

# Gateshead Safeguarding Adults from Abuse

Safeguarding Adults Board

Annual Report  
2020/21

September 2021

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## Introduction

This is my first annual report as Chair of Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) having taken over from Sir Paul Ennals who stepped down in the summer of 2020. Sir Paul had chaired the Board in Gateshead since 2016 and we're very grateful for his work. I'm especially thankful for the strong position the Board is in as I begin my time Chairing. My thanks also go to the strategic partners and our Business Manager Carole Paz-Uceira who have been a great help as I settle into the role. Finally, I'd also like to offer my thanks to Cynthia Atkin from Healthwatch who very kindly agreed to chair the Board until a permanent replacement could be appointed. I'm privileged to have been a Board member for two years and I'm honoured to be chairing the Board.

Making Safeguarding Personal is central to safeguarding adults. We're all probably familiar with that aim and understand well the goal of ensuring that we make safeguarding person-centred and outcomes focussed, and "move away from process driven approaches to safeguarding."

However during this last year I have witnessed colleagues making safeguarding personal to an even greater extent. Not just by taking a person centred approach, but by taking an increased personal responsibility for safeguarding at a time when our vulnerable residents are at risk like never before, truly making safeguarding personal. Covid-19 and the subsequent measures put in place to protect us all from the pandemic had the potential to exacerbate risks of abuse and neglect for some people by heightening loneliness and isolation and by increasing barriers between people and support services. Especially as some services were forced to retreat from face to face work and rely on other methods.

Navigating this perfect storm has required a partnership approach like never before and the SAB has been a great vehicle to exercise this responsibility, mobilise our response and hold each other to account for the benefit of our most vulnerable residents. This report offers an insight into the work of the Board over the last twelve months, a period in time when we have had to be vigilant to new challenges and open to new approaches.

Colleagues from the Board and across the safeguarding arena in Gateshead have worked incredibly hard over the last year in incredibly difficult circumstances and deserve our heartfelt gratitude.



**Phil Conn**  
**Chair, Gateshead SAB**



## Policy Context

The [Care Act 2014](#) enshrined in law the principles of Safeguarding Adults, which aim to ensure that the most vulnerable members of society are afforded appropriate support and protection, and help them to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible.

[Chapter 14 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#) issued under the Care Act replaces the No Secrets document as the statutory basis for all safeguarding activity. This was updated in March 2016 by the Department for Health.

The Care Act identifies six key principles which underpin all adult safeguarding work and which apply equally to all sectors and settings:

- **Empowerment** – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent
- **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Protection** – support and representation to those in greatest need
- **Partnership** – local solutions through services working with their communities
- **Accountability** – accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice

The Care Act sets out the Safeguarding Adult responsibilities for Local Authorities and their partners. It places a duty upon Local Authorities to establish Safeguarding Adults Boards (SAB) and stipulates that SABs must produce a Strategic Plan and Annual Report. The Statutory Guidance encourages the SAB to link with other partnerships in the locality and share relevant information and work plans.

# Safeguarding in Gateshead

## Gateshead SAB

The Gateshead SAB became a statutory body in April 2015. The Board's vision for adult safeguarding in Gateshead is:

***'Everybody in Gateshead has the right to lead a fulfilling life and should be able to live safely, free from abuse and neglect – and to contribute to their own and other people's health and wellbeing'***

The Board is responsible for assuming the strategic lead and overseeing the work of Adult Safeguarding and Mental Capacity Act arrangements in Gateshead. Within Gateshead we have an Independent Chair to enhance scrutiny and challenge. The Board has a comprehensive [Memorandum of Understanding](#), which is updated annually, and provides a framework for identifying roles and responsibilities and demonstrating accountability.

In law, the statutory members of a SAB are defined as the local authority, the local police force and the clinical commissioning group. However, in Gateshead, we recognise the importance of the contribution made by all of our partner agencies and this is reflected by the wider Board membership (correct as of September 2021):

- Gateshead Council
- Northumbria Police
- Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – on behalf of NHS England, North East Ambulance Service and incorporating GP lead for Adult Safeguarding
- Lay Members
- Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
- South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust (STSFT)
- Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)
- Gateshead College
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)
- Probation Service (NPS)
- Oasis Community Housing
- Connected Voice Advocacy
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Healthwatch Gateshead

## Gateshead SAB arrangements during Covid-19

The UK government imposed a lockdown on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 the government published guidance for the Care Act Easements which were created under the Coronavirus Act 2020. The guidance temporarily relaxed the duties placed on Local Authorities and introduced powers to enable Local Authorities some flexibility in relation to assessments, reviews and meeting individual needs. Whilst some Local Authorities chose to implement the Care Act Easements, Gateshead chose not to implement Easements under the Coronavirus Act.

