



Kent and Medway Annual Report 2023/4 Appendix 2.

How our strategic partners delivered the KMSAB Safeguarding Priorities in 2023/2024

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Kent County Council

Priority 1. Promoting person centred safeguarding - this means putting adults at the centre of our work.

The **KCC Adult Social Care Strategy Making a Difference Every Day** has continued to develop over the last year (2023/24) with the implementation of the new Locality Operating Model on 3 April 2023. The Locality Operating Model means that specialist staff (who worked separately in areas such as learning disability, physical disability, older people and mental health) will retain their expert focus but work much more closely together around a person's needs in 24 geographical teams called Community Teams. This way of working will ensure that people remain at the centre, receiving the support that is right for them, and are less likely to be passed between separate teams. Working in this multi-disciplinary way will also mean that our new teams will be more empowered to work much more collaboratively with their local communities.

The importance of **hearing the persons voice throughout any support provided** remains paramount within Adult Social Care. To further strengthen awareness of [Making safeguarding personal \(MSP\)](#) the KCC Adult Strategic Safeguarding Unit and Digital Services produced a new dedicated page on Kent.gov.uk which went live in September 2023. The information page explains what happens when safeguarding concerns are shared with Adult Social Care, with our promise to keep the person at the heart of the enquiry. This builds on the previous Making Safeguarding Personal project work in Ashford Canterbury and Coastal in Spring 2023; focussing on engaging with adults and practitioners, re-evaluating how we can best enable others to provide meaningful MSP feedback, to help improve how safeguarding works for those people experiencing or at risk of abuse and/or neglect.

The Making Safeguarding Personal page also has a [Feedback form](#) to enable people to share their safeguarding experiences. Practitioners can also use this form to share with the adults they have supported (or their suitable person/advocate). Feedback provides us with valuable insights and contributes towards our ongoing aim to continually improve service delivery, shaped by the people we support.

Data gathered by our Digital Services team shows that the **KCC Safeguarding "Report abuse"** page was viewed 29,407 over the last year, with people accessing it fairly consistent throughout the year. The link for the online Report Abuse form was used a total of 5,766 times in the last year. As part of our ongoing improvements, the KCC Adult Safeguarding page is due for a review in June 2024 to enhance the information available for anyone accessing the page.

KCC remains a committed partner organisation for the **Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Programme**, working with many agencies who provided support to people in need of services during 2023/24. These agencies include, [Release the pressure](#) who offer free support for anyone, 24hrs a day, 7 days a week. In 2023/24 they provided over 54,000 text conversations, over 3,000 call per month and 23,235 visits to the Release the Pressure website.



Amparo offer free suicide bereavement support and worked with 87 bereaved families and

individuals in 2023/24; 74% of the beneficiaries indicated a positive change to their wellbeing, and feedback received such as “ *She made me feel at ease and able to talk openly about my son’s suicide. I am so grateful to her for helping me through the worst time in my life*”, shows how important services like this are to the people who need it during the most hardest times in their lives.

In 2023, Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week events were held week commencing 20th November, and provided KCC Adult Social Care with a further opportunity to speak to face to face with people we support or those looking for information and advice.

During the week, Strategic Adult Safeguarding held several events in venues across Kent, including meeting the public in Kent Libraries in the Deal and Dover areas, and working with partner agencies to raise awareness of Safeguarding with East Kent Carers Support and the Department of Work and Pensions.



Across the week of events, we were pleased to be joined by some of our multi-agency colleagues from KCC Sensory Services, Kent and Medway Partnership Trust (KMPT), KCC Community Wardens and Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT), which also provided a great opportunity to network with our partner agencies.

Colleagues were fortunate to meet over 40 members of the public within the library events and the feedback from the event was very positive. As well as the libraries, we handed out safeguarding leaflets to the surrounding shops on the high street and we responded to questions from people who had an array of concerns, ranging from, the quality in care of a service, to people who had recently been scammed. This was a great opportunity to sign post and share information in line with the Care Act (2014) ‘prevention’ safeguarding principle.



Strategic Adult Safeguarding Unit (SSU) also represented Adult Social Care at the **Registered Manager’s Conference** held at the Kent County Showground in Detling on 10th October 2023. This event is very popular and was attended by over 100 Registered Manager’s from across Kent.

SSU held an information session on the Main stage, with over 90 providers in the audience, to discuss Adult Safeguarding and when to raise a Safeguarding Concern. This provided the opportunity to have a really interesting discussion, with many attendees sharing their experiences around safeguarding, and to clarify the Care Act (2014) guidance for raising a Safeguarding Concern.

SSU also shared a stand at the event with colleagues from the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse service, promoting the White Ribbon Campaign to end violence against women and girls. We were able to provide information and advice relating to Safeguarding, including information provided from the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board and Domestic Abuse information produced by the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS).



Priority 2. Strengthening system assurance - How organisations are working together to support adults

In order for KCC to ensure areas of work such as services provided, policies or processes are truly person-centred, KCC have organised a number of **Co-production groups** with a variety of people who use our services including people who are more likely to receive poor care, support and treatment to remove barriers and reduce inequalities. KCC holds regular meetings such as People's Panel, Learning and Disability Partnership, Direct Payment involvement group, Older People's forum and Carers group. Their input helps form and shape the way we work. However, we know there is more to do to ensure we are truly co-producing to meet the aims of our Strategy.

KCC drafted a **2023 Co-production plan** which is a record of our intentions towards co-production in line with our commitment to the vision and strategy of Making a Difference Every Day and will support us embedding co-production across all levels of the organisation. The Co-production plan gives an overview of where we are now and outlines several actions to improve our approach to co-production. This includes reviewing representation of people with protected characteristics against population data and identifying gaps and opportunities to connect and co-produce more inclusively, and to develop a 'Valuing your voice' policy to ensure that people's time given to support co-production is recognised and rewarded where appropriate.

One of the most recent areas of work reviewed by the Safeguarding Co-production panel, Chaired by Strategic Adult Safeguarding, is the review of the **Kent [Online Safeguarding Form](#)**. The review is to ensure that the form is accessible and easier to complete without compromising on the essential information required by the Local Authority such as the views of wishes of the person at the centre of the concern. This review is currently ongoing and is due for completion in Summer 2024.

Quality assuring our work continues to be a priority. The KCC Quality Assurance Framework was launched in December 2022 and we continue to embed the framework to ensure that the standard of support provided for the people of Kent within Adult Social Care is to the expected standard, supporting the development of a culture of continuous learning. **In 2023/24, Strategic Adult Safeguarding Unit carried out audits on just over 470 Safeguarding Concern and Enquiry closures.** These audits focus on areas such as ensuring the persons voice is heard and their wishes recorded, feedback and communication with partner agencies is evident and legal literacy is demonstrated within decision making by practitioners. Audit findings are collated and provided to Senior Managers to ensure any good practice and areas for development are discussed with their respective teams. The recent audit outcomes from January - March 2024 audit, identified that approximately 80% of Safeguarding Enquiries captured the views and wishes of the person and where no information was recorded, a clear rationale as to the reasons why had been provided, noting an improvement in ensuring the persons voice is heard within the Safeguarding process.

KCC Adult Social Care continue with their role as a statutory partner agency for the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB), and regularly attend Board and working group meetings, contributing towards the review of multi-agency policies and processes, and provide confidential reports for the Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs). The learning from SARs are shared within Adult Social Care and used to ensure operational colleagues are fully informed of the themes highlighted within the Reviews, and learning is incorporated appropriately into related policies and practice improvements.

