

Committee: **Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Date: 9th February 2021

Wards: All

Subject: Merton Safeguarding Annual Report

Lead officer: John Morgan, Assistant Director Adult Social Care, Community & Housing

Lead member: Councillor Rebecca Lanning, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Contact officer: Tricia Pereira Head of Operations, Adult Social Care, Community & Housing

Recommendations:

This report provides Scrutiny Committee Members with an overview of the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) Annual Report for 2019/20. The report summarises safeguarding activity undertaken in that period by the Council and its key partners and the performance data figures to date.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safeguarding Adults Annual Report is published retrospectively and reflects on the work undertaken for a previous period. This is due to the process in which, the Department of Health and Social Care collate the national annual data returns. The data is collated and retrospectively published as a national document. As such, the data for the period 2019/20 has not yet been published and cannot be reported on. We are only now publishing the data for 2018/19.

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and partners should work to support and protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. The Safeguarding Adults at risk is a key corporate priority and is integral to all the relevant key plans for adult social care.

The Local Authorities statutory responsibilities amongst other duties include:

- Make enquiries, or request others to make them, when concerns have been raised or they think an adult with care and support needs may be at risk of abuse or neglect in order to need to find out what action may be needed

- Lead a multi-agency local adult safeguarding system that seeks to prevent abuse and neglect and stop it quickly when it happens
- Establish a Safeguarding Adults Boards, including the local authority, NHS and police, which will develop, share and implement a joint safeguarding strategy

3 MERTON SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD (MSAB)

- 3.1 The Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) is a statutory function, under Section 43 of the Care Act 2014. The Board is responsible for writing and publishing the Annual Safeguarding Report.
- 3.2 The MSAB operates at a strategic level. Supporting and protecting adults in Merton from abuse and neglect, through co-ordinating and reviewing the multi-agency approach to safeguarding, across all member organisations. The approach that the MSAB takes directly influences how frontline safeguarding operations are carried out in each member organisation.
- 3.3 The Local Authority and the Board has oversight on all adult safeguarding across the local area. Collaboration and co-operation are fundamental to gathering safeguarding intelligence across the whole borough and is key to the effectiveness of the MSAB. As such, the Board is made up of various local organisation's both statutory members (Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and Police) and non-statutory members (provider health services, fire, probation, Healthwatch and the voluntary sector and other provider services).

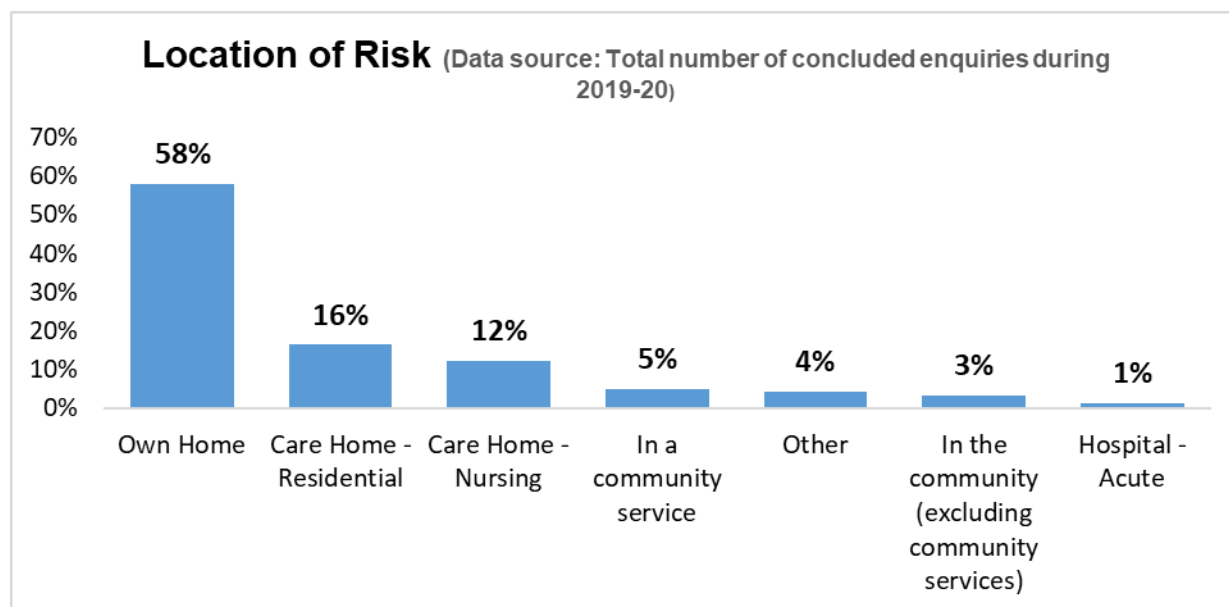
4. MERTON ADULTS' SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

- 4.1 The MSAB Annual Report (attached Appendix 1) contains a forward by the Board's Independent Chair Teresa Bell who took up post in 2016. This is a fixed term, three-year tenure, which ended in December 2019. The new Chair is Aileen Buckton MBE who started in this role in March 2020. However given Teresa Bell was the independent chair for the period in question; she has written and approved the forward for the report.
- 4.2 The Annual Report is an important function of the MSAB and provides an update on the multi-agency work undertaken to raise awareness in order to safeguard adults in Merton.
- 4.3 The annual report demonstrates that engagement with residents, the council and other agencies is improving and through the systems in place have provided feedback on the effectiveness of the Merton arrangements for safeguarding adults.

