



# ***Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2023-24***

*Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility*



# Foreword on behalf of the Independent Chair



I am very pleased to present the Annual Report of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board for 2023/2024. This is my first Annual report as Independent Chair for the Borough, having been appointed to this role in July this year. It is clear that however, that this has been a busy year for the Board which, despite the sad death of the previous Chair Fran Pearson in July 2023, and some other major changes in leadership in the key agencies responsible leadership of the Board, it has continued to work on its priorities, assisted by Dr Somen Banerjee, the Borough's Director of Public Health as Interim Chair of the Board. The Board ensured that the Safeguarding Adults Review concerning the deaths of two individuals in the Hindered Access Thematic Review, authored by Professor Michael Preston Shoot, provided recommendations for all agencies in Tower Hamlets to enhance their operational methods, particularly in instances where access for professionals to assist vulnerable adults at risk is challenging. The Board was also pleased to host a very successful Safeguarding Conference in 2023 on Homelessness and Substance Misuse.

The report also highlights the objectives for 2024/25, which were beginning to be worked through at discussions at Board, in the Board's development session in September this year. Much of the work of the Board is delivered through the work of its sub-committees and these are described in detail in the report below. The agencies represented at the Board have again shown their demonstrable commitment to adult safeguarding throughout the year and despite the pressures and demands on all public sector organisations at the current time, and the particular pressures on the leadership of the Board because of key personnel changes, the contributions of agency partners to the Board are very considerable and for which, as Independent Chair of the Board, I pay tribute. We know that the enduring effects of the Covid pandemic, the cost of living crises and the societal and individual pressures stemming from national and international tensions, as well as UK wide, are all contributing to pressures on the way our citizens in Tower Hamlets are living. Our collective commitment to adult safeguarding requires that we are continually sensitive to these pressures and focus our efforts on what the people we aim to support through our work, tell us about how they experience safeguarding and review and refine our responses to safeguarding, as a result. This commitment to engagement and co-production will underpin all the Board's work in the coming year. Whilst there is much to do to sharpen our focus in the coming year on these big safeguarding challenges across the Borough for all the Agencies represented on the Board, the commitment and expertise to deliver positive outcome is very plain to see.

This Annual Report, which has been delayed in publication because of the constraints described, has only been able to be a limited reflection of the vital safeguarding work across the Borough and we intend that future reports will present more loudly the voices of people who need and receive safeguarding services because this commitment is fundamental to the work of the Board and its partners. I commend this report to you and the work it represents in supporting vulnerable people at risk in Tower Hamlets.

**Dr Susan Ross**

*Chair of Safeguarding Adults Board*



# Safeguarding Adults' Board summary for 2023-24



## Volume & Trends

- The number of Safeguarding concerns received in the 2023/2024 was 1479, up from 1330 in the previous year (8% increase).
- The number of safeguarding enquiries raised has increased slightly from the previous year.
- 'Neglect' and 'Acts of Omission' remain the largest single type of abuse investigated in the Borough.
- The majority of safeguarding issues take place in the victim's own home and care homes.
- The number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) authorised continues to increase with this year being the highest (403) over the course of 5 years.

## 2023-24 Achievements

- Successfully published the Safeguarding Adult Review of Mrs N & Mrs O.
- The 2023 Safeguarding Conference on Homelessness and Substance Misuse was attended by over 200 attendees
- Established a joint working relationship in developing priorities and objectives with Tower Hamlets Partnership Executive Group.
- Successfully signed off the Self Neglect and Hoarding Toolkit and Escalation and Resolution Procedure.
- The SAB was recognised positively in the Peer Review for its continuous commitment to multi agency involvement.

