



SUNDERLAND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN

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COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Aim of the Strategy

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure adults are safeguarded. The Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) takes a proactive approach to safeguarding and is committed to promoting the safety, health and wellbeing of adults at risk of abuse and neglect and their family carers.

A key component of achieving effective safeguarding adults activity and outcomes in Sunderland is good and inclusive communication and engagement with key stakeholders, including multi-agency staff and members of the public. The aim of this strategy is to set out the different ways that the SSAB will raise awareness and promote key messages about how to safeguard adults – recognising the signs of abuse and neglect, and what to do if you suspect or know that harm or abuse has occurred.

Working together with other key partnerships to effectively communicate key messages around how to safeguard adults is pivotal to achieving this aim: the SSAB maintains good links with the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership, Health & Wellbeing Board, Safer Sunderland Partnership, Sunderland Domestic Abuse Board, and other key stakeholders. The SSAB also aims to keep the local community informed about the importance of safeguarding adults.

Purpose of the Strategy

This strategy will support the SSAB in achieving the communication and engagement element of its activity, linked to the User Engagement work within its [Strategic Delivery Plan](#).

The SSAB has a partnership approach that places the welfare of individuals at risk of abuse or neglect before systems and processes. All partners of the SSAB have a role to play, which includes sharing our key safeguarding adults messages as widely as possible.

The SSAB and its partners are committed to:

- Continued awareness raising activities.
- Promotion of: 'safeguarding is everyone's business and responsibility'.
- Raising the profile of the following six key principles of safeguarding practice:
 - Empowerment
 - Prevention
 - Proportionality
 - Protection
 - Partnership
 - Accountability
- Involving and engaging with service users & carers, the wider public, key stakeholders and partners through a range of accessible engagement activities; and using the learning from these activities to improve our services, our processes to safeguard adults and to inform our strategic plans.

- Continued promotion of safeguarding of adults with our partners, the wider community, and stakeholders.

Our Communication & Engagement Principles

The SSAB will communicate messages that are:

- Clear and straight forward
- Timely
- Accessible
- Relevant and targeted based on local needs and related research

The SSAB will:

- Encourage two-way communication
- Use and share feedback to inform and drive change

Our Communication & Engagement Pledge

Supporting, recognising and valuing the importance of individual's contributions and views and using these to inspire, influence, and inform future work is essential for the SSAB.

The SSAB pledges to ensure that:

1) All our partners and the wider workforce are knowledgeable and committed to effective communication and engagement by:

- Promoting a culture where all views and feedback gathered from staff and individuals is of value
- Openly sharing the learning from relevant case studies, to highlight areas for improvement and share examples of good practice
- Being transparent about sharing the learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (and other strategic reviews such as Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs), Children's Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), Learning Disability Mortality Reviews (LeDeR), and other types of learning reviews as appropriate) to support improvements to practice and services

2) The views and feedback gathered from local individuals are used to inspire future work, support the setting of priorities, influence policy, and inform decision making by:

- Respecting and acting on the views and feedback gathered (inclusive of our safeguarding arrangements, publications, and our website) to promote best practice and make improvements to processes and staff training
- Providing information and seeking feedback in a range of accessible formats such as easy read versions, British Sign Language.

How will we engage?

A key component of engagement is seeking feedback on our activities to safeguard adults at risk of abuse and neglect in Sunderland. The SSAB is committed to using a diverse range of consistent and good quality communication and engagement opportunities that reach as wide a group of the local community and staff as possible.

Examples include (not exhaustive):

- Attending and involving forums (e.g. Healthwatch, reference groups)
- Face-to-face interaction with individuals (e.g. speaking to those who are subject to the safeguarding adults process to gain their views and desired outcomes)
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Public events and roadshows
- Social media
- Radio campaigns (regional and local)

Key Communications & Engagement Relationships

The SSAB is committed to communicating and engaging with a wide range of groups and stakeholders to share its key messages around safeguarding adults. This includes between members of the SSAB and its Sub Committees, with wider partners and organisations in Sunderland, and with the local community.

