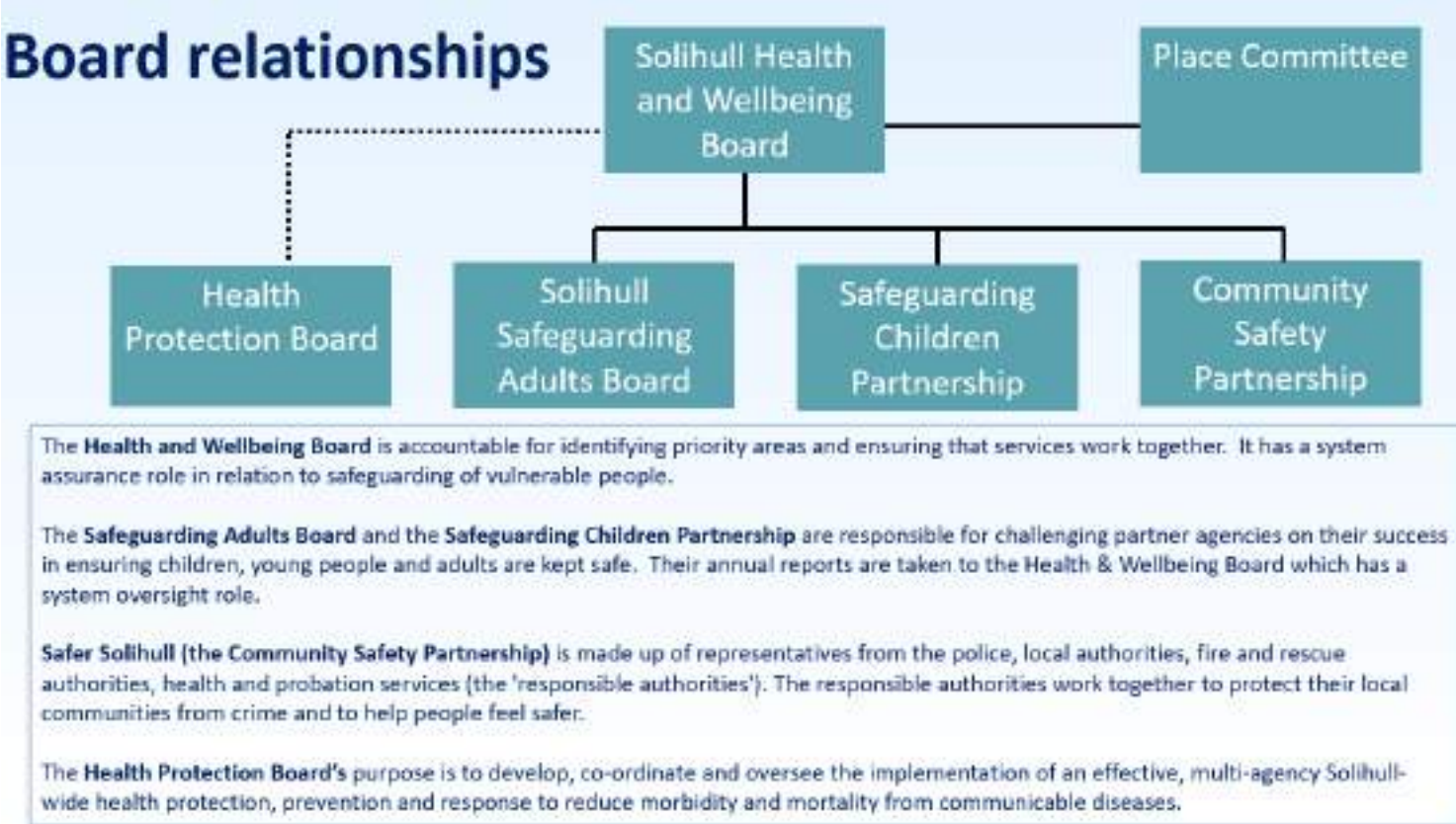
They talk with each other and the public and provide the Board with information to help us to decide what we should focus on each year to improve safeguarding practice.



The Independent Chair provides a report to Health and Wellbeing Board each January, setting out the Board’s progress in achieving its priorities, which are set annually. In June of each year, the Independent Chair presents to Health and Wellbeing Board, the Board’s Annual Report looking back at the achievements of the previous year, and the Strategic Plan setting out the Board’s intentions for the current year. A further meeting is then held with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive of the Council to present the Annual Report and Strategic Plan.