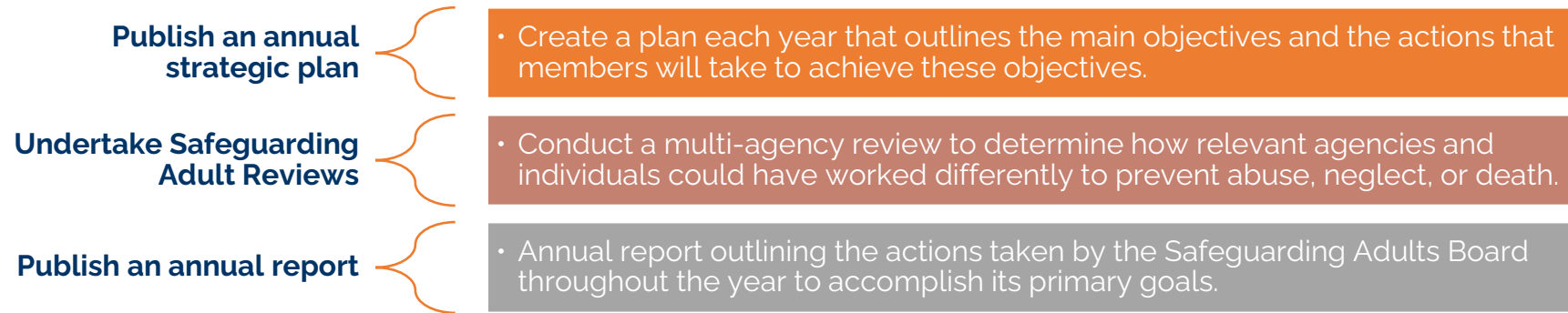


# Background



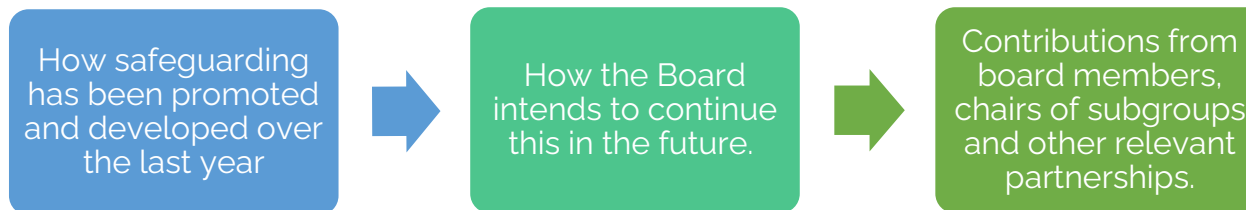
The Care Act 2014 mandates Safeguarding Adults Boards to guarantee the safety of vulnerable adults and facilitate collaboration among agencies to enhance their well-being. The Act establishes a legal structure that outlines how local authorities and other organisations should safeguard adults who are vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

The Board are 3 statutory duties:



The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report 2023/24 provides a comprehensive overview of the Board's activities during the past year and highlights the collaborative efforts of partner agencies in enhancing the protection of vulnerable adults from potential abuse. The Board works in accordance with the duties outlined in the Care Act 2014 and supporting statutory guidance.

The report contains details of:



# Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)



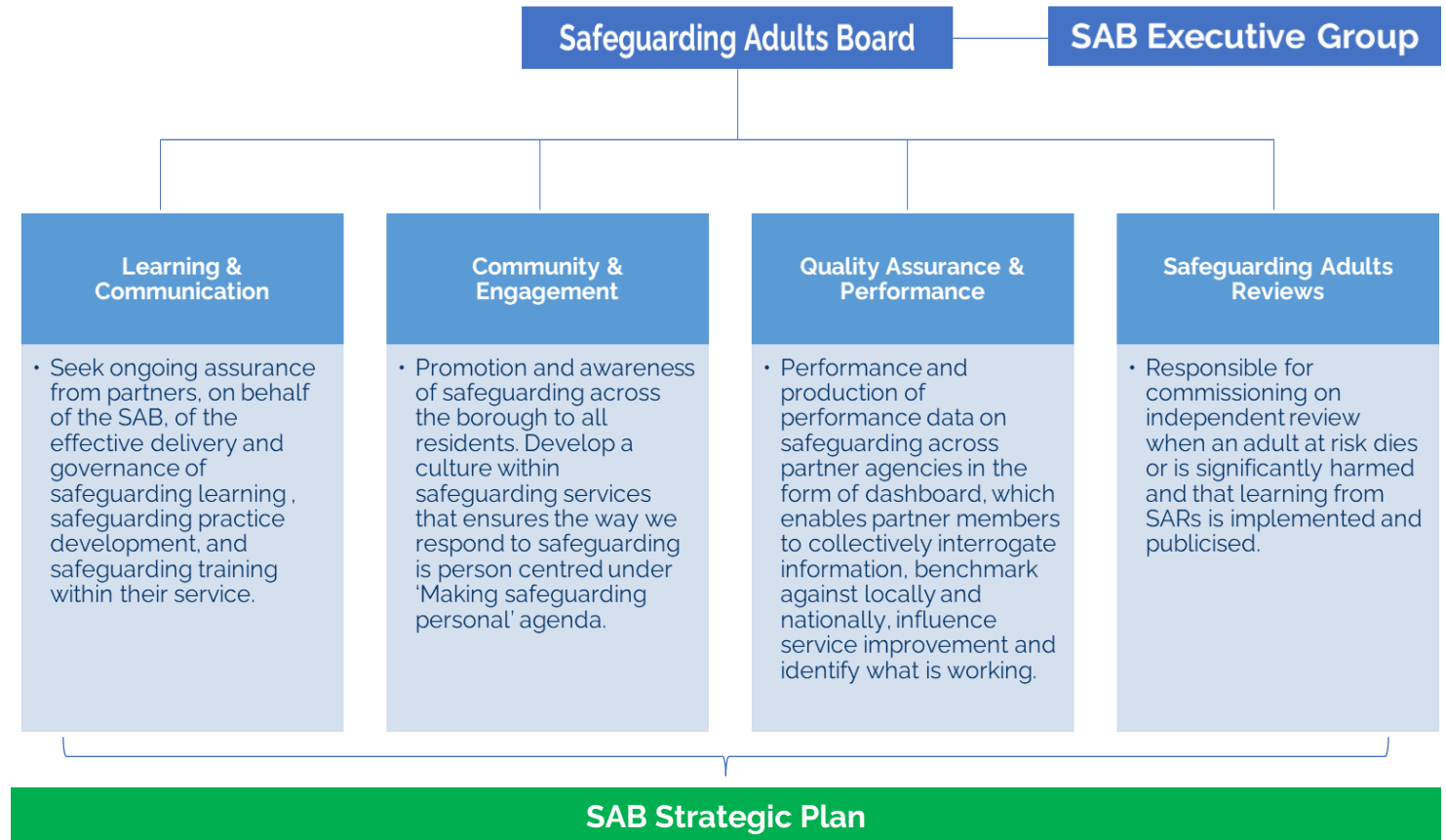
## Structure

The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board is supported by an Independent Chair to oversee the work of the Board, to provide leadership, offer constructive challenge, and work within the remits of the statutory guidelines.