Strategic Safeguarding Unit also provide bespoke summarised briefings, tailoring the learning specifically for Adult Social Care operational colleagues to further share learning in a succinct and impactful way. Briefings produced this year include learning around strengthening communication with multi-agency colleagues, supporting carers and working in a trauma-informed way. To share the learning, the Senior Management Team agreed that the briefings should be discussed within Adult Social Care operational team meetings.

KCC Adult Social Care work very closely with the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP), particularly in relation to **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)**. The learning from these reviews are also shared with colleagues through events such as bespoke Lessons Identified Webinars. The Kent Community Safety Partnership held three Webinars over the last year, incorporating the learning from three different DHRs and their related themes. These events included domestic abuse related suicidality and trauma informed practice, a focus on the new offence of non-fatal strangulation and management of perpetrators of abuse, and the 3rd event was delivered jointly with KMSAB on “Who cares for the carers?” during Safeguarding Adults week in November 2023. Across the three events, 353 people attended and 96% of those that provided feedback rated the events as excellent, very good or good. Feedback from attendees provides assurance that the learning has been helpful for colleagues, with comments such as *“I have taken away the importance of understanding trauma and an individuals’ response to this as well as reflecting on how we best respond. Including risk of suicide alongside unrealistic expectations of abused mother”, and “The language used around non-fatal strangulation and how it can be hidden/minimise in victim accounts- really helpful for future training.”*

KCSP also provide the Kent Community Warden Service who have a proactive and visible presence in Kent communities to improve residents’ quality of life and promote stronger and safer communities. They deliver a trusted community-based service that identifies and addresses local concerns by implementing preventative and early intervention measures. This includes contributing to KCC’s duties under the Care Act 2014 including: [Section 1 Promoting individual well-being](#) and [Section 2 Preventing needs for care and support](#). The work undertaken by the Community Wardens covers a wide range of situations and circumstances including many examples of [social isolation](#), self-neglect and hoarding, substance dependency, dementia cafés, [scams](#), and anti-social behaviour. Adult Social Care colleagues work closely with the Community Warden Service, along with a number of multi-agency partners.

Community Wardens – Preparing for change and supporting the vulnerable - a [consultation](#) on proposed changes to the Community Warden service to reduce its annual budget by £1 million by 2024/25 was undertaken from 12 July to 3 October 2023. Over 1100 responses were received, with hard copy responses still being recorded. Work will continue to analyse and incorporate the feedback to the consultation into the final recommendations for the service.

Alongside supporting the promotion of the consultation, wardens have continued with their much valued work of supporting the communities they serve, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, as the following case study shows:



“One of our wardens was made aware of an elderly lady who had previously broken her hip. They lived up four flights of stairs with no lift access and no access to appropriate Occupational Therapy (OT) equipment. They had not been out of their property for two years. The warden sought support with OT equipment and a Housing Needs Assessment, and also arranged for the library to have books dropped off as the resident was an avid reader and missed going to the library. Due to the warden’s actions the resident is now living in a ground floor housing association flat in a central area and living a fuller more independent life.”

Photo from the police open day in summer 2023.

A new National Safeguarding Adults Excellence Award was launched in 2021 by Bexley’s Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB). Each year since, the Board has invited nominations for professionals and teams across England who have gone above and beyond, demonstrating an outstanding commitment to safeguarding adults and their families. The new national award called ‘We See You – We Hear You’ came into being after members of the BSAB agreed on the importance of recognising those who work to make sure adults in the community are safe.



This year’s award ceremony was held on the 23rd November 2023. Several nominations were made for individuals and teams across the Kent Community Warden Service. The **Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling Team, led by Sandra Edmonds (below), won both the Empowerment Team Award and the Protection Team Award** for their work with adults at risk within their communities and through their work identifying, supporting and empowering those vulnerable individuals. **Well done to the winners, nominees and all wardens for the positive impact they continue to make to their communities.**

Priority 3. Embedding improvement and shaping future practice – organisations keep getting better

As highlighted in Priority 1, **the Making a Difference Every Day – Locality Operating Model was introduced in April 2023**, as part of our ongoing practice improvements. The new model was developed to keep the person central to the support they receive, reducing the need to go to various other teams. This is helped by working dynamically, in multi-disciplinary teams, combining the knowledge and experience of our practitioners.

Safeguarding remains a priority, and to further strengthen the support provided to the person concerned, and to ensure that the volume of Safeguarding Concerns received are addressed in the most robust and efficient way, KCC Adult Social Care introduced Safeguarding Hubs in March 2024. The introduction of the Safeguarding Hubs is part of the continuous improvements following the introduction of the Locality Operating Model. The Hubs have been developed within the four Area Referral Services

situated in Ashford and Canterbury, Thanet South Kent Coast, West Kent and North Kent, to help people receive the right support at the right time. In addition, the Safeguarding Hubs support better and more effective communication with local partners and professionals.

The KCC Adult Social Care Principal Social Worker working collaboratively with Practice Development, Strategic Adult Safeguarding and operational colleagues developed **Safeguarding Operational Practice Guidance for Adult Social Care colleagues**, introduced in October 2023. The internal document compliments the KMSAB Safeguarding Practice, Policy, Protocols and Guidance providing and provides robust and clear guidance for ASC colleagues.



Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment - As part of the national social care reform changes, a new Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment process for Adult Social Care statutory functions started in April 2023. CQC's role is to provide an independent assessment to the public of the quality of care in their local area and how we are meeting our duties as part of the Care Act 2014. During March and April 2024, KCC gathered a number of documents for CQC as part of the required information return to inform the first stage of the assessment process. CQC will review this information and start to contact a number of voluntary and community organisations to inform the next stage of assessment.

KCC have undertaken a self-assessment to identify our areas of strengths and areas we need to improve on. This is a live document and therefore we will continue to revisit frequently to update with improvements made in the identified areas to strengthen. To support our continuous improvement, we have sought opportunities for a peer review by the Local Government Association (LGA), to assist with our goal for continuous improvement. This work will continue throughout 2024.

Ongoing staff learning is also gained from the many **themes identified within Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Safeguarding Concerns received by the Local Authority.**

Self-Neglect continues to be an area of concern. To address this, KCC Strategic Safeguarding Unit provided a number of **Self-Neglect Workshops** for over 600 operational colleagues between December 2023 to March 2024. The workshops covered available guidance including the [Kent and Medway multi-agency self-neglect and hoarding policy and procedures](#), the importance of hearing the person's voice by [Making safeguarding personal](#), highlighting the use of the **Clutter Image Rating tool** which provides clarity and consistency when assessing hoarding situations (appendix 2 of the above Self Neglect policy), and examples of learning from Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adult Reviews. The feedback at the end of the Workshops was very positive, with 96% of attendees feeling "*more confident in using the KMSAB Self Neglect policy*" and felt they had "*an overall greater understanding of the impact of Self-neglect*".

The Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) contract has entered its 8th successful year. In 2023/24 the Single Point of Access received over 18,400 referrals; 3602 individuals were then referred on to the KIDAS lead providers for support in refuge and the community. Whilst we have seen a decline in referrals coming through the single point of access we have seen a 73% increase of new entrants being supported by KIDAS when compared to 2022/23. The **Specialist Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) service** supported 186 individuals across 2023/24 with 3% of those that receiving support being male.