It’s important that we understand what the other Boards and Partnerships in Solihull are doing to keep people safe, to make sure there is no duplication, but also that there are no gaps in our work to safeguard the community. Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board works with the Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership and Community Safety Partnership, as well as Health and Wellbeing Board, via quarterly meetings between the four support officers. There are also twice-yearly meetings of the six support officers and Chairs/Scrutineers of the four boards mentioned as well as Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and ICB Solihull Place Committee. These meetings enable oversight of progress made to improve coordination across the

boards, and to identify further opportunities to work together. Members of the boards and partnerships came together in February 24 to review progress made in improving coordination across the boards and to identify areas for focus during 2024-25 which have formed the basis of an action plan being overseen by the chairs and support officers of the boards and partnerships.



## What We Want to Achieve for People in Solihull:

**Empowerment** - "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."

**Prevention** - "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help."

**Proportionality** - "I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed."

**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."

## Developing Our Priorities for 2024-25

In developing our priorities for 2024/25 we have taken lots of things into account:

### The experiences and voices of survivors of abuse and neglect

Where the social worker who has supported a survivor of abuse has let us know that person would be comfortable to talk to us about their experience of support, we talk to them, being careful to avoid causing further anxiety or upset. Some survivors of abuse and neglect have kindly shared their experiences of safeguarding, and the feedback has been very positive. We know that people have really valued professionals who take the time to listen to them and to explain what is happening and why. We also know that where professionals have tailored their support to suit the individual circumstances this has had a very positive impact. This is exactly what we would expect professionals working in Solihull to be doing and it is reassuring to hear these examples of positive feedback. This year there has been an increase in the number of people who have shared their experiences with us, including adults who have been exploited, and we are pleased to see that adults are sharing positive experiences of being listened to and supported during a safeguarding enquiry. For 2024-25 we want to make sure we are hearing feedback from diverse voices to further improve our approach to making safeguarding personal. We also want to reach a point where engagement is part of our business-as-usual activity and feedback gives us all a greater understanding of how effective our safeguarding response is, and what needs to improve.

### The voices of Solihull's communities

As part of the board's objectives to understand from Solihull's communities and those with lived experience of safeguarding, what they need from an effective safeguarding response, the board's Performance and Development Lead has met with community groups and residents in several extra care residences. The board has also asked community group leaders to support with obtaining feedback from their members by sending a short set of questions out for members to discuss and respond to. This feedback has told us that when it comes to safeguarding, people would speak to a trusted person either in their family or in their community including their faith leader, as well as voluntary organisations if they were already involved. The board therefore needs to make sure that key safeguarding messages are being shared with Solihull's communities, so that they can make informed decisions about raising safeguarding concerns and seeking support. These messages will cover both prevention and early intervention, as well as how to seek support if abuse is suspected.

### The findings of Safeguarding Adult Reviews

Whilst we have not completed any Safeguarding Adult Reviews during 2023-24, we do know that key themes arising repeatedly in local, regional, and national safeguarding adult reviews are hearing the voice of the person and understanding their experiences and having a robust and effective response to self-neglect. We have made good progress in our work to engage with adults with lived experience of abuse and neglect and with the wider community over the last 12 months, but we recognise that we can do more to make sure we hear from diverse communities and

that engagement is embedded in the work of the board so that it becomes our day-to-day business. Regarding self-neglect, we know that those experiencing this can find it incredibly difficult to seek help and situations may only come to the attention of professionals when they have reached a crisis point. We want to make sure communities know where to seek support if they are concerned about a neighbour who might be neglecting parts of their self-care, to create opportunities for earlier intervention and the avoidance of crises.

We have also agreed to a joint initiative with colleagues in the Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) exploring the use of a trauma informed approach to safeguarding. Reviews undertaken in the SSCP locally, as well as by several Safeguarding Adult Boards across the country, have identified that this approach would be beneficial in helping professionals understand the history of the people they are supporting, and how it has contributed to the presenting situation, particularly where exploitation, poor mental health or self-neglect are evident.