The core work of the Board is undertaken by the Sub-Groups and the Partnership Board Unit. The Partnership Board supports the operational running of these arrangements and manages the Board on behalf of the multiagency partnership. The Board facilitate joint working, ensure effective safeguarding work across the borough, and provide consistency to our partner members.

## Governance

The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board is supported by an Independent Chair to oversee the work of the Board, to provide leadership, offer constructive challenge, and work within the remits of the statutory guidelines. The Board has four sub-groups that assist the board in meeting its obligations as set out in the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy 2019-24. The sub-groups have their own work programme and are chaired by partners from agencies which represent the SAB and meet on either a bi-monthly or quarterly basis.



# Our Subgroup priorities



## Learning & Communication

- Organise and deliver an annual safeguarding conference which focuses on key safeguarding risks identified by the Board and endeavors to include the participation of service users with lived experience
- Review the existing training package partners have in place, in order to make sure it is accessible and effective
- Produce 7-minute briefings for recently published SARs and disseminate the learning to partners through online learning events.
- Allow partners to present and discuss areas of practice development within the subgroup.

## Quality assurance and performance

- Continue the development of comprehensive multi-agency dashboard that has a clear focus on outcomes
- Conduct an annual deep dive partnership audit focusing on a key safeguarding risk
- Monitor the impact & effectiveness of SAR learning and recommendations in partnership with the SAR subgroup
- Analyse safeguarding data to establish the impact of on the types of abuse taking place to better inform our approach to safeguarding prevention and awareness raising in the community.

## Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy 2019-24

At a strategic level, we have worked to ensure the views and experiences of service users drive our plans: A number of resident service user groups, many of whom with experience of adult social care, contributed to the Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy 2019-24, including the Older Peoples Reference Group, Carers Centre and the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.

## Community Engagement

Launch a project that aims to uncover hidden harm through the expertise and knowledge of existing community groups

- Refresh and update the digital portal to make it more accessible and easier to navigate for residents
- Utilize social media channels to target key safeguarding messages towards the younger generation of residents in Tower Hamlets
- Coordinate Community Safeguarding conference with local residents, addressing relevant concerns and issues related to safeguarding with local services.

## Safeguarding Adult Reviews and other key activity

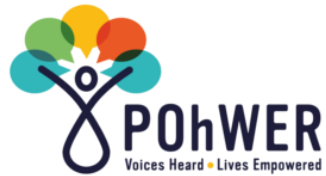
- Continue to commission Safeguarding Adult Reviews where necessary, but with a more innovative approach to better embed learning quickly
- Monitor the impact and effectiveness of SAR learning and recommendations in partnership with the Quality Assurance and Performance subgroup
- Work in partnership with the THCSP to look at issues around all age exploitation and transitional safeguarding
- Aim to further involve the views and participation of people with lived experience in the work of the SAB



# Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board partner members



The Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is made up of representatives from a wide range of organisations and services across the local multi-agency safeguarding partnership, including:



The best of London  
in one borough



# About Tower Hamlets...



Tower Hamlets continues to have one of the **fastest growing populations** nationally and now has an estimated population of 324,745.

The Median Age in Tower Hamlets was 31.6 – the **youngest of any area in England and Wales**. The borough had the **smallest proportion of older people aged 65+**.

At 34.6%, Tower Hamlets has the **largest Bangladeshi population in England and Wales** and the **largest Muslim population** (39.9%) in England and Wales. It had the fourth smallest White British population and the smallest Christian population in England.

In 2022, **nearly 4,000 older** and vulnerable residents received long and short-term care support from the council.

The borough ranks as one of the **highest in England** for older people living in income deprived households, estimated to be approximately 44% of older people.

Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) projections estimate that over 46,000 people aged between 18-64 will have a common mental disorder by 2024.





# What our data says...

## Safeguarding concerns, Section 42 Enquiries & Breakdown snapshot



### Safeguarding Concerns Received

2020-21  
**1,495**

2023-24  
**1,485**

2021-22  
**1,495**

2022-23  
**1,350**



### Section 42 Enquiries

2020-21  
**330**

2023-24  
**375**

2021-22  
**435**

2022-23  
**375**



### Section 42 Enquiries breakdown

Male  
**47%**

Female  
**53%**

White  
**48%**

Black  
**9%**

Asian  
**31%**

Undeclared  
**9%**

18-64  
**56%**

65+  
**44%**



# What our data says...

*Top 3 abuse type, location and enquiry outcomes snapshot*



## Top 3 types of abuse

'Neglect' and  
'Acts of Omission'  
**34%**

Financial  
Abuse  
**14%**

Self  
Neglect  
**13%**



## Top 3 abuse location

Own home  
**68%**

Care homes  
and hospitals  
**8%**

Other  
**11%**



## Safeguarding enquiries outcomes

Action Taken and  
risk reduced  
**73%**

Action taken  
risk remained  
**16%**

Action taken  
risk removed  
**8%**



# What our data says...

*Making Safeguarding Personnel snapshot*



## Desired Outcomes Expressed



## Desired Outcomes achieved



# The detail - Safeguarding adults' performance data 2023-24



This section provides data and information pertaining to the protection of adults for the year 2023-24. This provides a summary of the total count of safeguarding concerns received and the total count and categorization of completed enquiries (investigations). The data analysis enables us to pinpoint areas that require improvement and determine the specific areas to prioritise in the upcoming year. The council, in its primary responsibility for safeguarding, has a comprehensive understanding of all safeguarding concerns that have been reported within the borough. Therefore, information from the council's case management system has been utilised to provide insights for this section.