People who have used the service have reported that interventions delivered through the Enhance Therapeutic Support have increased self-esteem, reduced anxiety, and they feel better able to manage

aspects of their daily lives. This support included 1:1 Adult counselling, Self-esteem and confidence courses and activities to support women recovering from trauma including crafts, art therapy, yoga, gardening, theatre club.

There is a KIDAS Tenancy Support Worker in each area of the county, specifically intended to support women living in refuge with move-on especially those with more complex needs.

The Hospital IDVA (HIDVA) service provides IDVA support within the hospital setting. They are able to quickly react to any referrals from hospital staff around suspected domestic abuse. They also work to train staff in recognising and reporting domestic abuse. The HIDVA Service received 440 referrals in 2023/24 of which 425 became clients of the service. At the end of 2023 **KCC launched its first Male refuge pilot** which contains three bedspaces and offers support for male survivors and their accompanying children who are fleeing domestic abuse. This service opened on the 1st December 2023 and was full within 3 weeks.

KIDAS also led on the **'Know, See, Speak Out'** social media campaign which ran across 16 consecutive days in November / December 2023. We significantly increased our reach and engagement on last year, with a more diverse group of organisations and businesses sharing the campaign. The employer champions created 105 champions, 1433 partners and networks engaged with the campaign with 711 books for webinars and a total seen reach across all content of 5.6 million.



Information was shared via BBC South East as well as Heart FM breakfast news and KentLive news article. The SAFER Scheme went live on 1 December 2023. The SAFER Scheme comprises of a Single Point of Access, Property Security (such as security advice, door locks, window locks etc.) and the offer of a support package for occupants of the home that has been made safer (KIDAS for adults 16+ and SASS for children and young people 0-25yrs). The SAFER Scheme is designed to enable victims and survivors the choice to remain in their own home, where it is safe to do so, and where the perpetrator does not live. Alongside enabling people to remain in their own homes, the scheme aims to improve safety, health & well-being and prevent harm. The SAFER scheme supports the Council in expanding its offer of safe accommodation. Up until 31 March 2024 there have been 112 households referred to be made safer by this service, a total of 139 adults and 174 children were residing in these properties. **Of those referred, 86 properties have now been made safer with a total of 119 adults and 146 children who are now living in safe accommodation and have access to support.**

Kent Police

Priority 1. Promoting person centred safeguarding - this means putting adults at the centre of our work.

New Neighbourhood Policing Model

A new Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) model has been implemented by Kent Police, where every ward in Kent has a designated beat officer who receives additional support from their divisional neighbourhood task force to carry out the following duties:

- Crime Prevention - work with partners, support services, and communities to safeguard vulnerable adults to prevent them becoming victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. Working in partnership to ensure adults with care and support needs get the right care by the right person.
- Develop a Problem-oriented Policing approach, working with internal and external stakeholders, sharing information to design solutions to reduce harm, focussing on repeat callers and those with complex needs.
- Use innovative methods to develop specialist knowledge and understanding of methods used to exploit vulnerable adults, identifying those most at risk of exploitation or being coerced or controlled into criminality by those seeking to exploit their circumstances. This will include working with partner agencies to enhance standards of living, ensuring that they are fully supported throughout the process of any police or partners intervention.

Kent Police Open Days

Kent Police hosted three open days in summer 2023; attended by over 16000 people. These days offered a unique chance to engage with a wide range of individuals to help promote an understanding of policing and offer advice on crime reduction. There were stands dedicated to KMSAB, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Crime Prevention, Protecting Vulnerable People, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Kent County Council Trading Standards – all promoting safety and signposting to services to support those in need. Feedback from the public on the events has been excellent, and the force received hundreds of positive comments across our social media channels as well as in person on the day.

Violence Against Women and Girls

Kent Police has continued to strengthen the service we provide over the last year. We have engaged over 7,000 women and girls across Kent, this has enabled us to understand what it is like to live, work and socialise in the county. Some of the events are detailed below:

- 40 VAWG Walk & Talks took place across the county, these events allow Kent Police to walk with women and girls, to see their local areas through their eyes. These events were supported by Neighbourhood Watch, Crimestoppers, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Department of Work and Pensions, Community Safety Partnership, Violence Reduction Unit, and other support services.
- The force hosted four VAWG engagement events, where members of the public and wider stakeholders were able to engage directly with force VAWG leads, and their local policing teams. These were hybrid events attended either in person at each district or virtually.
- Divisions have mapped their local communities and arranged numerous events with diverse community groups to highlight the work taking place, to seek feedback and build relationships to encourage reporting. One event, held with English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) included

a victim sharing her positive experience of Kent Police at the event to give confidence in our service.

VAWG is a priority across the partnership and work continues to understand wider public perception of safety with the objective being to both reassure our communities and ensure that we provide a service capable of meeting all women and girl's needs.

Hourglass Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service

After its introduction to Kent & Medway last year the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has provided additional funding for the Hourglass IDVA Service. This funding has allowed for an additional independent domestic violence advisor (IDVA) in Kent and Medway to provide support to older victims of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse from the point of crisis and beyond recovery. More information can be found at [Hourglass \(wearehourglass.org\)](https://wearehourglass.org)

Qwell Pilot

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has provided funding to pilot the delivery of the Qwell digital emotional wellbeing and mental health service, supporting adult victims of crime in Kent with a special focus on victims of domestic and sexual violence. The service provides structured support with a professional, self-help tools and a community support forum. More information can be found at [Home - Qwell](#).

Annual Policing Survey 2023

As part of his commitment to actively engage with the diverse communities of Kent and Medway, the elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Matthew Scott, launched his seventh Annual Policing Survey in July 2023. 4,538 survey responses were received overall. Whilst not specifically targeted at Adults at risk of Abuse and neglect the survey did cover several key issues such as how safe people feel and how effective the Police were at dealing with issues such as antisocial behaviour which was seen by the public as the 4th biggest crime related issue. Results also showed that on average, residents of Kent and Medway do trust the police and more people think the Force performs well. There was strong support for the approaches of dealing with antisocial behaviour issues via Community Reparation (when unpaid community work is undertaken by the offender) and Restorative Justice (a meeting between the affected individuals and those who caused the harm).

Police Visual Handbook (PVH)

Kent Police has subscribed to the Police Visual Handbook (PVH) website and app. This provides access to regularly updated guidance and best practice covering all aspects of policing, including explaining the law in plain English, legislation changes, powers and procedures and Points to Prove. The PVH contains a section for frontline and investigative staff and officers on Investigating Vulnerable Adult Abuse which includes advice of issues raised during recent Safeguarding Adult Reviews such as mental capacity and self-neglect.

Priority 2. Strengthening system assurance - How organisations are working together to support adults

Policing

In 2022 Kent Police investigated over 4800 crimes involving adults at risk of abuse and neglect. Furthermore, Kent Police notified the Local Authority of over 2200 safeguarding concerns involving Adults at Risk. This was an increase on previous years and reflects the effectiveness of our new AWARE Adult Risk Assessment, which encourages frontline staff to consider the contextual risk when assessing an individual's care and support needs. The AWARE elements consist of Appearance, Words, Activity, Relationships and Dynamics, and Environment.