### Data and audit work

We review our safeguarding adults' performance dashboard each quarter and can see that the neglect was the highest reported type of abuse during 2023, making up 38% of all concerns received. Most neglect concerns related to adults aged 65yrs and over. We have agreed to focus on reducing the impact of neglect on adults in Solihull during 2024/25, examining the extent and range of neglect in Solihull through information gathering, and using this to inform improvements in practice and messages to the public that they have a right to live free from neglect.

We also examined the local data in relation to self-neglect, as we know from listening to regional and national learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews, that this type of abuse is the most often reported in SARs and is a very challenging area of adult safeguarding practice. In Solihull self-neglect concerns made up 6.8% of all concerns reported in 2023-24, and we want to make sure that all those who could be receiving support around self-neglect are being linked into support services.

A deep dive audit of a self-neglect case during 2023-24 identified largely good practice in terms of understanding the voice of person, partnership working across organisations, and the use of advocacy to support the person. We have also discussed areas where we can improve in our response to self-neglect, to support communities in understanding it, and supporting practitioners in their response to it. We have agreed some key actions to ensure we meet our objective, ensuring there is a clear local offer in terms of support for individuals who are neglecting themselves, and our work with people demonstrates best practice.

### Solihull's strategic approach to prevention and reducing health inequalities

Solihull's All-Age Prevention Strategy is a five-year strategy built on the principle that prevention and acting early is better than waiting for problems to develop. The strategy challenges all partnerships in Solihull to think 'think prevention' and make sure we work effectively together. Prevention is embedded in safeguarding practice as it is one of the six principles of safeguarding set out in the Care Act (2014). Individuals must receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, to support them in knowing how to recognise the signs, and what to do to seek help.



That is why engagement and the provision of information for the public feature heavily in our priorities for 2024-25. Solihull’s priorities in tackling health inequalities also complements the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board; groups at higher risk of health inequalities such as adults with disabilities and mental ill-health and their carers, are also at higher risk of abuse and neglect mental. Hearing from these groups as well as providing them with information and advice, and, where needed, support to be safe, will help them to maintain their own wellbeing and those they care for.



## **Board Priorities for 2024-25:**

**Priority 1: To understand from Solihull’s communities and those with lived experience of safeguarding, what they need from an effective safeguarding response and act on this.**

### **What we aim to achieve:**

- Increased reporting from diverse communities which is reflective of Solihull’s communities, meaning communities are seeking support when they need it.
- The board is hearing the voices of seldom heard communities, meaning the board’s work is informed by the communities it supports.
- Engagement is part of the board’s business as usual activity meaning it is happening routinely.
- Feedback from engagement activity is used to help set the board’s priorities for 2025-26.

### **How we will achieve this:**

- Feedback from services/organisations/forums who have built trusting relationships with those they support and can therefore engage sensitively and have open and honest conversations.
- Ensure that communications from the board use clear and simple language as standard and are accessible for Solihull’s communities.
- Ensure partner agencies have access to holistic and up-to-date safeguarding information for signposting and seeking support including for prevention/early intervention.

- Gain assurance through audit and feedback from individuals who have been safeguarded, that adults are supported with timely, proportionate, and effective responses to concerns of neglect or abuse.

#### **Risks to achieving this priority:**

- The board's engagement plans operate in a silo, whilst other engagement work is also taking place elsewhere across the multi-agency partnerships.
- People feeling uncomfortable discussing safeguarding which can be a difficult and triggering topic.

#### **Mitigations:**

- The board's business team will work collaboratively with other boards and partnerships, as well as colleagues in partner organisations to coordinate engagement activity.
- The board will seek support from services/organisations/forums who have built trusting relationships with those they support and can therefore engage sensitively and have open and honest conversations.
- The board will recognise and accept the limitations of engagement on sensitive and difficult topics.
- The board will learn from engagement during 2023-24 and use this to improve the approach.

### **Priority 2: Improve effectiveness of interventions and reduce the impact of neglect on adults in Solihull.**

#### **What we aim to achieve:**

- Adults, carers, and advocates are informed of their right to live free from neglect.
- Ultimately the goal is to reduce the number of neglect concerns received. However, in the short to medium term, through improved recognition of neglect etc. there may be an increase in safeguarding referrals and enquiries where a reduction would normally demonstrate effectiveness.
- The board can identify the extent and range of neglect in Solihull through information gathering, and this informs improvements in practice.