## Number of safeguarding concerns

Concerns are signs of suspected abuse or neglect that is reported. Where contact was made, 74% of contacts were escalated to a next step safeguarding concern. In 2023-

24, 1,479 adults had safeguarding concerns raised about them in Tower Hamlets, which is an increase of 8.4% from the previous year (1,330 in 2022-23). The increase in concerns is partly reflective of increased awareness of adult abuse and neglect amongst staff and residents in the borough being raised.

## Who is being referred?

This year there has been consistency in the profile of people who have concerns (referrals) raised about them compared to last year. The gender ratio has remained consistent with higher numbers of women being subject to safeguarding referrals (53%) than men (47%). In 2023-24, 43% of concerns were about older people aged over 65, down from 45.9% last year and there has also been an increase (56%) in the numbers of younger adults aged 18 - 64 years who had concerns raised about them compared to 54% last year.

The ethnic profile of those who have had safeguarding referrals made about them has stayed broadly consistent. This year 48.1% of people had a 'white' ethnic background, compared to 52.4% in 2022-23. 31% of referrals related to people from an 'Asian' ethnic background; a group that makes up over 40% of the total population in Tower Hamlets. Although this is a complex issue and the figures may be impacted by the age profile of the borough, the Safeguarding Adults Board is committed to understanding the reasons why this is the case and to addressing the disparity.

## Safeguarding adult's enquiries

Safeguarding adult's enquiries are concerns received that proceed to a safeguarding investigation in accordance with Section 42 of The Care Act 2014 (NHS England).

A total of 377 people had safeguarding enquiries commenced during 2023-24 which has reduced

slightly compared to last year (380 people). There has been a downward trend in safeguarding enquiries over three years, with the largest decrease between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

The 'conversion rate' from concerns to enquiries is based on the gross number of cases rather than number of people. This year the rate has increased to 27.5% compared to 26% last year.

The total number of enquiries completed for the 2023-24 financial year was 389, compared to 391 in the same period last year.

-----  
*\*Note that this figure differs to the enquiries commenced as that is counted per individual. Some individuals have may have more than one safeguarding incident and complex enquiries may involve multiple types of abuse, each is recorded separately.*



# Safeguarding adult's performance data 2023-24 continued



## Where the abuse takes place

Based on concluded safeguarding investigations, 68% of safeguarding issues took place in the victim's own home, an 8% increase compared to 2022-23. 'Other' was cited as the response to 11% of enquiries, which may suggest these areas are under monitored or diverse, with abuse less likely to be detected promptly. Enquiries raised in care home and hospitals each contributed 8%, which is the same as the previous year.

The low proportion of enquiries from care homes in Tower Hamlets compared to the national average reflects the small number of residential and nursing care homes in the borough.

## Types of abuse

'Neglect' and 'Acts of Omission' constituted the most extensive individual forms of abuse examined in Tower Hamlets during the fiscal year 2023-24, accounting for 34% of

the total abuse, an increase from 25% in the preceding year.

The full breakdown is given in the table: below.

Types of Abuse	% total
Neglect and acts of omission	34%
Financial or material	14%
Self-neglect	13%
Psychological	12%
Physical	10%
Domestic abuse	8%
Sexual	3%
No actual abuse or risk	2%

## Safeguarding enquiries outcomes - managing risk

Safeguarding and risk management can be complex processes with a number of factors that will render a person or situation being at risk.

Where risk cannot be completely removed, strategies are in place to monitor and inform the individual of what support is available to them.

In the highest proportion of completed enquiries the risk to the individual has been reduced – 73% for 2023-24. The risk remained in 16% of closed enquiries, an increase from 9% compared to last year. The risk was fully removed in 8% of enquiries – a decreased of 5% from the previous year.

## Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is intended to make safeguarding more person centred, develop more meaningful engagement of people in safeguarding and improve outcomes.

It continues to be central to the SAB strategic planning and subgroup activity such as through analysing data outcomes, creating

opportunities for Partners to collaborate, address emerging concerns both locally and nationally and ensure the best interest process is followed, including the use of independent advocacy as best practice for the vulnerable.

Where the Desired Outcome is Expressed, 81% expressed an outcome they wanted, up by 4% from 2022-23 and 12% were asked but did not provide an expressed outcome, same as the previous year and 7% who said Yes but no outcome was expressed.

It is known that the person's desired outcome may not always be achievable. During 2023/24, it was recorded that 73% had outcomes met or partially met, a drop of 4% compared to last year. Furthermore, 26% expressed their desired outcome was not achieved or not recorded yet, a drop of 5% from the previous year indicating varying levels of risk or complexities in cases.



# Safeguarding adult's performance data 2023-24 continued



## Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards performance data

In 2023-24, we have seen a 10% increase in DoLS referrals since 2022-23 and 24% increase in DoLS referrals since 2020-21. The increase may be due to more awareness raising as the DoLS teams have been busy promoting DoLS to adult social care teams as well as care homes being sent reminders for DoLS renewals. In addition, Tower Hamlets is an aging population and has more people live longer, the demand for DoLS is also increasing.