Right Care Right Person Agreement

A national partnership agreement was signed in July 2023 to implement a new approach known as 'Right Care Right Person'. Kent Police began rolling out this new approach to dealing with health incidents where policing is not always the best agency to respond. This will mean partners review their approach to managing such incidents and, unless there is a **significant safety risk or crime being committed**, agencies will look to their existing policy and procedures to manage them. This will ensure that Adults at Risk of Abuse or Neglect will receive the Right Care from the start. This process will formally launch in Kent in April 2024. Kent Police has held several information events and briefings with partner agencies in Kent and Medway

National Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week Joint Visits

To help promote awareness of issues identified in Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Kent Police Community Safety units have carried out visits to adults with identified needs for care and support in the community who had been victims of fraud previously. In total, 52 visits took place across the county during the week with a total of 12 further visits attempted but with no reply. Many of these visits were carried out jointly with Kent County Council Wardens. The following issues were identified during these visits and appropriate advice, referrals and/or signposting given:

- Self-neglect and Hoarding
- Carers Needs Assessments
- Advocacy
- Social Isolation
- Call Blocker Initiative to help combat telephone Fraud.

In total 11 referrals were made to partner agencies for further support.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Recognising the need to hold care homes responsible for the safety of adults at risk in their care, Kent Police hosted a training event led by the CQC for Investigators to raise awareness of and promote working with the CQC Investigations Team. This training included relevant legislation and how to refer concerns to the CQC. This input was used to create an information page on the Kent Police intranet for all staff to use when investigating relevant cases.

Kent & Medway Fraud Panel

Kent Police has continued to chair the Kent and Medway Fraud Panel. The Fraud Panel has been formed to work collaboratively in investigating allegations of fraud, prosecution of offenders, recovery of

criminal assets and the safeguarding of residents and victims. This co-ordinated approach has resulted in 141 Fraud alerts being circulated via the Kent Fraud Alert System reach 250,000 subscribers and over 2.3 million people via social media. The panel has also developed the Courier Fraud Trigger Plan, with alerts going out the above channels with an estimate estimated 80% success in protecting victims of such frauds. These alerts are also shared with banks to help spot victims and offenders.

Priority 3. Embedding improvement and shaping future practice – organisations keep getting better

National Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week – Multiagency Training Event

Kent Police hosted a multiagency event with several guest speakers from different agencies and additional inputs by the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) Development Team which focused on issues identified during Safeguarding Adult Reviews. The following were topics covered:

- Role of Kent Police PVP Command – Kent Police PVP Development Team
- Role of the Kent & Medway Safeguarding Adults Board - KMSAB
- Safeguarding Dependant Drinkers - Alcohol Change UK
- Risk Assessment for Older Adult Abuse - University of Kent
- Professional Curiosity - Kent Police PVP Development Team
- Legal Literacy - Kent Police PVP Development Team

The event was run as a hybrid event taking place simultaneously in the Kent Police College lecture theatre and online via MS Teams. In total 131 people attended the event from a wide range of agencies including Police, Local Authorities, NHS, and Charities. Feedback from attendees was positive with respondents on average rating the day as 9/10 both in terms of relevance to their safeguarding roles and overall quality of the inputs.

Internal Staff Training

Throughout 2023/2024 Kent Police has held several internal training events aimed at raising awareness of issues surrounding Safeguarding Adults such as Professional Curiosity, Self-Neglect and Hoarding and legal literacy. These events have been attended by a range of staff and officers including frontline Local Policing Teams, Community Safety Teams and investigation supervisors and managers. Feedback from these courses has been positive.

New Interview Planning Form for Vulnerable Victims and Witnesses.

Recognising the need to enhance the accessibility of the criminal justice system for vulnerable victims and witnesses, Kent Police has launched a new form to gather information from such victims/witnesses of crime before evidential statements/interview take place. This is used by police interviewers to ensure they provide the best possible service when interviewing vulnerable victims and witnesses. By using this form investigators can gather information about communication needs of victims/witnesses to ensure the most effective evidence is gathered and to reduce the impact of stress on the individual. This form can then also be used to support applications for special measures at court to support victims and witness through the criminal justice process.

Therapy dogs at court: supporting vulnerable victims and witnesses

Vulnerable victims and witnesses attending court can now benefit from the support of a therapy dog. Kent Police introduced the “Support Dogs at Court” scheme in late 2023 to help reduce stress and anxiety for victims and witnesses giving evidence, demonstrating the force’s commitment to supporting and protecting victims, which is one of the core themes within the Kent Police Pledge. Support dogs are permitted at both Maidstone and Canterbury Crown Courts, and Medway and Folkestone Magistrates Courts, with further courts being considered. With enough notice, cases can be listed at an appropriate court to ensure a dog can be present.

Achieving Best Evidence (ABE)

Kent Police have reviewed several videos recorded interviews against new guidance and practice reviews. This has identified opportunities to enhance our response and the course has been re-designed to ensure we get the best evidence and reduce the risk of re-traumatisation.

Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board

Kent Police has continued to fully engage with the work of the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board over the last year. As a statutory agency Kent Police attend all the working groups and have chaired several Task and Finish Groups looking at policy and practice review on behalf of the Practice, Policy, and Procedures Working Group. Kent Police also played an extensive role in the writing and review of the Agency Self-Assessment Framework on behalf of the Quality Assurance Working Group.

Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board

Priority 1. Promoting person centred safeguarding - this means putting adults at the centre of our work.

NHS Kent and Medway plan and buy healthcare services to meet the needs of 1.9million people living in Kent and Medway. As a leader in health we work with our partners, to make Kent and Medway a great place to live and where people lead longer, healthier, and happier lives this is supported by our NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy <https://www.kmhealthandcare.uk/about-us/vision-and-priorities/kent-and-medway-integrated-care-strategy> .

The points below describe and evidence the ways NHS Kent and Medway have contributed to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Boards (KMSAB) priority of promoting person centred safeguarding during 2023-24.

- Promoting Adult Safeguarding to the public especially how they can respond if they have concerns that they or someone they know is at risk remains a key aim of the Board. Having a consistent message across agencies is needed. NHS Kent and Medway have actively participated in the KMSAB communication and engagement working group and have shared and supported the KMSAB’s agreed social media content plans throughout the year. Our sharing of social media content plans for safeguarding adults’ week in November 2023 saw a reach of 319 on Facebook and 154 impressions on Twitter. Sharing the message that “noticing is not nosiness” in this way has helped to see a significant increase in people accessing the KMSAB website where they can

access safeguarding information and support.

- NHS Kent and Medway is a commissioning organisation and therefore has limited direct patient facing contact; however triangulation of individuals' lived experience is gathered from Safeguarding Adults Reviews, serious incidents, and local intelligence. This triangulated information is then used to strengthen system assurance and promote a continuous improvement approach. Examples of this include:
 1. Further embedding the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) across NHS Kent and Medway All-Age Continuing Care teams, supporting autonomous decision making and where appropriate the implementation of reasonable adjustments to support those with complex needs.
 2. Thematic safeguarding learning and its application has been consistently shared across the 180 GP Practices of Kent and Medway via GP bulletins, safeguarding lead forums and Primary Care protected learning times with subjects covering Veterans support, Hearing services, Executive dysfunction, Suicide prevention, drug and alcohol dependencies, Hoarding, Self-neglect, maternal mental health, domestic abuse and referral processes. This has supported practitioners to understand and promote safeguarding in their everyday practice.
 3. Last year's NHS Kent and Medway's Annual Report to the KMSAB reflected on the focused work that had been undertaken to support East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust. This had included an MCA audit and improvement plan following triangulation of learning from incidents. Work has continued this year with the Trust employing an MCA Lead within their structure. The NHS Kent and Medway Designate has been able to support the Trust to produce and socialise an MCA policy and introduce a new IT solution to ensure Capacity and Best Interest assessments could be easily recorded on the patient electronic record. This IT solution will improve access, quality, and auditability of assessments. The collaborative working process has helped to raise the profile of MCA in the trust and supported the MCA lead in networking opportunities. Findings and experience of the collaborative audit were shared to the KMSAB Quality Assurance Working Group (QAWG) and in November 2023 the Adult Designate aligned to the Trust and the Trusts MCA lead were nominated for a National Safeguarding Adults Board Award in the category of Partnership champions. Both received acknowledgement for changing practice and implementing change for the promotion and practical application of the Mental Capacity Act.