In March 2020 it was agreed that the scheduled Gateshead SAB meetings, Executive Group and Sub-Groups should be cancelled with immediate effect to enable our partners to respond to the unprecedented challenges brought by Covid-19. In the meantime, critical elements of the Board continued; including communication, assurance and responding to Safeguarding Adult Review referrals.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in new ways of working for the SAB. Partner organisations experienced unprecedented pressure with increased demand for services, diminished staffing levels and the introduction of online meetings where possible. Virtual monthly Safeguarding Partnership Meetings were held instead, enabling the three statutory partners of the SAB and Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) to come together with the Chair and Business Managers to ensure that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and duties continued to operate and be effective.

In May 2020, a fortnightly Safeguarding Adults operational leads meeting commenced to discuss current safeguarding arrangements, significant changes to ordinary practice and specific concerns. Issues discussed during these meetings included the high volume of data requests, support required for rough sleepers who have been moved into accommodation, surge planning, impact of court closures and the perceived increase in complex cases. The meetings continued monthly from July 2020 – December 2020.

## Gateshead SAB Sub-Group arrangements

Learning from our new ways of working, in February 2021 the SAB agreed new sub-group arrangements for the Board:

- **Quality, Learning and Practice Group** (Chaired by a senior manager from Gateshead Council)

The Quality, Learning and Practice Group was established in March 2021 following a restructure of the SAB Sub-Groups. The group is responsible for monitoring and reviewing performance data and driving forward quality via the quality assurance framework, case file audits and monitoring inspection recommendations. The QLP collate and review recommendations from statutory Safeguarding Adult Reviews and discretionary reviews and has oversight of multi-agency safeguarding training. The QLP aims to ensure that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults policy and procedures and supporting practice guidance continue to be fit for purpose. The Group has responsibility for keeping up to date with national policy changes that may impact upon the work of the SAB. The Group also has responsibility for the development and implementation of the Communication and Engagement strategy.

- **Safeguarding Adult Review and Complex Case (SARCC) Group** (Chaired by a senior manager from Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust)

The Safeguarding Adults Review Group (SARCC) consider Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) referrals, commission reviews and subsequently monitor their progress. The SARCC may also oversee discretionary reviews into cases that do not meet the criteria for a SAR, where the group feel that there are multi-agency lessons to be learned. It will collate and review recommendations from SARs and other reviews, ensuring that achievable action plans are developed and that actions are delivered. The SARCC also provides a forum to discuss complex Safeguarding Adult cases that require additional scrutiny and support.

- **Joint Strategic Exploitation Group** (Chaired by a senior officer from Northumbria Police)

The Joint Strategic Exploitation Group is a sub-group of both the SAB and the GSCP. The group is responsible for overseeing all work with respect to all aspects of exploitation including modern slavery, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, trafficking, missing and female genital mutilation in Gateshead.

The Board and the three sub-groups regularly commission time limited task and finish groups to undertake specific pieces of project work.

The SAB agreed to review the role of the Executive Group in 2021/22.

The SAB has developed strong links with other local multi-agency partnerships including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership and Gateshead Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

### **Partner Governance Arrangements and Scrutiny**

Board members are responsible for ensuring that governance arrangements for Safeguarding Adults are incorporated within the structure of their own organisations, and that there are mechanisms for disseminating and sharing information from the SAB. Examples of the governance and scrutiny arrangements for the three statutory partners include:

- **Gateshead Council** – The Care, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive updates from the SAB and key pieces of work are submitted to Cabinet. The SAB performance dashboard and annual mandatory Safeguarding Adults Collection are scrutinised within the Adult Social Care performance clinic and strategic items are shared with the Care, Wellbeing and Learning Group Management Team. The Gateshead Council Internal Audit service provide assurance that the Board and Gateshead Council are meeting their statutory duties.
- **Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group** – An Executive Director holds the lead for the safeguarding portfolio. Following the appointment of a replacement Designated Nurse Safeguarding Adults in September 2020 the Adult Safeguarding Team has maintained a full establishment and have continued to manage the CCGs statutory duties and responsibilities for safeguarding adults. CCG internal assurance is provided via safeguarding reports to the Quality Safety and Risk Group (Quarterly). Reports provide local updates on the work of the safeguarding partnerships and ensure that key safeguarding risks, issues and developments are reported within the CCG. Reports also outline activity relating to Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and other non-statutory reviews such as Appreciative Enquiries.
- **Northumbria Police** – All learning from national and local serious case reviews are scrutinised through the organisational delivery group and the organisational learning log. The organisational learning log is focused on the importance of identifying learning opportunities and



drivers, embedding the value of lessons learned, and helping the organisation to become focused on the importance of continuous learning. Each Area Command and Department has a responsibility to consider drivers for lessons learned and to encourage organisational learning within their areas of business. The organisational learning log is submitted to each Operational Delivery Group (ODG) and Board for discussion and agreement of new actions, and to ensure organisational wide learning has been considered. Agreed recommendations and actions from the relevant ODG or board will be managed by the assigned learning owner. Areas of learning and best practice that require Force wide communication or change are escalated through Strategic Management Board. To ensure consistency of practice and that any themed learning is shared across the force footprint a new Learning and Improvement Detective Inspector post has been created within the Safeguarding department.

### **Strategic Plan 2019/24 and Annual Business Plan 2020/21**

The Gateshead Strategic Plan 2019/24 was approved by the SAB in April 2019. The five-year plan incorporates five strategic priorities:

- **Quality Assurance**
- **Prevention**
- **Communication and Engagement**
- **Operational Practice**
- **Mental Capacity**



The Strategic Plan is supported by an Annual Business Plan 2020/21 to enable the Board to prioritise and focus activity over the five-year period.

## Key Achievements 2020/21

The Annual Report must demonstrate what both the SAB and its members have done to carry out and deliver the objectives of its strategic plan. Some of our key achievements for 2020/21 are documented below and are aligned to the SAB Strategic Priorities.

### ➤ Quality Assurance

- **Learning from Regional and National Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)**  
The Quality and Assurance Group (which subsequently changed to the Quality, Learning and Practice Group in March 2021) review regional and national SARs and relevant Domestic Homicide Reviews. Case details are summarised and the group consider key findings relevant for Safeguarding Adults in Gateshead. Partner agencies are encouraged to share the findings within their own organisations.
- **Regional SAR Champions**  
Gateshead has contributed towards the work of the North East Regional SAR Champion network which was established to improve SAR learning and practice across the region. This group has been very proactive and successful work to date includes:
  - [Publication of North East SAR Quality Marker Checklist](#)
  - Creation of North East Review library via Microsoft Teams – this was developed and hosted by Gateshead Council and continues to be hosted by Gateshead
  - Agreed standard learning improvement template for Review Summaries
- **Recruitment of three new lay members**  
There was a positive response to the advert seeking lay members to join the SAB and GSCP. Following interviews, three lay members were recruited, with their own unique experiences in safeguarding adults and children. An virtual induction workshop was arranged and the lay members attended their first SAB meeting in October 2020.
- **Northumbria Police Strategic Innovation Partnership Team**  
Northumbria Police have recently created a new Strategic Innovation Partnership Team (SIP). This ensures that the same member of the Safeguarding Senior Management Team (SMT) at DCI level attends all six of the Local Authority's Safeguarding Adult's Boards. Within the new SIP team, there is now a learning and improvement function, overseen by a Detective Inspector who will attend all learning and improvement / quality improvement sub-groups, to work with partners to drive and share internal and external learning and improvement. The SIP team will help support the GSAB priorities and provides a consistent and innovative approach to Safeguarding and the development of safeguarding procedures.

➤ **Prevention**

- **Transitional Safeguarding**

Gateshead and South Tyneside Safeguarding Business Units joined forces to organise a regional transitional safeguarding workshop which took place on 23rd February 2021. This was opened by Steve Baguley from the National Working Group, and the keynote speech was provided by Dez Holmes from Research in Practice. Over 170 senior leaders from across the Northumbria and Durham areas attended. National and regional best practice was shared, and senior leaders from Gateshead had the opportunity to come together to discuss our approach and what we need to focus upon in the future.