DoLS in care homes continues to be high (81%) with 48% being out of

borough and 33% in borough care home referrals. Hospital referrals and others such as hospices amount to the remainder of the DoLS referrals. In 2023-24, there was an increase in hospital referrals by 2%.

Since 2022-23, there has been an improvement in the Best Interest Assessors working within timescales from 14% (2022-23) to 25% (2023-24). The team's objective is to ensure that all cases, except for a few exceptional ones, meet the legal DoLS deadlines by 31 March 2025. The team is making significant progress towards achieving this goal.

	2023-24	2022-23	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
<b>Total DoLS request received</b>	<b>643</b>	583	519	596	630
<b>DoLS authorised</b>	<b>403</b>	397	224	293	213
<b>DoLS not authorised</b>	<b>35</b>	42	45	80	30
<b>DoLS withdrawn</b>	<b>189</b>	144	250	223	341

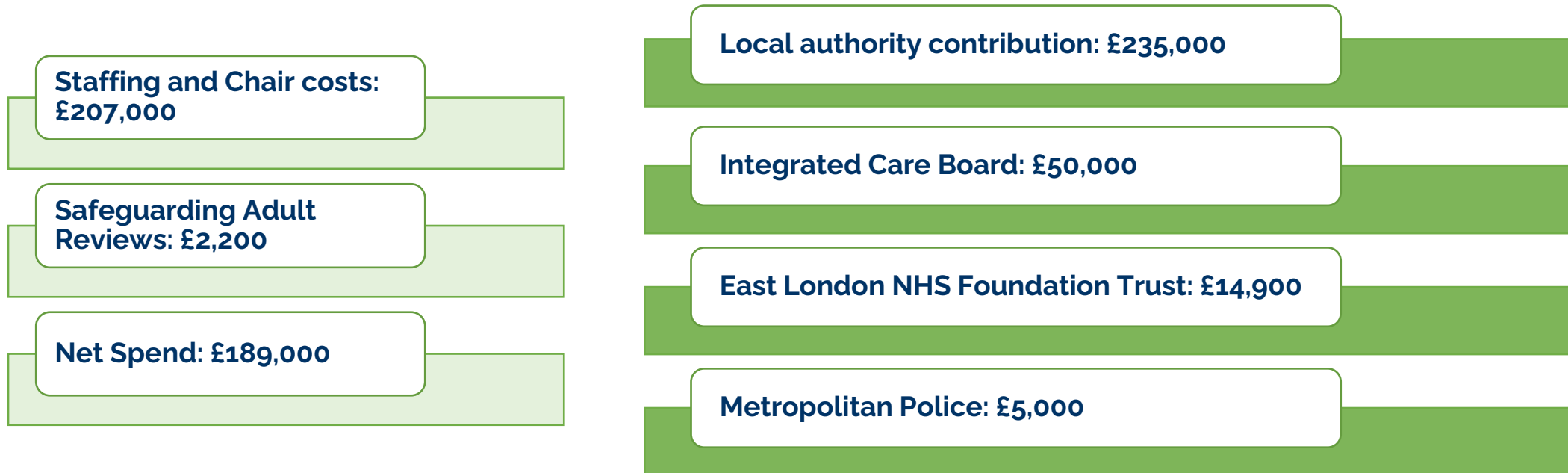


# Funding for the Safeguarding Adults Board 2023-24



Section 43, Schedule 2 of the Care Act 2014 ("the Act") allows a 'partner' to make payment towards expenditure incurred by or the purposes connected with the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board. It is acknowledged that every organisation faces financial challenges each year; therefore, it is with appreciation that partner members give their time and resources to support the functioning of the board.

This funding covers the cost of the Independent Chair, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Board Management. The tables below set out the level of the partner contributions in relation to the Board for 2023-24:



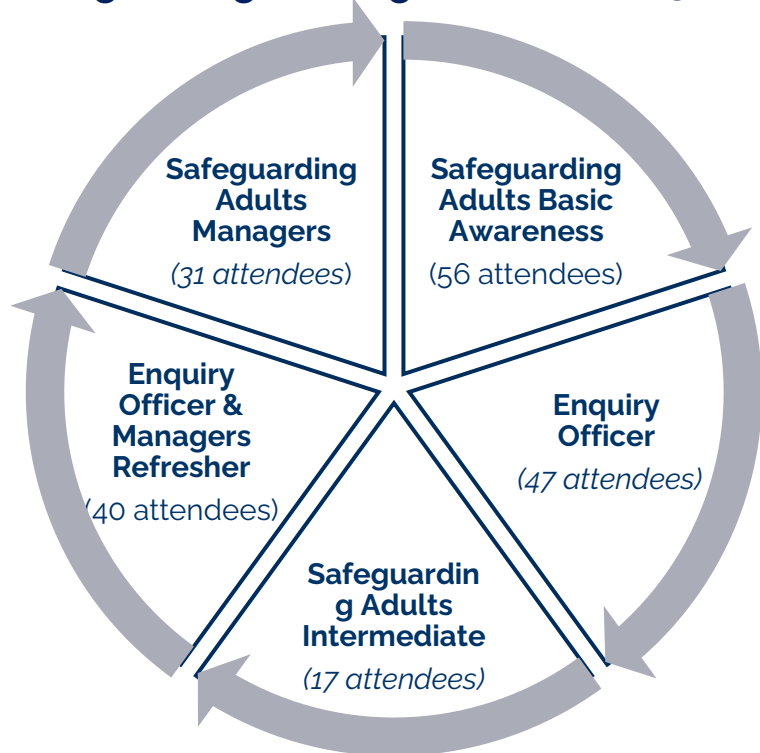
# Learning and Development over 2023-24



Tower Hamlets offers safeguarding adults' training for all staff levels to help them identify and address safeguarding issues. We offer courses on adult safeguarding, enquiry officer training, safeguarding adult managers, intermediate safeguarding, and modern-day slavery. Customised training on hoarding, human trafficking, and Female Genetical Mutilation is available.

We continue to work closely with training providers to ensure courses are bespoke and address the specific learning needs of the workforce to maintain and develop new and existing skills in safeguarding adults. In the past year we have progressed our learning based on feedback received on the practice nature of our learning and have provided the following:

## Safeguarding Training delivered 2023-24



- Delivery of in-house basic MCA and Safeguarding training
- Launch of Practice & Policy Guide, Induction Checklist, Panel Support Guide – all of which supports Safeguarding practice.
- Failed Visits policy refreshed, and training video produced
- Staff learning session on trauma-informed practice when working with vulnerable parents
- Prepared a "back to basics" safeguarding training for March 2024.
- Further development of the Person in a Position of Trust process
- Learning from cases and incidents to identify good practices and areas for possible development





# Safeguarding Adults Board achievements over 2023-24



The priorities for 2023-24 came from the Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy of 2019-24 and the Spring 2023 SAB workshop. Each priority was built into the business plan relating to the six principles of safeguarding. The importance of supporting people in a personalised way runs throughout these principles in order to promote *'Making Safeguarding Personal'*.

The business plan is monitored by the Safeguarding Adults Board, whilst the work is undertaken via the sub-groups. Each partner agency has worked to ensure their organisation continues to provide a service, that the workforce receives safeguarding training and understands how to recognise abuse respond to it.

We requested input from our partners regarding the impact of their work on the SAB and the six principles of Safeguarding. A summary of the work carried out against each principle are shown in the next slides.



# Some of our achievements from partners



## Principle 1: Empowerment

*People should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions. Ensuring services are more personal, giving people choice and control over decisions and asking people what they want the outcome to be.*

**Tower Hamlets Council:** "Audits require auditors to speak to people with lived experience to gain their direct feedback in how service needs are being met. The local authority has recently implemented QR Codes, which enables individuals to provide direct feedback on the services they receive. Targeted discussions are conducted with service user groups, such as those with learning disabilities and carers."

## Principle 2: Prevention

*We should work together to stop abuse before it happens through raising awareness about abuse and neglect, training staff, making sure clear, simple and accessible information is available about abuse and where people can get help.*

**North-East London Integrated Care Board:** "The ICB has developed a set of safeguarding standards, designed to be used in the commissioning of new services. The comprehensive standards provide assurance with regards to the safeguarding functions of any newly commissioned service and form part of the contract agreement."

## Principle 3: Proportionality

*When dealing with abuse situations we must ensure that they always think about the risk. Any response should be appropriate to the risk presented. Services must respect the person, think about what is best for them and only get involved as much as needed.*

**Barts Health Trust:** "For safeguarding adult, domestic abuse, and related concerns there are numerous specialist teams onsite that can provide oversight, support, and complex case work. For example, all safeguarding adult and domestic abuse referrals will be sent to the Royal London Safeguarding Team and where need, the safeguarding specialists can provide direct support to staff and will see patients."



# Some of our achievements from partners



## Principle 4: Protection

*We must ensure that they know what to do when abuse has happened by what to do if there are concerns, how to stop the abuse and how to offer help and support for people who are at risk*

**AGE UK East London**, "We have an established Equality, Diversity & Inclusion group. All staff are trained in this area, and we have allies within the EDI group. Our customer feedback takes into consideration those with lived experiences, and we will be establishing a steering group for our hospital services to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the population."

## Principle 5: Partnership

*Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.*

**East London Foundation Trust**: "There has been progress is working in an integrated way and improving communication with partners. There has been better use of MDT support, enabling practitioners to identify risks, share information and developed shared robust risk assessments."

## Principle 6: Accountability

*Safeguarding is everybody's business. Everyone must accept that we are all accountable as individuals, services and as organisations. Roles and responsibilities must be clear so that people can see and check how safeguarding is done.*

**Providence Row**: "We are confident where we believe that something is preventable we embed the learning from our own experience of the person and SAR findings into our practice. We use SAR internally to talk about and reflect and identify training needs. This can be challenging however with high staff turnover and capacity issues."



# Summary of achievements by the Safeguarding Adults Board and partner agencies (continued)



## Our priority last year:

*Involve service users with lived experience into the work of the SAB, particularly around community engagement activity*

## What we have done:

Tower Hamlets collaborates closely with individuals who have firsthand experience, particularly through the Annual Social Care User survey. Findings from the survey is shared with the SAB to understand service user feedback on a range of issues related to safeguarding and service user experience.