- NHS Kent and Medway's role as a health system leader allows for the safeguarding team to have a reach to services across the system and share messages, learning and best practice information. NHS Kent and Medway safeguarding team has shared the messages of adult safeguarding and the roles and responsibilities of the Board at various forums/groups such as
 1. Health Reference Group
 2. Primary Care protected learning time.
 3. Safeguarding lead forums
 4. Advanced clinical practice conference
 5. Representation at the 2023 Kent Police open day
 6. Health care support worker conference



NHS Kent and Medway utilised various platforms to promote the message of safeguarding adults' week.

This included blogs, vlogs, social media content plans, a safeguarding quiz and a presentation to the health and care support worker conference. The activity that the team undertook has supported the visibility of the team in the ICB (Integrated Care Board) and to colleagues across the system.

- Case study of learning in action: A Safeguarding Adults Review made recommendations for a GP Practice to review the guidance from National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in respect of Insomnia. The GP practice exceeded the recommendation and by undertaking their own research producing best practice guidance on the promotion of sleep hygiene instead of pharmaceutical interventions. This had been shared within the practice who have seen a move to patient centred management of insomnia as opposed a pharmacological approach. The practice has agreed for the sharing of this across Kent and Medway.

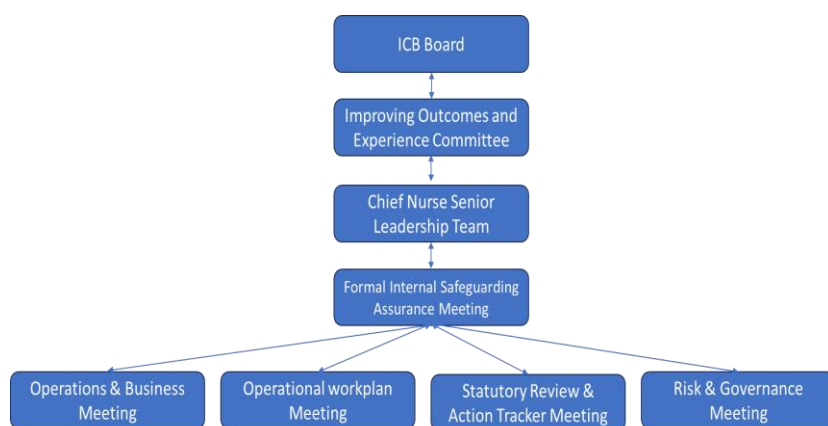
Priority 2. Strengthening system assurance - How organisations are working together to support adults

The points below describe and evidence how NHS Kent and Medway has contributed to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Boards (KMSAB) priority of strengthening system assurance during 2023-2024.

- NHS Kent and Medway provide active representation to the KMSAB Quality Assurance Working Group which co-ordinates quality assurance activity and evaluates the effectiveness of the work of all KMSAB's partner agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
- NHS Kent and Medway undertook the KMSAB Self-Assessment Framework (SAF) in November 2023. The SAF process supports agencies to review progress against key standards and learning across the course of the year. The initial peer review at the start of 2024 provided NHS Kent and Medway safeguarding team with some key points to support progress through over the next 18 months. NHS Kent and Medway have completed an action plan demonstrating how compliance with SAF will now be made.
- In last year's KMSAB annual report NHS Kent and Medway shared that an independent audit from a specialist business assurance provider (TIAA) was undertaken feedback was received in

quarter 1 of 2023-2024. Feedback was noted as “reasonable assurance” with some recommendations to provide ratification for the allegation and safeguarding policies. These have now been completed with updates to the TIAA action plan.

- NHS Kent and Medway ensure that quality of safeguarding practice within the ICB is effectively monitored via monthly formal assurance meetings which are attended by an NHSE (NHS England) regional safeguarding representative. This provides a robust safeguarding governance structure.



- NHS Kent and Medway retains responsibility for seeking assurance and monitoring the quality of safeguarding practice in NHS commissioned services across Kent and Medway. Across 2023-2024 assurance monitoring processes have continued to proactively support NHS commissioned services.
- NHS Kent and Medway retain responsibility for supporting and monitoring the quality of safeguarding practice for Primary Care services across Kent and Medway. Across 2023-2024 The team have worked with the NHS Kent and Medway primary care quality team to support practices identified by CQC/system intelligence as requiring additional support to improve safeguarding practice.
- The NHS Kent and Medway safeguarding team have also impacted adult safeguarding assurance outcomes through the delivery of level 3 safeguarding training across all primary care networks to 1629 delegates. Feedback on how training will impact practitioners to change practice was captured.
- The team have undertaken a review of ICB internal staff training, remapping staff competencies. The new face to face delivery ensures that safeguarding roles and responsibilities are included, and all staff receive training on what constitutes a safeguarding concern. Documents produced by the board will continue to be promoted.
- The team have also worked with provider and NHSE regional safeguarding teams to support improvement across the system and example of the benefits of collaborative working is shared below.

An Integrated Approach: Laying the foundations of cultural supportive change for Mental Capacity



- The SE Region and ICB System have worked together to support EKHUFT with an MCA LPS work plan to support their deliverable plan as part of the CQC assurance.
- We have produced audit tools, networking opportunities and jointly audited 3 sites across EKHUFT in relation to MCA practice.
- We have raised the profile of the MCA lead who has shared practice and development discussions with other regions to reflect on systems and practice.
- We have met with clinical staff and gathered their views on MCA and the systems in place in real time
- We have highlighted key areas of priority and the Head of safeguarding and the MCA Lead have started operational change including an MCA Policy, Training Strategy bespoke MCA training champions, promotional material for MCA and LPS A key area for required to support the workforce must include systematic changes within the Clinical information system

Benefits of Collaboration

- Highlighted key areas of priority for operational change including:**
- Systematic changes to the Clinical information system that will continue to support any upcoming LPS changes and support improvement for future Trust MCA audits.
 - an MCA Policy
 - Training Strategy
 - promotional material
- Raised the profile of the MCA in the trust including the profile of the MCA lead**
- Networking opportunities**
- Strengthened relationship between ICB & Trust**
- Shared vision for outcomes
 - Fostered a culture of constructive challenge
 - Supported escalation of concerns
- Improved the quality of MCA application and documentation**
- Trust ability to provide assurance to ICB improved
 - Trust staff have felt listened to as involved in change
 - improved quality of MCA training
- Patients are empowered in decision making**