5. A PERSONALISED APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDING

5.1 The 'Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)' principles continue to be at the centre of safeguarding adults work in Merton. It is about engaging with people about the outcomes they want at the beginning and middle of working with them, and then ascertaining the extent to which those outcomes were realised at the end. Furthermore, that we become involved only as much as the person states they need us to and that we take the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. This has been a strength in Merton in previous years and in 2019/20 we have focused on further strengthening the recording of outcomes and managing risk, in order to demonstrate an accurate reflection of our safeguarding activity in the national data collection dashboard.

5.2 LOCATION OF RISK



5.3 During 2019/20 the location of the alleged abuse was broadly in line with national picture. In response to our findings, further work is underway to ensure mechanisms are in place to gather accurate information from partners regarding safeguarding concerns, as well as raising awareness of the safeguarding adult reporting process.

6. HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT: SAFEGUARDING DATA, BENCHMARKING AND UPDATES FROM 2019/20

Year	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Total number of Adult Safeguarding Concerns raised during	732	483	322
Total number of Adult Safeguarding Enquiries commenced	366	98	80
Conversion Rate (Number of Section 42 Enquiries + Number of Other	50%	20%	25%

6.1 During 2019/20, 732 concerns were received by Merton Local Authority in total. This is significantly higher than the number of reported concerns raised in 2018/19.

6.2 The data also shows a significant improvement in the numbers of Section 42 enquires (a response to indications of abuse or neglect in relation to an adult with care and support needs who are at risk and are unable to protect themselves because of those needs) and the overall conversion rate increased from 20% to 50%. This figure is above the national average and a positive improvement in Merton.

6.3 In 2018/19 we identified issues in the way we recorded safeguarding information on our database. Although we were sure from our records that practitioners were upholding the principles of ‘Making Safeguarding Personal’ and that the risks for people had been reduced, the way we recorded outcomes did not reflect this. As a result, we reviewed and updated our recording processes on our database to ensure they reflected our performance management requirements, as well as capturing outcomes for our service users. This meant that our conversion rates from concerns to enquiries would be more accurate going forward.

7. ACTION TAKEN TO IMPROVE AND SUSTAIN PRACTICE

7.1 As part of our response to improve recording from our data in 2018/2019, practitioners went through a series of training workshops to refresh their knowledge of the safeguarding process. As stated in 6.3, data for this year, in relation to concerns converted to enquiries, have improved considerably.

7.2 Mapping of the Safeguarding Pathways on our information system Mosaic continues as we respond to changes, for example the current pandemic. This is to ensure we are collecting the information and data required for continuous learning and improvement.

7.3 A quality assurance framework has now been embedded with regular audits undertaken on our safeguarding work. This has highlighted good practice as well as practice, that needs improvement, which we are working on.

7.4 Work is underway in the MSAB subgroups with our partners to raise awareness of the safeguarding adult reporting processes, to improve our responses to adults at risk in the community. We have four subgroups;

- **Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Sub Group;** Oversees the safeguarding adult review process when they meet the criteria. Ensures learning from reviews are identified and shared effectively.
- **Learning and Development Sub Group;** Oversees the learning and development strategy, including training across the partnership. Works alongside the SAR Sub Group to ensure learning from SAR's are included in training plans as required.
- **Performance & Quality Sub Group;** Has oversight of performance and quality of safeguarding activity, through developing robust mechanisms across the partnership, which assure good practice to safeguard adults at risk.
- **Communication and Engagement Sub Group;** Oversees communication and engagement to improve engagement with a wider range of stockholders, including service users and carers, on behalf of the Board.

8. SAFEGUARDING ADULT REVIEWS (SAR)

8.1 A Safeguarding Adults Review is a legal duty under the Care Act 2014. The purpose of a SAR is to learn from cases, on a multi- agency level, to prevent similar incidents occurring. The aim is not to apportion blame on an organisation or individuals for any failings that may be discovered.

8.2 The Board did not receive any SAR referrals during 2019-20 for consideration. Four reviews have been ongoing and continued throughout 2019-20. These reviews commenced in 2017/18 and have been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. However, two are in the final stages of completion. In 2020/21 we have so far considered two referrals for safeguarding adult reviews.

8.3 There were a number of key areas identified early on in the SAR process. These included focusing on professional curiosity and ownership across the partnership. We have responded to this via reflective practice and learning and sharing at team meetings and more specific training is planned going forward

9. Appendices

The Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) Annual Report 2019/2020

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None