

**REPORT TO:** Health Policy & Performance Board  
**DATE:** 15th February 2022  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People  
**PORTFOLIO:** Health and Wellbeing  
**SUBJECT:** Safeguarding Update  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update the Board and highlight key issues with respect to Safeguarding in Halton.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:**

**The report be noted**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The current global Covid 19 pandemic is unprecedented and the impact for individuals, families, communities and wider society is significant and long lasting. It has touched every part of people's lives and has required individuals and organisations to adapt to new daily interactions, social distancing, shielding, undertaking assessments by phone or using digital solutions to continue essential business. Many of the existing protective factors in the lives of adults at risk of abuse and harm have been temporarily absent or limited.

3.2 COVID-19 has had a significant and sustained impact on the care homes and domiciliary care sectors, for both residents and staff. There is concern that both sectors are under pressure in terms of current sustainability and longer term financial viability, as well as issues around Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the risks associated with a reduction in visiting and face-to-face contact.

3.3 There is a high potential for compassion fatigue as well as emotional and physical stresses among all those continuing to provide support, both formal and informal, in highly volatile times leading to increases in safeguarding risks.

3.4 The pandemic has also impacted on the implementation of the replacement for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). The Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) has been delayed further.

The Government announced on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 that the planned implementation date for LPS (April 2022) 'cannot be met' Currently there is no new implementation date – that will form part of the implementation process which is due to take place in early 2022.

- 3.5 Various regulations still need to be written to accompany the Act. These cover topics such as training for Approved Mental Capacity Professionals, transitional arrangements and who will regulate the LPS scheme.
- 3.6 There will be a new Code of Practice. The draft version of the new code is scheduled to be published in early 2022 which could trigger the 12 week consultation period. However, that is still subject to a couple of issues notably covid and is expected to be delayed further.
- 3.7 Throughout the pandemic the requirement for DoLS had not been amended and the restrictions remain robust. During the first wave there were lower number of referrals as the care homes battled with the virus and addressed essential care needs. The referrals have now returned to normal levels.
- 3.8 The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying lockdowns have had an unprecedented and extraordinary impact on all aspects of day-to-day life and behaviours. There are ongoing concerns about how people with care and support needs may experience different or more abuse or neglect due to these changes. The Insight project was developed to look into the impact of the pandemic on safeguarding activity can firstly, describe what is happening, secondly, inform future activity to mitigate increased or different risks of abuse and thirdly, offer a national picture for the varied and shared local experiences. Data and intelligence provide evidence, both to emphasise the importance of safeguarding adults and influence policy and decision makers.
- 3.9 The Covid 19 adult safeguarding insight report published its third report in December 2021 and includes data from 50 councils including Halton. The key messages from their third report include:
  - Safeguarding concerns continue to show an upward trend, which decrease during lockdown and other restrictions followed by a sharp increase
  - Due to lockdown regulations, many safeguarding concerns have been reported to adult social care services later than prior to the pandemic.
  - The delays in reporting safeguarding concerns or related issues have altered how they have been dealt with since the pandemic. Delayed issues are less likely to be case managed, instead becoming safeguarding concerns.
  - The location of risk in the individual's own home has

increased notably during the pandemic, with risks located in residential and nursing care homes conversely making up a lower percentage share of Section 42 enquiries.

- Councils reported on the impact of COVID-19 on work with social care providers; increasing mental health issues; abuse of people with learning disabilities, safeguarding people experiencing homelessness, and carers' stress.
- Technology has had a significant impact on ways of working, opening up increased opportunities for multi-agency engagement with professionals and has had an impact on the safeguarding work with adults with care and support needs.

3.10 National Safeguarding week is an event which takes place on an annual basis organised by the Ann Craft Trust and is an opportunity for agencies to work together to raise awareness of important safeguarding issues. The theme for the safeguarding week (15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> November) was 'creating safer cultures'. Promoting safer cultures is about how organisations and individuals can take steps to minimise harm occurring in the first instance and ensuring policies and procedures are in place so that safeguarding concerns that are raised, are recognised and responded to effectively. During the National Safeguarding week there was a theme for each day in order to focus on the different aspects of creating a safer cultures. The themes can be found on the safeguarding site - [www.halton.gov.uk/adultsafeguarding](http://www.halton.gov.uk/adultsafeguarding) **(please use google chrome to search for website so you can view the updated version)** and included emotional abuse and safeguarding mental health, the power of language, digital safeguarding, adult grooming, creating safer organisational cultures, safeguarding and you.

3.11 As part of ongoing pandemic support, and in response to Government recommendations, Halton Borough adopted a programme of work to look at 'lessons learned'. This approach involved a series of meetings with bed-based care providers to reflect on Covid19 outbreaks and captured the learning from them.

3.12 Case studies were written as a result of the lessons learned meetings that took place. Where possible the meetings involved other agencies so that a multi-disciplinary approach was taken to looking at the situation. Infection Prevention and Control were present at the meetings.

3.13 The evaluation of this work looks at the need for ongoing action from the Council, and this is, in the main, further covered under the Care Home Road Map, which is to be monitored by the Care Home Development Group and Halton Safeguarding Adult Board and will ensure the continued support to the care sector.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 New policies in respect of LPS will be developed once the Code of Practice is published

#### 5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified at present

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Halton Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) membership includes a Manager from the Children and Enterprise Directorate, as a link to Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership (HCYPSP). Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership membership includes adult social care representation. Joint protocols exist between Council services for adults and children. The SAB chair and sub-group chairs ensure a strong interface between, for example, Safeguarding Adults, Safeguarding Children, Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime, Community Safety, Personalisation, Mental Capacity & Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

##### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None Identified

##### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The safeguarding of adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable to abuse is fundamental to their health and well-being. People are likely to be more vulnerable when they experience ill health

##### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

##### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

#### 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Failure to consider and address the Statutory duty of the Local Authority could expose individuals to abuse and the Council as the Statutory Body vulnerable to complaint, criticism, and potential litigation.

#### 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 It is essential that the Council addresses issues of equality, in particular those regarding age, disability, gender, sexuality, race,

culture and religious belief, when considering its safeguarding policies and plans. Policies and procedures relating to Safeguarding Adults are impact assessed with regard to equality.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act