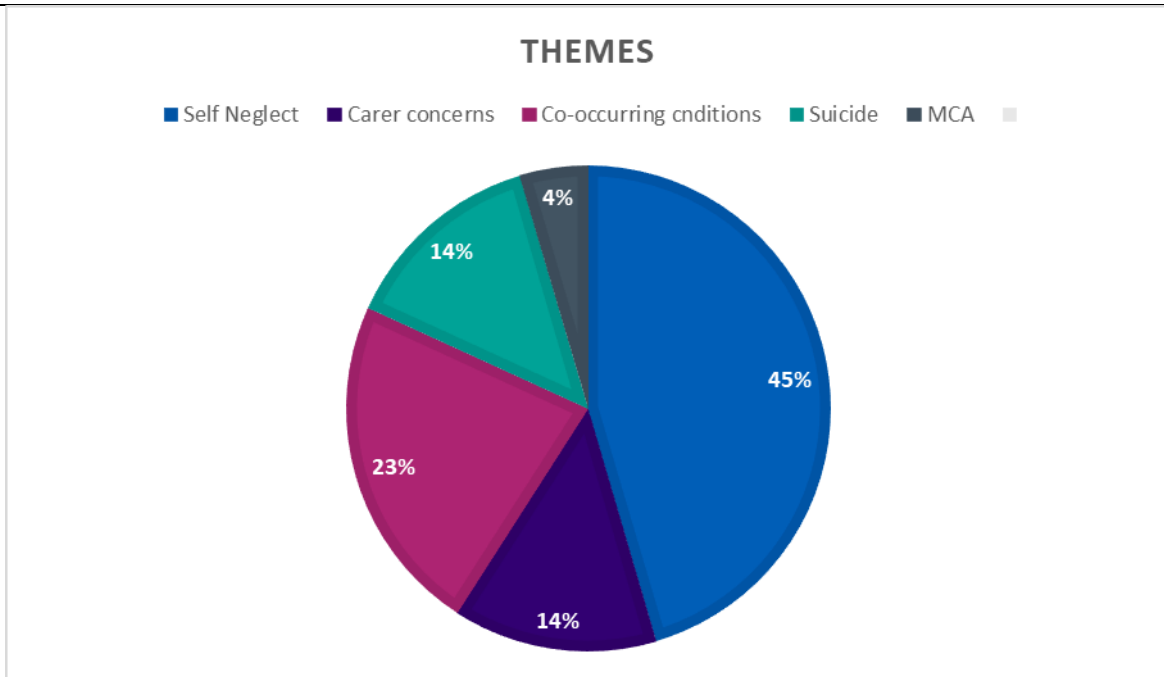


- NHS Kent and Medway has worked collaboratively with system partners to improve multi agency working by undertaking a review of safer discharge. NHS Kent and Medway have looked at multiple approaches to share learning on safer discharge across the system to ensure that safeguarding is considered in all discharge processes. This includes raising awareness of vulnerabilities and complex needs from the point of admission.
- NHS Kent and Medway have raised awareness of the roles and responsibilities of both health and partner organisations through sharing of information relating to:
 1. Right care right person – new roles and responsibilities
 2. Raising concerns – new electronic KCC safeguarding concern forms and changes to Hub models.
 3. Participation in producing cooccurring conditions protocols and promotion of safe accommodation.

Priority 3. Embedding improvement and shaping future practice – organisations keep getting better

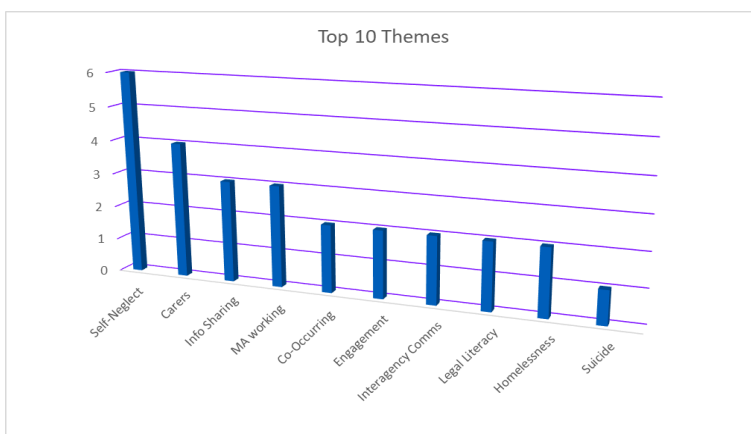
The points below describe and evidence the ways NHS Kent and Medway have contributed to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Boards (KMSAB) priority of embedding improvement and shaping future practice during 2023-2024.

- All staff working in the ICB can access safeguarding adults training according to the mapped training need.
- All the NHS Kent and Medway adult designate team are trained to health competencies at level 5.
- The team support the culture of learning and have continued to ensure that there is a clear process in place to share learning from SARs to Primary care services across Kent and Medway. This is undertaken by ensuring that learning from reviews is shared via:
 - Regular GP bulletins
 - Reflective synopsis of case learning at monthly safeguarding lead forums
 - Reflective presentations for involved practices.
- NHS Kent and Medway has further shared learning from SARs. 17 new SARs (Safeguarding Adult Reviews) in 2023-24 showed the following themes:



The themes of the newly commissioned SARs are not dissimilar to those of previous years. Self-neglect remains the most common theme and is commonly linked to co-occurring conditions such as substance misuse and poor mental health. The identification and support of carers is a persistent issue surfaced in many SARs, despite remedial work being undertaken to support clinical practitioners. The increase in suicide has been noted and there is currently work being undertaken with Public Health.

There were 13 SARs published during 2023-24, the graph below shows the top ten most prevalent themes:



- Self-neglect was the most prevalent Kent & Medway (K&M) theme, this reflected the national picture where it featured in 60% of the SARs reviewed. Information sharing, multi-agency working, interagency communications & legal literacy were all identified nationally as themes. Co-occurring conditions, homelessness, carers need, and suicide were not identified nationally as an issue; therefore, it can be concluded that these issues are likely to be specific to K&M and cross agency working is required to address them. Work undertaken to address these local themes an

example of this is work undertaken around a co-occurring conditions. From January 2022-December 2023 there were 4 SARs where there were the recommendations for improvements when working with people with co-occurring conditions, since January 2024 none of the SAR (Safeguarding Adults Review) notifications received by NHS Kent and Medway indicate co-occurring conditions is a theme: at this stage this identifies a potential improvement across the health system, particularly primary care and KMPT. The NHS Kent and Medway will continue to gather assurance, track data, and monitor that the new Mental Health Pathways are working to support people living with co-occurring conditions. The theme across 2024-25 will also be monitored using the Statutory Review Tracker and NHSE Database/Dashboard, this will allow identification of whether further work/training is required across Kent and Medway Health system for this area. NHS Kent and Medway will continue to work Mental Health providers to support this work.

