

REPORT TO ADULTS & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 27th March 2023

Regarding: Review of Adult Safeguarding Arrangements

1. Purpose

The Strategic Director of Adults and Health has a statutory responsibility on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure a Safeguarding Board is in place, able to implement the requirements of the Care Act 2014.

The Local Government Association (LGA) in association with the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS), were asked to organise an independent Consultant to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the arrangements in Blackburn with Darwen .

The request was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pan Lancashire approach and the effectiveness of the local Board. The Consultant was then asked to make recommendations related to effective delivery of the statutory responsibilities of the SAB Board. These would be specifically in relation to the structure enabling assurance from partners about its effectiveness, set within a Pan Lancashire arrangement in preparation of a CQC Assurance Framework.

2. Methodology

2.1 Interviews:

- with all statutory partners - 45-minute sessions (list provided)
- with the Board Manager – 1 hour
- with DASS – 1 hour
- with Independent Chair – 1 hour

Dates were agreed between the consultant and Blackburn and Darwen for February

2.2 Literature Search Undertaken

Blackburn and Darwen provided the following for the consultant:

- A structure chart which shows the Pan Lancashire arrangement, and the new current arrangements.
- Copies of all the SAB Boards and Subgroups Terms of Reference
- Copies of minutes of the SAB Board Meetings for the last year December 21 to December 22.
- Copies of the subgroups for the last 9 months.

- Copies of Policies and Procedures in relation to Safeguarding and the SAB Board including any Protocols, Contracts or Memorandum's of Understanding in place.
- Copies of Executive Meetings for the last year December 21 – December 22
- Copies of work plans for the SAB Board or Subgroups
- Copy of the SAB Strategy
- Copy of the last SAB Annual Report
- Copies of any Cabinet/Committee/Scrutiny/Health and Well Being Board Meetings that have discussed/reported safeguarding in the last year – December 21 – December 22

The consultant completed a website search to view information available to the public about the SAB.

3. Recommendations

The following recommendations and comments were the result of the 5 day review. The recommendations are in light of the fact the Lancashire safeguarding Adults Executive Group has been stood down and statutory accountability passed to the local place based safeguarding Adults Boards. Blackburn has appointed Dr Henri Giller as its Independent Chair.

14.1 The new local Governance will offer robust oversight of safeguarding work in Blackburn with Darwen. The local **Accountability Board** for each "Place" will offer the scrutiny to ensure the work is focussed on what matters within the Blackburn with Darwen patch.

14.2 The local SAB will need to set up the governance to enable the Panels to be created and served.

14.3 The Board will meet twice a year, chaired by the Leader of the Council, and attended by senior stakeholder representatives. This has been agreed in Blackburn with Darwen. There will be two parts of the meeting, Part 1 - assurance that identified risks and progress is monitored against the strategy and business/annual work plan for safeguarding, and Part 2 will select and anonymise safeguarding cases which will be presented to the Panel to consider examples of good practice or challenges and learning of what did and did not work.

14.4 Blackburn with Darwen should consider whether the current SAB Strategy is "fit for purpose". There is no local SAB Business Plan, and this needs to be addressed. The collective responsibility at a senior level does need to be clear with consideration whether it meets localised needs, based on qualitative and quantitative evidence.

14.5 It is recommended that a Blackburn with Darwen workshop is facilitated to jointly agree the Strategy and direction of travel, with the Annual Business/Work plan including clear and relevant aims, objectives and milestones in order for the SAB to better evidence its effectiveness.

14.6 With the new Lancashire Executive Leads Safeguarding Network being formed, this will hopefully renew the energy to demonstrate the benefit of a Pan arrangement at some level as there are likely to be common themes across the patch and whilst localised accountability is imperative, the benefit could be a loss to Blackburn with Darwen if not managed effectively. It is noted that the three newly appointed place based Independent Chairs will be in communication with each other, and the Joint Partnership Business Unit (JPBU – located within Lancashire County Council) will evaluate agenda items that could be of value in each place.

14.7 The Pan Lancashire Partnership may want to consider through the Executive Leads Network, whether an overall 3-year Strategy could be agreed with for example 3 common areas to work on at a Pan Lancashire basis, with localised priorities for each “Place” based SAB. This could offer a consistent approach on common themes, and still enable some work to benefit the whole Partnership. This would need clear direction, however, could be driven by the Independent Chairs.

14.8 There is a need for a clear sense of direction and agreement about the work of the sub-groups, with deliverables to support the Board in its duties.

14.9 It is agreed that each Board will establish some of their own sub-groups based on their requirements. The plan is for this to be worked through with Independent Chair engagement with the DASS and Board Members.

14.10 It will be necessary for the partners to decide how best to deliver the duties and responsibilities through existing sub-groups, or whether these become localised to meet Blackburn with Darwen priorities,

14.11 The sub-groups Terms of Reference should be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and covering the areas detailed, so that attendance can be confirmed and the fluctuating and changing attendance minimised to ensure delivery of the key priorities within defined timescales.