How will we communicate?

We will use a variety of ways to communicate our key messages around safeguarding adults and seek feedback, for example:

- Annual Reports
- Strategic Plans
- Electronic Communications (e.g. the Safeguarding Adults & Children Leaflet, the SSAB Newsletter)
- Public and Partner events
- Safeguarding Adults Board Website: www.sunderlandsab.org.uk (including links to national & regional resources such as good practice, guidance, topic-specific websites, animations, etc)
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Procedures
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults training offer for staff and volunteers
- Publishing Safeguarding Adult Review reports and sharing the learning from these and other relevant reviews as noted on page 3.
- Multi-agency briefings on safeguarding adults topics, e.g. '7-minute briefing' one-page summary format
- Case studies
- SSAB Training Offer for staff (trainer-led & e-learning)
- Radio and other media campaigns
- Social media engagement, e.g. Safeguarding Adults Board X (formerly Twitter) account: [@SunderlandSAB](https://twitter.com/SunderlandSAB)
- Survey activities
- Press releases/media statements
- Sharing findings from audits with partners to improve processes and services
- Through partner organisations

Communications Quality Standards

The SSAB will make every effort to ensure that its communications and information are both inclusive and accessible, meeting any related statutory requirements, by:

- Using the Board logo and branding for all SSAB communications
- Writing all information in clear and plain language
- Using Arial font size 12 as the standard typeface
- Providing a statement on where to access information in different formats (e.g. large print, Braille, other languages, Easy Read, BSL, Audio or other electronic formats). We will make every effort to make these available on request. If it has not been possible to produce the requested format, the inquirer will be informed of the reason and an alternative format will be sought and agreed with them
- Consistently applying all communication methods, being mindful of equality and diversity

In addition, the SSAB will periodically explore new and innovative ways to communicate to ensure it is making the best use of the available resources.

Key Messages

The SSAB maintains a preventative and proactive approach to safeguarding adults, which includes the communication of key messages. The SSAB will:

- Raise the profile of and help people understand the different types of abuse, including the categories of abuse added to the Care Act 2014
- Raise the profile of and help people understand the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal, to ensure person-led and person-centred safeguarding with an outcomes focused approach is at the core of our Safeguarding Adults processes and related activity
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people to stay safe
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people to raise and report concerns about the safety and wellbeing of an adult or carer (including self-reporting)
- Commission appropriate training programmes that include the learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and other reviews
- Use feedback from individuals to help inform us whether our safeguarding adults arrangements place them at the heart of the process and are meeting their outcomes
- Seek assurance at regular intervals from all partners of the Board that they are taking a personalised approach to safeguarding adults which supports our strategic vision and aims
- Promote the work of the Board with openness and transparency and make public our achievements and challenges, e.g. Annual Report
- Share the learning from a range of local and national activities, e.g. Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- Listen to the views of front-line staff, and support them in their work through effective strategic activity and decision making

Our Success Measures

The SSAB will continually monitor, review and report upon achievements and areas of challenge. Reporting will be via briefings and reports, e.g. Annual Report.

Measures of success in achieving effective communication and engagement will include (not exhaustive):

- Numbers in attendance at public/partner and/or SSAB events, and taking account of discussion themes and feedback from attendees at those events
- Partner contributions to SARs and other review processes
- Partner contributions to the Board's Annual Report
- Partner contributions to audits and other assurance activity
- Website hits for the SSAB website and partner websites
- Completed surveys and findings from surveys
- Completed self-assessment tools
- Reporting rates following campaigns e.g. radio or social media awareness-raising campaigns
- Training Evaluations (both on-the-day and follow-up evaluation exercises)
- High rates of outcomes recording and feedback from service users involved in the safeguarding adults process
- Increased awareness of how people can help to safeguard adults at risk of abuse and neglect

Communication Links and Media

The SSAB is open and transparent in its work and there may be occasions where there is media interest in this. It is important that SSAB members are aware of when to report any issues that may lead to media attention or that require escalation to the Independent Chair.