- The ICB has highlighted the need for practitioners to consider the role of the carer and to offer carers assessments. Materials and guidance have been shared via GP bulletins, GP PLT sessions and via Safeguarding Awareness Week 2023. The ICB is a partner organisation supporting the work of the Kent & Medway Suicide Prevention Steering Group and has publicised / socialised the K&M suicide prevention strategy to aid practitioners to support those with suicidal ideation.
- Designate Nurse for Safeguarding Adults has shared learning, examples of this included:
 - Presentation of SAR Pablo with the Kent Combatting Drugs Partnership meeting to support a range of senior representatives from agency partners across the Kent system in understanding how they can support front line staff to improve outcomes by considering use of the Kent and Medway Multi Agency Risk Management Framework alongside the Multi Agency Protocol. Sharing the learning supported discussion of how MARM and the Protocol may have improved the outcome for Pablo.
 - Presentation of learning from SAR Rosie & Emma at the Kent Co-occurring conditions away day to support learning in respects of adults at risk living with this need and to promote the new updated multi agency co-occurring protocol to support practitioners across the Kent and Medway system understand how they can use the protocol to improve outcomes.
 - Designate Nurse for Safeguarding Adults wrote a case study for SAR Pablo that now features as a case study example within the new Kent and Medway Multi Agency Risk Management Framework which will support practitioners across the whole Kent and Medway system with understanding the learning and how use of MARM could support an improved outcome in the future.
- Learning from reviews is also shared via NHSE regional safeguarding meetings to enable wider regional and national themes to be reflected upon with the ability to share learning beyond Kent and Medway.
- Learning from reviews is also shared via NHS Kent and Medway commissioning and contract teams to influence changes in processes and pathways. An example of this has been NHS Kent and Medway undertaking work around the availability and commissioning of specialist Learning Disability and Autism placements.
- There have also been independent inquiries which relate to the Kent and Medway health system

that have been published. These include the Kirkup Report in October 2022
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/634fb083e90e0731a5423408/reading-the-signals-maternity-and-neonatal-services-in-east-kent_the-report-of-the-independent-investigation_print-ready.pdf

and the phase 1 Fuller Report in November 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/david-fuller-inquiry-phase-1-report>

NHS Kent and Medway are working with health commissioned services across Kent and Medway seeking assurance and supporting action planning / implementation of recommendations. Outcomes of this assurance process will be reported in next year's annual report.

Medway Council

Priority 1. Promoting person centred safeguarding - this means putting adults at the centre of our work.

Objective one – Raise awareness of adult safeguarding to ensure that people understand what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and how to seek help.

Medway Council has information on the Council website to support residents understanding of safeguarding adults. The website includes information about what adult abuse is, enquiry types and how to report abuse. Over the year 2023 -2024 there were 15,736 visits to the safeguarding pages.

Medway Adult Social Care has a monthly Principal Social Worker and Safeguarding newsletter which is circulated to all Adult Social Care staff. The newsletter includes messages and tools from the KMSAB, learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews and details of any training on offer. KMSAB policies and protocols are included in each edition to support practitioners' knowledge remain up to date.

As part of safeguarding awareness week 2023, Medway Adult Social Care shared the KMSAB posts via social media with a reach of 5.7k people. Information was also shared on the internal weekly staff bulletin, Our Medway, to raise awareness about safeguarding adults work to all council staff. During safeguarding awareness week, Adult Social Care ran an information stand in the Pentagon Shopping Centre. Both the Operational Safeguarding Lead and Councillor Theresa Murray were able to meet some of the residents of Medway and raise their awareness of adult safeguarding by sharing key information, answering questions and signposting to resources and services.

In June 2023, Adult Social Care took part in MP Tracey Crouch's Over 55's Advice and Information Fair to share information on the KMSAB and adult safeguarding. The aim of the fair was to ensure that older people are aware of the services available to them. The stand was well attended by the 450 residents who attended the fair and information was able to be shared to help raise awareness amongst the over 55's cohort and their support networks.

To increase the understanding with partners about safeguarding adults works, Adult Social Care delivered sessions about adult safeguarding as part of the World Homelessness Day conference that

was hosted by Medway housing colleagues in October 2023. The session covered the three-point threshold for safeguarding, what happens when Medway Council receive a safeguarding concern and the KMSAB multiagency document about what makes a good referral. Partners in attendance included care providers, Public Health, The Department for Work and Pensions and health partners.

Objective two – Enable residents of Kent and Medway to voice their opinions on the work of the Board.

Medway Adult Social Care has identified the need to further strengthen our engagement with staff, partners, and residents. To support us achieve this a new role of an Engagement Manager Lead, has been created and recruited to. The Engagement Manager is tasked with ensuring residents voices are heard across all aspects of Medway Adult Social Care service delivery, including safeguarding adults work. The feedback from engaging residents will be used to inform strategic and operational plans and strengthen partnership working, where the need for improvement has been identified by individuals and their representatives.

Objective three – Ensure the voice of the person (or their representative) who has been involved in our safeguarding system is heard in respect of their safeguarding experience.

Within the safeguarding concern document, the referrer is asked whether they have discussed the concern with the person and sought their views where it is safe to do this. This promotes the ethos of Making Safeguarding Personal from the beginning of the safeguarding process and supports the person to feel in control of the process from the start.

Quarterly safeguarding audits take place and as part of the audits, it is specifically reviewed whether the views of the person or representative were asked. In instances where this has not happened reflection and learning opportunities take place with the Inquiry Officer and the Designated Senior Officer. Our data demonstrates that the number of people being asked about their desired outcome rose from 80.5% in 2022/23 to 85.6% in 2023/24.

There is a formal process in place to seek feedback from individuals about their experience of safeguarding. It has been identified that the current method of seeking feedback can be further strengthened. As part of Adult Social Care's commitment to strengthening the current system we have introduced and recruited to the Engagement Manager post detailed earlier in the report. The feedback gained by the Engagement Manager will feed into the service improvement plan.

To utilise the KMSAB resource about Making Safeguarding Personal, a session was delivered to staff at the Divisional Away Day in October 2023. The session included sharing information about what Making Safeguarding Personal is and how this can be embedded in practice. Attendees took part in a tabletop exercise about what Making Safeguarding Personal looks like in practice. Feedback from this activity has been collated to inform practice going forward.

Medway Adult Social Care has a contract with an advocacy provider to ensure that advocacy can be provided to those who want or need to access advocacy support. Utilising advocates ensures a person who requires or would like support to voice their views can receive this specialist independent support making the safeguarding process more equitable. Advocacy also enables those who lack capacity to have an independent person work in their best interests throughout the safeguarding process, ensuring objectivity and providing independent challenge to the professionals and/or family

involved.

An example of when advocacy has successfully enabled a person to have a voice within the safeguarding process is the example of T. Concerns of financial and material abuse were raised in respect of T and T's spouse. T's spouse refuted the concerns. However, as T was also identified as being at risk, their views needed to be sought. T had some health challenges which meant they required additional support to express their views and wishes. Advocacy was therefore considered and implemented. The advocate was able to seek T's views independently and compiled a report which was read out at the safeguarding meeting. T's views and wishes were expressed and the outcomes that they wanted were able to be achieved. As T had health challenges there was the risk that their views were not sought, and the views of T's spouse only considered. However, T was considered in their own right, and support implemented to ensure that their voice was heard, which resulted in the risks to T and their spouse being removed.

Objective four – Seek assurance that each partner agency's workforce demonstrates 'professional curiosity' and has processes in place to allow them to reflect on their practice and receive appropriate supervision.

A Quality Assurance Framework has been developed by the Principal Social Worker and is the process of being embedded across the division by the Heads of Service. The Quality Assurance Framework is the approach used by adult social care to ensure the work undertaken is of the highest quality. The framework provides a mechanism to evaluate not only the effectiveness of practice but also provides opportunities for reflection and learning.

A new post was created and recruited to in November 2023 of Practice Development Manager. Since the introduction of this post an additional Practice Development Manager post has been agreed and recruitment is in process. The introduction of the Practice Development Manager roles has greatly increased the ability and capacity for Adult Social Care to build on practice strengths and start to make improvements in areas identified as requiring development.