#### **How we will achieve this:**

- Working with SSCP to ensure an all-age, think family approach to tackling neglect.
- Raising awareness of support available for carers to reduce likelihood of caring situations becoming unmanageable.
- Using intelligence from safeguarding concerns and enquiries received to target preventative work.

- Multi-agency neglect themed audits to identify themes and trends, establish how safeguarding is working for adults with care and support needs and support improvements in practice.

#### **Risks to achieving this priority:**

- Through improved recognition of neglect etc. there may be an increase in safeguarding referrals and enquiries.

#### **Mitigations:**

- Safeguarding data will be monitored via the quarterly Performance, Quality and Adult meetings with commentary added to the dashboard to identify reasons for an increase, where a reduction would normally demonstrate effectiveness.

### **Priority 3: A constructive and compassionate response to self-neglect**

#### **What we aim to achieve:**

- An increase in self-neglect referrals due to raised awareness in communities and with professionals, meaning people are being referred for the support they need.
- Audits of self-neglect cases evidence best practice and use of guidance/policy/procedure, meaning people are receiving person centred support.
- There is a clear local offer in terms of support for individuals who are neglecting themselves, meaning people know what they can expect from support and professionals know where they can signpost/refer to.

#### **How we will achieve this:**

- Raising awareness of self-neglect across the multi-agency partnership as well as in communities and encouraging referrals for support to be made.
- Raising professionals' understanding and confidence in using a trauma informed approach with people who are neglecting themselves, to support an understanding of the causes of the presenting situation.
- Using learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews to ensure local policy and procedure reflects best practice.
- Use findings from the West Midlands region self-neglect workshop 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 24 to inform local improvement actions.
- Carry out an assurance activity to establish how safeguarding is working for adults with care and support needs.

#### **Risks to achieving this priority:**

- Limitations on organisational capacity to support individuals in a timely manner.

## Mitigations:

- Any gaps in service provision or challenges in meeting need will be identified by partner agencies and addressed at the most appropriate forum, being escalated to board where necessary.



## Multi-Agency Boards Coordination

During 2023-24 the Safeguarding Adults Board, Safeguarding Children Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board and Domestic Abuse Partnership Board have been working to improve cross-board arrangements and coordination. The intended outcome from this work is that each board's work is effective and has impact and that capacity is organised to deliver our priorities.

Focus has been on:

- Maintaining our 'plan on a page' which sets out the key multi-agency boards in Solihull, the purpose for each one, and the priorities for each one. This gives an 'at a glance' view of how it all fits together and we have initiated plans to refresh this for 24-25.
- Consolidating our risk management approach, so that we have consistency of understanding and application of how we consider risks within and across our boards.
- Having a strong focus on impact by ensuring all our strategic plans can be directly connected to the impact and difference they will make for Solihull children, young people and adults.
- Strengthening the focus each board must have on delivering against our [Living Well in Solihull Prevention Strategy](#) and [Tackling health inequalities](#) ambitions, to facilitate further improvements to wellbeing and outcomes, and to reduce inequalities.
- Making sure everyone has the key information needed to be a productive member of the board(s) they are involved in. We will maintain our Multi-Board Induction and Information Pack to achieve this.

This work is overseen by 6 monthly meetings of the board chairs and support officers. A multi board event held in April 2024 with representatives from the boards and partnerships previously referenced, provided an opportunity to share progress with wider board membership, seek their feedback and identify additional areas for improvement which will be the focus for 2024-25.

## **Reviewing Progress in Achieving the Priorities**

The Board meets quarterly and receive updates from the subcommittees on their progress which supports Board oversight of progress. The Board holds a development session each October to review progress made to date, and to agree actions to ensure progress stays on track or is improved where necessary. This supports the Independent Chair in providing an update to Health and Wellbeing Board each January on progress made and areas for focus for the remainder of the financial year.