To help understand service user needs, the council has recently implemented QR Codes, which enable individuals with firsthand experience to promptly provide direct feedback on the services they have received. Targeted discussions are conducted with service user groups, such as those with learning disabilities and carers, to gather feedback on areas of success and identify areas for further enhancement.

People with lived experience are encouraged to complete a 'What do you think?' questionnaire each time an intervention is completed. Beginning in April 2024, plans are in place for telephone feedback using the 'What Do You Think' through the Council's business support teams. Example of feedback received includes:

*'I was very happy with the conversation we had and felt that matters were in capable hands. So, no suggestions as felt I received very good service'*

*'Very professional and took time to explain when I was not clear about something'*

## Our priority last year:

*To review of audit schedules for partner agencies and identify which audits may be of relevance to group and the SAB's priorities*

## What we have done:

The Quality Assurance and Performance subgroup meet quarterly to discuss the strategic direction of safeguarding activities and emerging concerns within Tower Hamlets. They make key recommendations to the Board through reviewing data and monitoring trends that provides insight and leads to escalation if required.

The subgroup carried out a full audit review on Safeguarding Adult Collection 2022-23 that was submitted to NHS Digital. The audit was able to understand trends in volumes of safeguarding concerns raised and enquiries conducted. Highlighting a continuous decline in the number of Safeguarding concerns received and a drop in Section 42 enquiries commenced when compared nationally. The subgroup was able put forward an improvement plan to better reflect the learnings identified, work closely with referrals made from partners, address data quality issues and promote safeguarding awareness.

An audit review took place at Barts Health on Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs). This was in response to an external audit that there was limited assurance regarding staff understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. An improvement plan was put in place that consisted tighter protocols and a co-ordinated training plans to support staff in evidencing their learning.



# Summary of achievements by the Safeguarding Adults Board and partner agencies



## Our priority last year:

*Engage with the community around safeguarding using different channels and networks to raise safeguarding awareness*

## What we have done:

Previously the Community Engagement subgroup of the SAB organised safeguarding awareness through the promotion of an animated video on YouTube called 'What is Safeguarding Adults?'; Further work is taking place to promote the video in various languages locally known in the borough and have it promoted in waiting areas such as at GPs, hospitals.

The subgroup is in early stages of developing a potential dedicated SAB website to provide access to information, so people know where to go and who to speak to in a timely and effective way. It would allow Partners to share key pieces of work and information they are doing based on the Board's priorities.

A dedicated Community Safeguarding Conference has been organised for November of this year. This event aims to provide an opportunity for the local community to identify safeguarding concerns and seek support for themselves and others who may be at risk. Representatives from various local organisations will be delivering presentations on a variety of safeguarding topics, including homelessness, learning disabilities, domestic abuse, advocacy, hate crime, and additional relevant issues.

## Our priority last year:

*Continue to better embed learning and monitor actions from Safeguarding Adult Reviews*

## What we have done:

The SAB commissioned a themed Safeguarding Adults Review of two adults with similar health issues and complexities, which was published in March 2024. A 7-minute briefing has been put together that has been shared with partners and at their respective safeguarding team meetings.

SAR learning from already published reviews were monitored by the SAR subgroup throughout the year, with work underway to ensure that previous SAR recommendations are thoroughly embedded and evidenced. It is a standing item both in the SAR subgroup and for the SAB to monitor. Our SAR Action Tracker is continuously audited to support partners in managing updates from which we have seen 80% of SAR recommendations updated over the course of the year.

There were 4 new case discussions for potential Safeguarding Adults Reviews considered by the SAR Sub-Group during 2023-24 and 1 case has been agreed for a full review. Following on from this 1 case, we have held a multi-agency learning event with practitioners and managers to highlight the findings in this thematic review of good practice and areas for reflection and improvement.



# Summary of achievements by the Safeguarding Adults Board and partner agencies



Our priority last year:

*Continue to deliver safeguarding training to colleagues and staff across the partnership ensuring it is accessible and effective*

**What we have done:**

The Learning and Communication subgroup of the SAB organised the annual Safeguarding Conference in November 2023 with over 200 attendees present. This year's Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Conference looked at the impact Homelessness, Substance Misuse and Mental Capacity has on our residents as it is one of our priorities for the Safeguarding Adults Board..

The event brought together experts, professionals, and partner organisations to discuss and share insights on the work they do to support our residents. We were able to raise awareness, share best practices, and empower individuals to play an active role in safeguarding.

We were able to share and explore opportunities and learning on the following areas at the event

- **'Homelessness & Substance Misuse in Tower Hamlets'** by Public Health
- **'Tower Hamlets Perspective – working to support people experiencing homelessness and substance misuse'** By Change Grow Live (RESET) and Providence Row
- **'Homelessness, Substance misuse and Mental Capacity'** by Professor Michael Preston-Shoot
- **'Housing Options Pathways'** by Housing Options Team
- **'Flexible Support Fund and Easements'** by Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)



# Safeguarding Adults Reviews



Section 44 of the Care Act 2014 places a duty on Safeguarding Adults Boards to arrange a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR), in cases where an adult has died or experienced significant harm or neglect. The purpose is to ensure learning from the lessons and to prevent situations occurring again. *In 2023-24, there was **one** Safeguarding Adults Review that has now been completed – Mrs O and Mrs N. Full details of all published Safeguarding Adults Reviews can be found on the Tower Hamlets website: [Safeguarding adults reviews \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults-reviews)*