The Principal Social Worker has introduced a 3 weekly, Mental Capacity Forum. The forum enables practitioners to present cases and scenarios relating to mental capacity which are complex. At the forum practitioners receive support and supervision from the Principal Social Worker, managers and peers. The impact of the forum is that practice is strengthened as a variety of strategies are contemplated, legal frameworks and implications are considered, and the person's voice kept at the centre of discussions, resulting in well thought out, legally compliant interventions. The forum also provides learning opportunities and promotes professional curiosity as it is also attended by students and newly qualified social workers who listen to the case discussions and contemplations.

Priority 2. Strengthening system assurance - How organisations are working together to support adults

Objective five – Establish a mechanism to identify system issues and risks to provide assurance to Kent and Medway residents that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Performance data is used to analyse activity and performance in relation to safeguarding adult's work. The data informs about the volume of safeguarding concerns and enquiries and highlights whether these elements of the process are being completed within the expected timescales. The impact of regularly monitoring performance data is that Adult Social Care are able to be responsive, in relation to increases in demand.

There is a framework in place which enables the Directorate's Senior Management Team to regularly review the safeguarding data. A weekly report is sent to the Director and Assistant Director which highlights demand and any risks or pressures in being able to effectively meet demand. A monthly update is also presented to the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Board and the Health and Social Care Oversight Board, which is chaired by the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Theresa Murray. The impact of this senior oversight is that if required, additional resource or agreement to move resource can be agreed promptly, ensuring safeguarding arrangements continue to be effective and responsive to change.

Safeguarding audits take place every quarter. Audit outcomes are shared at the Quality Assurance & Performance Improvement Board. The impact of this is that areas of good work can be shared and if there are areas of concern, this forum provides the opportunity for decisions to be made promptly and for concerns or risks to be escalated quickly and appropriately.

There is a monthly internal high-risk panel where practitioners present cases that are assessed as highly complex or high risk. The Panel provides the opportunity for practitioners to receive guidance and senior management oversight. The impact of the High-Risk Panel is that it enables close oversight of highly complex and risky situations. The additional oversight provides the opportunity for barriers to positive outcomes or risk mitigation to be discussed and management support to remove some of the barriers – for example approaching partners to request flexibility in their referral criteria or to undertake bespoke work.

Objective six – Improving public understanding of the roles and responsibilities of our partners.

Please see evidence under Objective 1.

Objective seven – Improving interagency understanding of the roles and responsibilities of other partner organisations.

A high number of inappropriate safeguarding concerns continue to be received; the majority being raised by partner agencies. To improve the quality and accuracy of safeguarding concerns received Medway Adult Social care have jointly worked with Kent County Council to develop a safeguarding threshold document which is due to be published. The safeguarding concern document has been redesigned to make clearer what constitutes a safeguarding concern. Impact will be measurable in the coming year.

A digital safeguarding concern form and a professional referral for Care Act assessments have been developed, to enable partner agencies to better understand the correct referral route to take. The impact is still to be measured but the introduction of clear and separate referral routes aims to improve partner agency knowledge about appropriate referral routes.

Public Health colleagues have developed a strategy for engaging with and improving outcomes for disadvantaged and hard to reach groups. The Principal Social Worker makes up part of this strategic group. An outcome of the strategy is that a new team has been created called the Medway Multi Disadvantaged Team. The team consists of a variety of partners from Housing, Health, Social Care, Drug and Alcohol Services, Counselling Services and Mental Health Services. The Team's aims to ensure services working in collective partnership, are transparent in both successes and challenges faced. The team use their collective powers, resources and knowledge to flex and change systems to create opportunities for success for all. The Principal Social Worker wrote a business case and made a successful bid for funding from Public Health for a new social work post to form part of this team and this post has been recruited to. Recruitment to this post has meant that there that there is dedicated social work resource with the skillset to undertake complex capacity assessments and identify those who need enhanced social care support, including those who are Neurodiverse.

A further example of when Adult Social Care have continued to develop positive partnerships is evident in the following example. Adult Social Care were made aware of a situation of a person living in their own flat where there were concerns were raised about cuckooing and illegal activity being carried out in the individual's flat. Good multi-disciplinary teamwork took place, working together to manage the risks and ensure safety. The partners included Adult Social Care, Community Mental Health Team, Kent Police and Medway Council Housing. The individual was supported to move to supported accommodation where they remain safe and well.

Objective eight – Discharging their respective responsibilities to safeguarding people.

Medway Adult Social Care has social workers and senior social workers employed to undertake adult safeguarding work specifically. This enables the council to have the skill and resource to respond to safeguarding concerns as they are received.

Senior Social Workers and managers have specific training about undertaking the role of the Designated Senior Officer. This ensures that the Council has staff who are skilled and competent to make decisions about thresholds, safety planning, enquiries and whether the safeguarding episode is appropriate to close.

Performance data is utilised to identify demand, themes and trends and enable effective review of resources to ensure safeguarding duties can be met.

Medway Adult Social Care have completed a right sizing exercise and gained significant investment to ensure that there is permanent additional staffing resource to manage the continued increase in demand.

Objective nine – Ensure effective Board to Board/Partnership arrangements.

Adult Social Care has designated representation at the Medway multi agency panels including MARAC, Blue Light, Integrated Locality Review and Vulnerability Panel. This enables collaborative working, to achieve the best outcomes for individuals.

Objective ten – Ensure effective functioning board with appropriate support structures.

Medway Adult Social Care is statutory member of the KMSAB and is fully involved in the work of the

KMSAB. There is appropriate representation in all of the working groups and active engagement in relevant task and finish groups. The Director for Adult Social Services is a member of the Board and the Assistant Director for Adult Social Care is the deputy chair and also member of the KMSAB Board thereby providing an appropriate level of seniority.

A Bimonthly Safeguarding Adult Review and Domestic Homicide Review meeting is held and chaired by the Assistant Director of Adult Social Care. The meeting provides the mechanism to monitor and track the progress of actions being undertaken as a result of direct learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews.

The KMSAB escalation policy is regularly promoted in the Principal Social Worker and Safeguarding newsletter and utilised as appropriate

Priority 3. Embedding improvement and shaping future practice – organisations keep getting better

Objective eleven – The voice of the person is listened to, and there is evidence their wishes are respected.

Practice guidance has been developed for situations when engaging a person continues to be unsuccessful. The need for this guidance was highlighted by a statutory safeguarding adults review following the death of a person who was known to a significant number of agencies. The guidance was developed to support professionals navigate situations where individuals may resist or refuse support. It aims to promote understanding, respect autonomy, and find alternative ways to aid while considering the person's preferences and choices.

The Engagement Manager post was created and recruited to, to support Adult Social Care capture individual and representative feedback.

The advocacy service continues to be utilised, supporting individuals to voice their views.

Data demonstrates that the number of people being asked about their desired outcome has from 80.5% in 2022/23 to 85.6% in 2023/24.

Objective twelve – Learn from experience and have a workforce that is knowledgeable and confident in the application of their safeguarding adults' roles and responsibilities

In response to a safeguarding adults review, operational guidance has been developed regarding assessing risk and the risk assessment tool was reviewed and updated. This updated guidance is supporting staff to identify the level risk present and determine what next steps should be undertaken.

In response to learning from a safeguarding adults review, a range of bite size learning sessions on legal literacy were delivered, including ordinary residence, Sec 117 after care, Care Act duties, S9 and S11 assessment, record keeping and Powers of Attorney.