

Gateshead Safeguarding Adults from Abuse

Safeguarding Adults Board Communication and Engagement Strategy

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Section 1 - Introduction

Safeguarding Adults in Gateshead

Living a life that is free from neglect and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. Our vision for adult safeguarding in Gateshead is:

‘Everybody in Gateshead has the right to lead a fulfilling life and should be able to live safely, free from abuse and neglect – and to contribute to their own and other people’s health and wellbeing’

In Gateshead we believe that Safeguarding is everyone’s business. This means, whoever you are, wherever you are and whatever position you have – you have a responsibility to help protect our local residents from abuse or neglect.

The Care Act 2014 has enshrined in law the principles of Safeguarding Adults. The Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) subsequently became a statutory body in April 2015. The Statutory Partners of the Board are Gateshead Council, Northumbria Police and Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, although many more organisations are represented on our Board and Sub-Groups..

The Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board is committed to making Safeguarding person-led and outcome focussed. It is also recognised that Safeguarding cannot be fully delivered by agencies acting in isolation.

The Care Act identifies six key principles which underpin all adult safeguarding work and, which apply equally to all sectors and settings:

- **Empowerment** – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent
- **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Protection** – support and representation to those in greatest need
- **Partnership** – local solutions through services working with their communities
- **Accountability** – accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice

The Practice Delivery Group is responsible for the development and implementation of this Communication and Engagement Strategy.

Communication and Engagement Strategy Aims

The aims of this Communication and Engagement Strategy are twofold:

- We want to improve and strengthen how we communicate, consult, involve and engage with service users, carers, staff, stakeholders and the wider public to raise awareness and promote key messages about safeguarding adults in Gateshead
- We want to build community resilience so that our residents are better equipped to keep themselves safe from harm

Section 2 - Communication and Engagement Principles and Outcomes

The following principles will be adopted by SAB members whilst undertaking communication and engagement activities on behalf of the SAB:

Principles

- Board branding will be used for all SAB communications
- Maximise opportunities for shared communication / engagement activities i.e. regional campaigns, joint partner events
- Use and share consultation and engagement feedback to inform and drive change
- Communicate messages clearly in plain English
- Communicate messages that are relevant based upon local needs and related research
- Two-way communication and engagement activities are encouraged
- Information is kept up to date and accurate

The communication and engagement strategy aims to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcomes

- Service users, carers and local residents will know what safeguarding adults is, how to protect themselves and how to report abuse and neglect
- Key stakeholders will understand the work of the SAB and will be able to access information about it.
- People's lived experiences of safeguarding adult will inform future communications and improvements to safeguarding adult practice
- The workforce will understand their respective roles and responsibilities, leading to improvements in multi-agency working and outcomes for adults who are safeguarded

Section 3 – Who do we want to communicate /engage with

The main target audiences for this strategy are the following:

- Adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Adults who have lived experience of abuse or neglect
- Adults with needs for care and support
- Carers / Advocates / Family members
- Gateshead Safeguarding Adult Champions
- Partner organisations
- Voluntary / community sector
- Workforce
- Service providers
- General Public
- Partnership Boards, including Community Safety Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Section 4 – What are our key messages ?

It is important to prioritise our key messages to maximise impact. Our primary key message is the nationally recognised strapline for Safeguarding Adults:

- Safeguarding is Everyone's Business

Other key messages that we would like to promote within Gateshead are:

- The definition of an Adult experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- The ten categories of abuse within Safeguarding Adults as defined by the Care Act 2014
- How to embed Making Safeguarding Personal
- Practical application of the Mental Capacity Act within Safeguarding
- Promote early help and prevention

Section 5 – How will we communicate/ engage

There are a wide variety of methods that we can use to effectively communicate our key messages and engage with our target audiences. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Communication / Engagement Method	Target Audience						
	Adults at Risk / Service Users	Carers / Advocates / Family	Partner orgs (inc. voluntary / community sector)	Workforce	Service Providers	Wider Community	Partnership Boards
Section 42 Enquiries	X	X	X		X		
Section 44 Safeguarding Adult Review	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Annual Report and Strategic Plans			X	X	X		X
Website / Social Media	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Leaflets / Posters	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Safeguarding Adults Champions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Service User feedback (Surveys / forums)	X	X	X		X		
Board / Sub Groups / Task and Finish Groups			X	X	X		X
Training / briefing sessions / workshops			X	X	X	X	X
Press releases / media statements	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Events / roadshows / community group events	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Provider forums			X	X	X		
Staff supervision / Staff forums			X	X	X		
Conferences	X	X	X	X	X		X

Section 6 – Media Protocol

Proactive use of the media to promote positive safeguarding adult messages should be a routine aspect of any public awareness campaign undertaken by the SAB.

Responsive media statements may be required by the SAB when there is an issue involving a specific person / provider / partner or where there is negative media coverage pertaining to safeguarding adults that needs to be addressed.

Communicating with the media – General Principles

Any communication with the media in the name of the Gateshead SAB should be undertaken via the SAB Chair, or a nominated representative where appropriate. The SAB Chair will, wherever possible, ensure that the three statutory partners are in full agreement with the content of any communication prior to release.

From time to time issues may arise that are of interest to the media. These issues may be of a negative nature and may have a damaging impact on the reputation of the SAB and of partner agencies. It is the intention of the SAB to be open and transparent about its work, whilst protecting and respecting confidentiality of adults experiencing or at risk of abuse and neglect, their carers and families. Partner agencies must ensure that any public communication does not negatively impact on the SAB or a partner agency of the SAB.

Dealing with media enquiries

If you receive a media enquiry relating to Safeguarding Adults in Gateshead, your internal communications team and the SAB Business Manager should be notified immediately. If the matter relates solely to your organisation, then the response should come from your organisation, with input from SAB partners if required. Media responses should be sent to the SAB Business Manager, who will subsequently share with SAB members for information.

If the enquiry relates specifically to the SAB or multiple partners within the SAB, the media response should come directly from the SAB Chair and signed off by the SAB Executive Group. Where possible, media responses should be sent to the SAB Executive *before* it is sent to the journalist by the communications team. However, media deadlines mean it is not always possible to wait for a response from each organisation before the response is submitted, although every effort should be made for this to happen.

The SAB commits to ensuring joint responses to media enquiries wherever possible. This should be established at the initial contact stage.

When an immediate media response is required, this will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Board or whomever they designate this to. The Chair will have authority to talk to the media on all Board matters. In the absence of the Chair, this role will be taken on by one of the three statutory SAB members.

Any news releases will be drafted by the SAB Chair and SAB Business Manager in collaboration with communications officers from the three statutory partners and other relevant agencies as required.

Any media coverage of the Gateshead SAB will be included within the SAB Business Manager update to the Board on a quarterly basis.

Proactive media / communications activity

The SAB will issue proactive information to the media, as well as to staff, the public and other stakeholders via individual partner communications teams. SAB communications will normally be joint communications. All proactive activity will be planned jointly and in advance by the SAB, the SAB Executive Group or a SAB Sub Group.

Actions following media scrutiny

The impact of media scrutiny upon individuals, families, carers and communities can be profound. SAB members should consider who will be impacted, how to mitigate against any potential negative impact, and how to engage and support those individuals prior and post publication. Good practice would include identifying a single point of contact for those affected and considering the use of advocates.

Communicating following a Safeguarding Adults Review

The SAB Chair should be the key representative to speak to the media about a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) and any actions following that review on behalf of the Board.

It is important to note that any news release will only be made once the SAR has been completed and published. If a media request for a statement is received prior to completion of a review, the SAB will provide a holding statement on the case.