Potential issues that may require further discussion with the Board or the Independent Chair include, for example:

- Media attention e.g. press/TV/internet, about adults with care and support needs and/or at risk of abuse and neglect and carers within the local area, which raises issue about how the SSAB has provided challenge, influence and assurance in relation to safeguarding adults at risk of abuse and neglect
- Media attention e.g. mystery shopper/undercover/whistleblowing activity that highlights issues about how the SSAB's partners safeguarded people and there is learning to explore
- There are serious concerns from partners or an escalation of concerns for services commissioned by partners of the SSAB and a decision to decommission has been agreed
- Media attention about adults with care and support needs and/or at risk of abuse and neglect or carers who have been injured or died (further guidance is available from the SSAB Safeguarding Adult Review Protocol, available at www.sunderlandsab.org.uk)

For all the above instances, all members of the SSAB should consider their own organisational role and should notify the relevant Senior Officers and Safeguarding Leads within their organisation if appropriate. Members should refer to their own internal communication teams and Safeguarding Leads for advice and support.

Following advice, and if appropriate, contact should be made with the Board's Strategic Safeguarding Team (Business Unit) to ensure instances are recorded. The Board's Strategic Safeguarding Team (Business Unit) will inform the SSAB Independent Chair of the relevant details and contact information to take forward.

Monitoring, Review & Evaluation

All Board communication and engagement activities will be conducted in line with legally required standards & processes. If required, advice or clarification may be sought from the local authority's Communications Team or Legal Services.

The Quality Assurance Sub Committee will review this Communication & Engagement Strategy on a 3-yearly basis on behalf of the SSAB, and will consider any local, regional, or national learning and guidance that will inform that activity.

The Quality Assurance Sub Committee will review the Activity section of the Communications & Engagement Plan element on a more regular basis, at least twice per year, to ensure activities are current and take advantage of linkages with other national & local dates/events/communications, in particular those of partner agencies.

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

A. Methodology

Methodology	Description
Bulletins/Newsletters	Quality of submissions, contributions and links to other documents and organisations. E.g. SSAB Newsletter (quarterly).
Events & Focus Groups	Attendance at partner and other agencies engagement forums. Bespoke focus groups on particular safeguarding adults themed topics.
Feedback Routes	People are welcome to submit their feedback through a variety of formats and alternative languages, in whichever way suits them, for consideration by the SSAB.
Partner Websites	Volume and quality of activity of partner's websites linked to SSAB Communications & Engagement Strategy.
Press & Radio	Activity to help promote the work of the Board and some of the key issues as these arise throughout the year, e.g. Safeguarding Adults Radio Campaign (regional, last held April 2021; local, last held 2023) and Safeguarding Adults Week (yearly in November).
Public Advertising	Activity in relation to the publication of awareness raising materials in public places (cost/benefit analysis). An assessment of effective links with partner agencies.
Strategic Meetings	Board's Strategic Plan and Annual Report considered and discussed, leading to higher level strategic objectives being created.
Social Media	Further development of social media links.
Surveys	Service user surveys for formal consultation (e.g. Adult Social Care annual survey; SSAB annual service user survey) and other snapshot surveys as required. Surveys available in a range of formats. Action plans are then formed and carried out using feedback from surveys.
Training	As described within the SSAB Training Strategy. Activity helps to indirectly improve awareness of the Board's work and links to prevention outcomes.
Website	Volume and location of activity, and connectivity to key parts of the site.