14.12 There are at least quarterly written reports from the Chair of the sub-groups to the SAB about whether the work plan is tracked, and exceptions highlighted for action by the SAB as required.

14.13 Within any agreed Pan Lancashire sub-group framework, consideration will need to be given about how any differences between the 3 areas are managed to assist the sub-group chairs have authority to influence delivery of tasks, as this is being inhibited through each area/organisation not being willing/able to agree the joint framework so that differences can operate for the individual area’s if needed. It is proposed that the Independent Chairs will need to take on this role and the evolving role for the JPBU which is seen as key to this.

14.14 If there are any Pan Lancashire sub-group’s that remain it may be beneficial for an Executive lead member to operate as a mentor/coach to support the chair and sub-group due to the diverse nature of the Partnership and to enable clear accountability and direction and if agreed to ensure the responsibilities and accountabilities in each “Place” are clarified. Alternatively, the Independent Chair could assume this role if it is required.

14.15 It may be helpful to consider a job role/description for SAB members, so each partner is clear about the roles and responsibilities of being a SAB member.

14.16 It would be helpful for the SAB to consider how it enables a wider discussion of local themes to be assured or identify issues and challenges which may be shared and could be mitigated. An example would be quality assurance ensuring the issue with the care homes in the borough is addressed.

14.17 It is recommended that consideration is given to the data reporting from partners and analysis so there is clarity about how this informs the SAB. This is a key driver, and a designated sub-group will be able to investigate further to report back to the SAB and inform audits of practice across the "Place". This will provide evidence the SAB's grip on safeguarding.

14.18 It is important to clearly identify the SAB's role in terms of prevention and protection. Case studies as highlighted in the Complex Safeguarding sub-group may be helpful to be discussed as part of the SAB to inform the wider partnership of the challenges and offer the assurance and the understanding of the lived experiences of residents. The **Accountability Board** will also benefit as proposed from this oversight.

14.19 It is recommended that the SAB consider further how they can evidence and understand the quality of practice in safeguarding to ensure decision making is robust and consistent, informs learning, and leads to areas for deeper analysis. This could potentially flag more referrals to the Strategic SAR sub-group for consideration.

14.20 The SAB needs to seek assurance that the local multi agency policy is implemented at a local level. It has not been reviewed for five years and requires refresh.

14.21 It may be helpful for the SAB to review its membership to benefit from a wider range of partners for example DWP, CQC, GP, independent provider representatives, voluntary sector partners, service users, and carers.

14.22 It would be helpful to set minimum expectations for frequency of some sub-groups as Terms of Reference on occasions refer to meet on a "regular basis."

14.23 In order to ensure representation at sub-groups a list of expected organisations/attendees for each meeting with a note of those who apologised, substituted, failed to attend/send any apology, would create more transparency and accountability for the delivery. Where necessary the SAB can then agree any actions or amend membership as required to meet the key priorities.

14.24 The SAB should summarise discussions and adopt a SMART approach to tasks and delivery so impact can be measured. The SAB would then have clear evidence and indicators for measures of success or understand the need for further action/mitigation.

14.25 A decision needs to be made about whether Learning and Development remains a Pan Lancashire sub-group as it requires support from the partnership. A suggestion

could be that the Training Leads in each organisation are required to attend this sub-group as they have the mechanisms to deliver learning within the organisation as its part of their role.

14.26 Whilst a SAR was recognised and referred to the SAB, it may be helpful for a further briefing for staff and managers across Blackburn with Darwen to ensure that there is a solid understanding of when it is necessary to refer for a SAR.

14.27 If the Strategic SAR sub-group remains, it will be necessary to ensure the membership representation is agreed and robust for each Placed based SAB in light of the accountability for Safeguarding Adult Reviews and the possible issues that can arise on publication relating to media and potential challenge, as the management and accountability is not as clear as it should be.

14.28 It would be advisable to ensure the DoLs plan incorporates some expected targets to monitor the risks due to the 360 DoLs reported as the current backlog.

14.29 It will be important to agree across the Pan Lancashire Partnership how the JPBU resources are structured and deployed in the new arrangements post April 2023.

14.30 A refresh of the website and its content, with a gap analysis would be beneficial and promotion of prevention along with any guidance to assist residents can only be beneficial.

14. Conclusion

There is a strong commitment to safeguarding and addressing areas for strengthening the accountability and scrutiny which is highlighted as part of this Review. There is also an understanding that a balance is needed to incorporate the benefits of the Partnership, alongside local accountability to ensure prevention, and protection for residents where required.

The following provides a check for partners:

*“The SAB must lead adult safeguarding arrangements across its locality and oversee and coordinate the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its member and partner agencies. This will require the SAB to develop and actively promote a culture with its members, partners and the local community that recognises the values and principles contained in **‘Making Safeguarding Personal’**. It should also concern itself with a range of issues which can contribute to the wellbeing of its community and the prevention of abuse and neglect.”*

Reference: www.scie.org.uk

