

Cabinet 22 May 2019	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Denise Radley – Corporate Director Health, Adults and Community	Classification: Unrestricted
Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy 2019-24	

Lead Member	Councillor Denise Jones, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Originating Officer(s)	Shohel Ahmed, Joint Adults Safeguarding Governance and Strategy Manager
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	n/a
Reason for Key Decision	n/a
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Outcome 7: People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled

Executive Summary

Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect is a key priority in Tower Hamlets.

In 2017-18, 940 safeguarding concerns were raised relating to adults in Tower Hamlets, of which 699 proceeded to a safeguarding investigation. The past three years have seen an increase in the number of safeguarding concerns received in Tower Hamlets, reflecting an increased awareness of safeguarding as well as potentially reflecting the scale of the issue. Some of the established trends in Tower Hamlets include:

- Neglect is the largest single type of abuse investigated.
- Safeguarding investigations are proportionately more likely to relate to older people.
- The majority of investigations relate to people living in their own home (as opposed to a care home).

At the same time, there are a number of emerging and changing trends that impact safeguarding. These include online abuse, human trafficking and 'cuckooing'¹. As safeguarding risks continue to evolve, it is vital that the Board is able to adapt to such changes to ensure the response remains contemporary and relevant

¹ 'Cuckooing' is the term used to describe the practice where professional drug dealers take over the property of a vulnerable person and use it as a place from which to run their drugs operation.

Abuse and neglect can have a devastating impact on people's lives, and we know that partnership working between statutory services is a key way of tackling the issue at a strategic level. The Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy seeks to articulate how we will do this. It is a five year plan that outlines the Board's long term priorities to prevent and tackle adult abuse and neglect, as well detailing the key interventions required to meet these priorities.

The strategy has been developed using feedback from Safeguarding Adult Board partners, resident groups as well as data and evidence from a local, regional and national level. It has a strong emphasis on prevention and partnership, which were the two key messages arising from this activity. This includes tackling new forms of abuse and neglect at an early stage, and working together to ensure that there are effective procedures in place to prevent abuse and neglect.

Once the strategy is agreed, an annual business plan will be developed, which will detail and monitor the actions required to achieve the priorities of the strategy.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy 2019-24, which was agreed by the Safeguarding Adults Board in March 2019.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Under the Care Act 2014, one of the duties of the Safeguarding Adults Board is to develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how they will meet their objectives and how their member and partner agencies will contribute.
- 1.2 Although the annual business plan fulfils this statutory requirement, the strategy is intended to be a resident-facing document which summarises our strategic approach to safeguarding, and also articulates the long term commitments from all relevant partners.
- 1.3 In addition to this, the strategy also informs residents and relevant stakeholders of the Safeguarding Adults Board work programme, as well as increasing the transparency and profile of the work of the Board.
- 1.4 The annual business plan will detail the actions that will be undertaken in order to achieve the priorities, and include some of the more practical issues that need to be addressed.
- 1.5 The strategy was signed off by the Safeguarding Adults Board in March 2019. Once the strategy has been discussed at the Cabinet, it will go through a final design process to ensure that it is presented in a professional and engaging manner. It will then be published onto the Tower Hamlets website, and circulated to partner agencies. Further work will be explored to promote the strategy, ensuring that residents (and professionals) are able to access the strategy easily.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The annual business plan can be published on its own (without a strategy), which will fulfil the statutory obligation of the Care Act. However, this would risk losing the benefits of having the strategy as an articulation of longer term priorities, increasing our transparency and levels of resident engagement. The Board could risk becoming 'reactive' to emerging safeguarding issues as opposed to 'proactive'. It is generally seen as good practice to publish both a long term strategy alongside an annual business plan, and is an approach that the majority of boroughs in London adopt.
- 2.2 There are also various options which can be considered with regards to the content/format of the strategy.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy 2019-24 sets out the Boards five year strategy for safeguarding adults, outlining the priorities of the Board and detailing the actions required to achieve those priorities.
- 3.2 The strategy covers:
- The legal framework for safeguarding
 - The scope of the strategy
 - Why we need an adults safeguarding strategy
 - Challenges
 - The response so far in Tower Hamlets
 - Our priorities for 2019-24
 - How we will achieve this
 - Other strategies and plans that are linked
 - Glossary
- 3.3 The priorities are built around the six key principles of adult safeguarding that are defined under the Care Act 2014; Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Partnership, Protection and Accountability.
- 3.4 There is a strong emphasis throughout the priorities around 'Making Safeguarding Personal', which is about developing a safeguarding culture that focuses on the personalised outcomes desired by people with care and support needs.
- 3.5 The strategy also describes the main interventions needed in order to achieve the priorities. These will be overseen by the respective sub groups of the Safeguarding Adults Board.