B. Key Stakeholders

Group	Level of Influence & Involvement	Activity
Service Users	Key Player	Links through feedback as part of the safeguarding adults process and any general engagement via feedback given, events, website and/or surveys.
Carers & Personal Assistants	Key Player	General engagement via events, website and or surveys. Ongoing feedback whilst undertaking their caring (paid or unpaid) role.
Board members	Key Player	Board's formal meetings & structure, bulletins, events, website, surveys, Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).
Professionals & Practitioners	Key Player	Board's formal meetings & structure, bulletins, events, website, surveys, QAF.
Any Other Organisation	Show Consideration	General engagement via events, website and or surveys.
Advocates	Show Consideration	General engagement via events, website and or surveys.
General Public	Show Consideration	General engagement via events, website and or surveys. 'Problem noticers': the 'eyes and ears' in the community – raising a concern if they think an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect.
Healthwatch	Show Consideration	Board's formal meetings & structure, bulletins, events, website and surveys.
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	Show Consideration	Contact via Business Units and some formal contact through the Board's structure.
Community Safety Partnership	Meet Their Needs	Links via representation on the Board meetings.
Health & Wellbeing Board	Meet Their Needs	Board Independent Chair or other Board representatives attending meetings periodically.
Overview & Scrutiny Boards	Meet Their Needs	Board Independent Chair or other Board representatives attending meetings periodically.
Press & Media	Arm's Length – as and when required	Press releases, interviews.
Regional & National	Arm's Length – as and when required	Strategic Safeguarding Team (Business Unit) linked into Regional SAB's Network (including SAR Champions sub group of this) and National SAB's Network via email and meetings. Board Independent Chair linked into National SAB Chairs Network. Partner agencies feed back on relevant regional or national meetings attended.

C. Communications & Engagement Activity

Each current year's activity will be set out in the 'Safeguarding Adults: Targeted Communications & Engagement Activity' document which sits alongside this Communications & Engagement Strategy & Plan. The table below shows some examples (not exhaustive) of the categories and types of activity that might take place.

ACTIVITY:	EXAMPLES:
Newsletters & Bulletins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSAB Newsletter released at least 3 times per year • Partner agencies' newsletters and bulletins shared and also highlighted on social media where appropriate
Events (link safeguarding adults awareness-raising into these existing campaigns)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSAB's local activity in relation to the safeguarding awareness-raising campaign: National Safeguarding Adults Week (November each year) • Partner agencies' events throughout the year • Safeguarding Conferences/Workshops/Learning Events • Use of www.awarenessdays.com to help SSAB and partners highlight relevant campaigns and circulate safeguarding messages in conjunction with them • Learning from SARs events • Joint Workshops with the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) on a range of safeguarding topics
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSAB (via partner agencies & Healthwatch) to tap into existing groups e.g. residents/service users/advocates, to gain views and feedback on aspects of its work; e.g. this method was used in production of SSAB's Safeguarding Adults Easy Read Guide.
Partner Websites 'Front Page News'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner agencies to highlight SSAB website, link to SSAB newsletter and SSAB events such as safeguarding conferences/workshops/learning events or the National Safeguarding Adults Week campaign, as well as highlighting their own internal activity to promote safeguarding adults.
Safeguarding Adults Posters & Leaflet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSAB Posters (2 designs, refreshed 2024) available to download from www.sunderlandsab.org.uk • Safeguarding Adults & Children Leaflet (refreshed 2022) available to download from www.sunderlandsab.org.uk and www.safeguardingchildrensunderland.com
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018/19, 2022/23 & 2023/24: Service User Survey (of people who have gone through the safeguarding adults process) – commissioned by SSAB and undertaken by Healthwatch. Further survey planned for 2025/26. • 2018: Training Needs Analysis Survey (of multi-agency staff) to inform review of future training plans • Results of relevant surveys undertaken by partner agencies to be fed into SSAB as appropriate. Assurance exercises on service user surveys undertaken by partners were carried out in 2022 & 2023. Assurance exercise re: what safeguarding

	messages partner agencies had shared with public & staff was carried out in 2024 & is being followed up on to get a progress update in 2025.
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