The Safeguarding Adults Review Sub-Group meets to consider all referrals for potential Safeguarding Adults Reviews. The referral is reviewed by the SAR Panel against the criteria and a recommendation is made to the SAB as to whether a SAR should take place. There were **4** new case discussions for potential Safeguarding Adults Reviews considered by the SAR Sub-Group during 2023-24 and **1** case that was agreed for a full review and is currently due for completion – ***Hindered Access Thematic Review.***

Miriam was 70 years old and White British. She lived with her husband in accommodation with evidence of hoarding. There were concerns about self-neglect, and her husband's alleged coercive and controlling behaviour. This included refusing access to health and social care practitioners. No inquest has been held with respect to her death, which occurred in April 2021. A further case that was captured within the same SAR related to Cedric an 87 years old, White British male. His wife had died in November 2021, after which he continued to live with his son. He was increasingly bedbound, with reported pressure sores and a leg ulcer. Concerns focused on his son's alleged coercion and control, which included denying access to practitioners. His son was reported to have mental health difficulties. Cedric died in March 2022 in hospital.

This SAR is still to be finalised, however initial learning for partners involved includes timeliness of legal advice especially in complex and challenging cases, the robustness of data collection including performance information on carers assessments and the provision of guidance regarding the role of MARAC and other panels and their interface with formal adult safeguarding procedures.

Work to address these and other recommendations has already started and will be tracked through the regular SAR Sub Group.



# Implementation and learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews



We also continue to learn and implement recommendations from previous SARs. This includes the following.

## ***Learnings and recommendations to inform and include:***

- Strengthening our **Mental Care Act** understanding and application
- Improving our **partnership working** and communication
- **Reviewing** with partner agencies where there are gaps to be filled in available policies and procedures
- **Produce and disseminate** multi-agency procedures for working with people e.g. self-neglect toolkit
- **Commissioning a multi-agency case file** audit to seek assurance about the timely seeking of legal advice in complex and challenging cases, and to take any action indicated when the audit reports

## ***We are driving forward practice change in the following ways:***

- Ensuring our training partners fully understand our **development needs** and they are robustly meeting our learning needs
- Working with trainers to include LBTH case studies and ensure learning is strongly connected to real practice and **the needs of Tower Hamlets residents**
- Ensuring that our safeguarding audit tool and guidance allows us to focus more keenly on practice development areas, reflect the **6 safeguarding principles** (Care Act, 2014) and align with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings
- Employing **Thematic Safeguarding audits** (in addition to our annual Safeguarding 'deep-dive' Audit and biannual practice audits)
- Reviewing our **referral pathways** for ASC to receive timely advice and support in safeguarding cases related to Mental Health

## ***Monitoring recommendations and developing best practices through:***

- Continuous monitoring of our internal SAR Tracking system to ensure SAR recommendations **are actioned and evidenced**.
- Escalating **issues, concerns and delays** through recording meeting minutes and holding partners to account in speeding the recommended actions up as updated in our terms of reference.
- The ability to share the work done in the implementation of **SAR recommendations** by Partners through the annual report.





# Adult Social Care Peer Review



From January 2024, all Councils across England will start to be inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), in relation to Adult Social Care (ASC). This will involve inspections of Adult Social Care departments and examining the wider systems that they are a part of, according to how well we are meeting our statutory responsibilities and delivering high quality services.

A peer review is designed to help local authorities and its partners assess current achievements, areas for development and capacity to change. The peer challenge is not an inspection. Instead, it offers a supportive approach, undertaken by friends – albeit '*critical friends*' with no surprises. The information was gathered anonymously to encourage a transparent and sincere exchange, and the feedback from the team members is provided in good faith.

Tower Hamlets requested a Peer Review as part of the preparation for inspection, which took place between Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The Peer Review focused on **two** of the four CQC thematic areas:

- **How We Work With People** - This includes assessing needs (including unpaid carers), supporting people to live healthier lives, prevention, well-being, information and advice)
- **Leadership** - Scope of assessment includes capable and compassionate leaders, learning, improvement, innovation and governance

## How did the Peer Review work?

- The Peer Review is a peer-led assessment to highlight our areas of strength and development. The team consists of senior council officers from other councils.
- The Peer Review process involves a three-day visit in which the team will meet with staff, partners, people with lived experience and other relevant stakeholders.
- A self-assessment setting out how we think we're doing has been provided to the team, and a case audit has been undertaken.

## What was the outcome of the Peer Review?

After completing their review, the SAB has much to be proud of its role in Adult Social Care, which was reflected in the Peer Team's report:

- *"Safeguarding Practice evidence is good along with the pathway for safeguarding."*
- *"Good evidence of learning from SAR's and Domestic Homicides."*
- *"Safeguarding – Protection plans routinely shared with District Nurses and health partners. "*
- *"Safeguarding Board is Multi- Agency, reported to be working well with strong evidence on the Website."*



# What to do if you are worried about an adult

If you think you or someone you know is being abused or neglected, you should call the telephone hotline on **0300 303 6070**.

You can also email [enquiry@towerhamletsconnect.org](mailto:enquiry@towerhamletsconnect.org)

You can also visit your local library, Idea Store or leisure centre during opening hours where staff can help you to report abuse.

If you think a crime has been committed and it's an emergency, you should call **999**. For non-emergencies call 101.