3.6 The strategy was presented at the Mayor's Advisory Board on 1st May. At this meeting, it was suggested that a stronger focus be added on the transition from childhood to adulthood as it relates to safeguarding. Whilst there is a priority in the strategy on this issue, more high-level actions will be added into the strategy document following Cabinet. These will be:

- (i) *Utilise the multi-disciplinary high risk transition panel to support young people transitioning to adulthood and vulnerable adults where there are high risks of serious harm and difficulties transitioning to services that meet their needs.*
- (ii) *Conduct a review of the multi-disciplinary high risk transition panel – including gathering insights from service users - to identify how the panel and transition process can be improved.*
- (iii) *Ensure social work staff are able to work across departments to identify young people at risk and ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, working with families and networks to reduce risks.*

The strategy also notes that the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy and Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy (currently under development) are two of a number of key interdependent strategies.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Although the strategy is intended for adults in general, it sets out a number of equalities issues and the actions needed to address these issues. These can be summarised as follows:

- 4.1 The strategy recognises that people with a learning disability, physical disability or a mental health issue are at a greater risk of abuse and neglect. It has therefore included actions such as learning from reviews such as Learning Disabilities Mortality Reviews, and ensuring that safeguards are in place to protect the most vulnerable in Tower Hamlets.
- 4.2 In the last couple of years, approximately half of the safeguarding concerns and investigations in Tower Hamlets related to people over the age of 65. Safeguarding issues tend to be more prevalent within this group, and they are also more likely to have a higher dependency of need with regards to care. The strategy seeks to address this, by including actions such as analysing why loneliness and social isolation impacts on safeguarding within vulnerable people (including older people), and makes preventative measures a key priority throughout.
- 4.3 The strategy includes actions to target safeguarding awareness raising campaigns to 'hard to reach' and 'easy to ignore groups' as it recognises the challenge the diversity and transient nature of the borough brings to safeguarding. There is a strong emphasis throughout the strategy to build on the work of previous strategies to ensure that as many people as possible within the borough are aware of the safeguarding mechanisms within the borough, and are able to protect themselves from abuse and harm.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Effective safeguarding of adults will have a positive impact on cross cutting issues such as crime and disorder and radicalisation. The Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy will maintain close links with other strategic plans and strategic partnership in order to ensure that responses are efficient and effective.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report recommends the agreement of the Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy for 2019-24. The strategy itself has no direct financial implications; it is the annual business plan that maps out the specific activities to support achievement of the priorities within the strategy that will have a financial impact. Consideration of the annual business plan and the resource requirement will be programmed and factored in to the annual MTFS refresh.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Care Act 2014 places the Council's duties in respect of safeguarding adults with care needs who are at risk of abuse or neglect on a statutory basis. The requirements in respect of establishing a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) are set out in Sections 43-45 and Schedule 2 of the 2014 Act. As with all of the Council's duties under the Act, the duty to promote wellbeing applies to the Council's safeguarding duties.
- 7.2 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance sets out further detail in respect of the requirement to publish the SAB strategic plan and annual reports. By preparing a long-term strategic plan in addition to the annual business plan, the Council has gone beyond the minimum legal requirements, and is applying Best Value principles.
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Appendices

Appendix I: Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy 2019-24.

Appendix II: Summary of feedback

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Shohel Ahmed, Joint Adult Safeguarding Governance and Strategy Manager – Health, Adults and Community Services