### **Expectations of our Subcommittees**

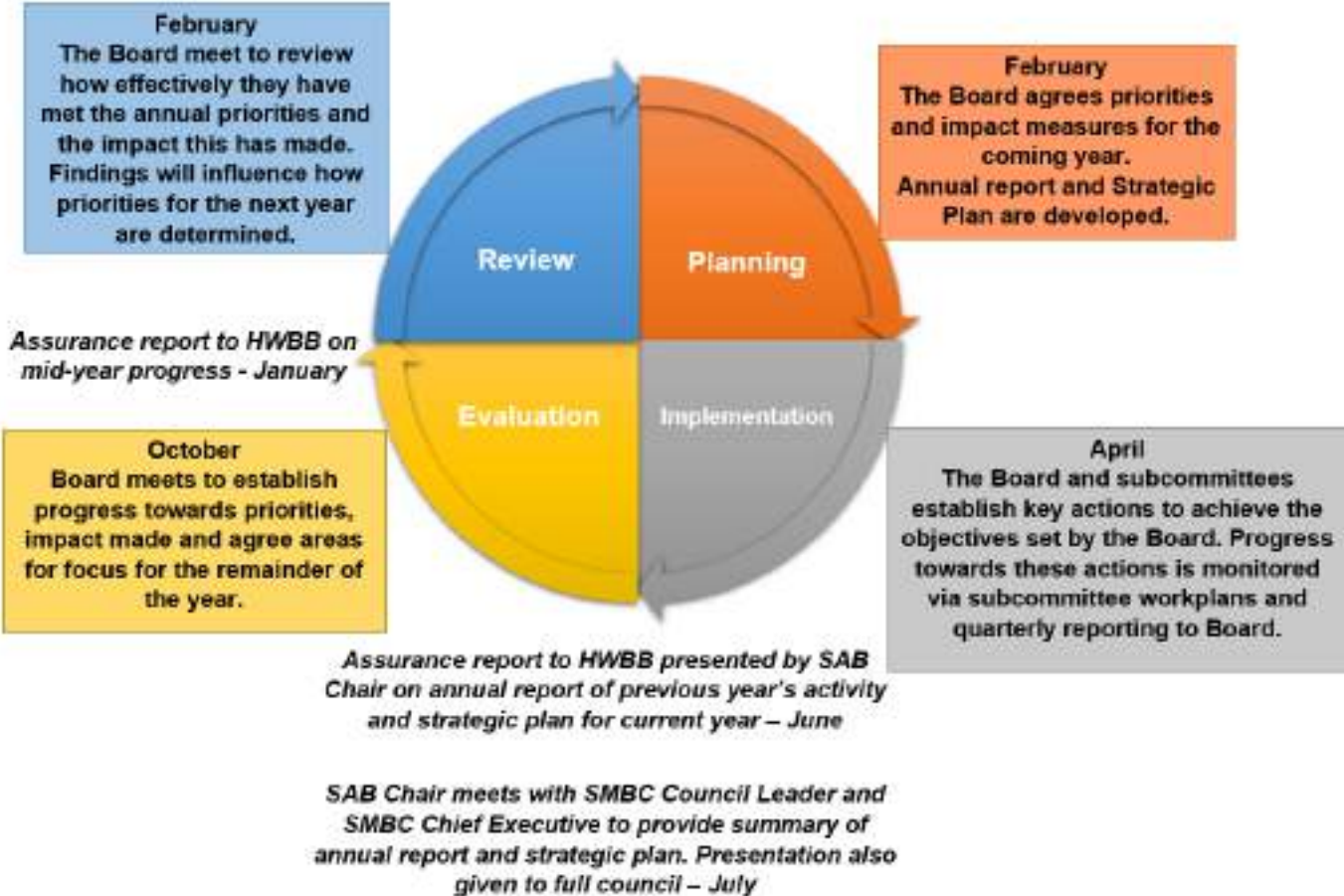
Each subcommittee will have its own workplan that will contribute to the Board's priorities. As the year progresses and we receive evidence of the successes and areas for improvement, the work of the subcommittees may change and develop.

The subcommittees will identify risks for their area of scope, which could prevent the Board from achieving its priorities and objectives. This will be a standing item on each subcommittee agenda and each quarter a collated report with risks, mitigations, and any recommendations from the five subcommittees will be brought to the Board meeting for assurance and oversight.

# Board Annual Report and Strategic Plan Cycle

The diagram below sets out the annual cycle of how the Safeguarding Adults Board develops its priorities for the year, reviews progress in achieving the priorities, shares updates with Health and Wellbeing Board, and uses learning identified through the year to set its intentions for the following year.

Annual cycle – SSAB annual report & Strategic plan





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