Fifteen scoping workshops have been held with front line practitioners from children and adults social care to understand issues and gaps associated with the wider transitions agenda. Work is ongoing across all sub-groups of the SAB to drive forward improvements to transitional safeguarding based upon the identified learning.

- **Northumbria Missing Adult Protocol**

One of the recommendations of the Gateshead Winnie Smith Appreciative Inquiry was to develop a shared approach to Adult Missing. Gateshead SAB and Northumbria Police led on the development of the [Northumbria Missing Adults Protocol](#) in partnership with all SABs and Clinical Commissioning Groups within the Northumbria Police Force area. The protocol, which was subsequently launched in November 2020, is designed to ensure a consistent and strategic approach across the Northumbria Police Force footprint and recognises that the missing episode of a vulnerable adult requires a multi-agency response.



(Pictured SAB Business Manager Carole Paz-Uceira and DCI Lynne Colledge at the lunch of the Northumbria Missing Protocol)

The Missing Adults Across Northumbria protocol introduces the Winnie Protocol. This encourages carers and professionals to record useful information which could be used in the event of an adult going missing. This will support Northumbria Police and partners to locate and support the individual in the event of a future missing episode and reduce the risk of

harm. The Winnie Protocol will be particularly useful for those adults who have repeat missing episodes. The Winnie Protocol follows the same principles of the national Herbert Protocol scheme, which was established to protect people with dementia or Alzheimer's who go missing.

Work is ongoing to embed the protocol across the region. This includes presentations at several partnerships such as the Northern Sub Regional Suicide Prevention Group and the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Anti-Slavery Partnership. A comprehensive presentation was also given to the Safeguarding Adult National Network (SANN) led by NHS England and NHS Improvement, which has cited the protocol as best practice.

- **Training**

The Gateshead Council Workforce Development Adviser worked with the SAB, Gateshead Safeguarding Children's Partnership (GCSP) and the Community Safety Partnership to produce a comprehensive training directory for 2020/21. Training courses advertised within the directory are free of charge to practitioners and volunteers within Gateshead. During the pandemic nearly all training was moved to virtual delivery. This was initially quite challenging, however as learners have become accustomed to virtual delivery we have seen course numbers increase and in future we will be looking at offering a mix of both virtual and face to face sessions. The e-learning offer for safeguarding courses has also been developed over the past year, in light of the covid restrictions it has been necessary to provide a range of learning and development options. Some providers requested specific sessions to suit their needs and discuss the changes they had experienced in their services.

Examples of training and awareness raising for the SAB in 2020/21 include:

- ✓ 15 x Care home/ provider reporting concerns Level 1 training courses
- ✓ 17 x Safeguarding Adult reporting concerns Level 2 training courses
- ✓ 2 x Safeguarding Adults Undertaking Enquiries Level 3 training courses
- ✓ 6 x Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA Level 1) Training
- ✓ 2 x Modern Day Slavery
- ✓ 1 x Hate Crime
- ✓ 1 x Mate Crime

In addition, our partner organisations continue to offer a wide range of safeguarding training opportunities. For example, Connected Voice continue to offer 'Introduction to Safeguarding' training for the VCSE sector across Newcastle and Gateshead.

- **The Modern Slavery Liberty Project**

The Changing Lives Northumbria Liberty Project supports victims of modern slavery in the Northumbria area. Linked to the project is the establishment of the Northumbria Modern Slavery Liberty Strategic Group. The purpose of the meeting is to bring together strategic leads to share

practice and knowledge, to discuss current trends and changes identified across Northumbria Police Force area in relation to Modern Slavery. The first meeting of the Liberty Strategic Group took place on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The Gateshead SAB Business Manager is a member of the strategic group, ensuring Gateshead are active participants in shaping the regional approach to Modern Slavery, in particular the Victim Care Pathway.

- **Domestic Abuse**

During 2020/21 Gateshead Community Safety Partnership reconvened the Strategic Domestic Abuse Forum. The forum held its first meeting in January 2021 and is chaired by the CCGs Designated Nurse Safeguarding Adults. The forum will lead the implementation of key requirements of the Domestic Abuse Bill and will eventually become the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board that is required to be established in every Local Authority area under the Domestic Abuse Bill. On 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced funding allocations to local authorities for the delivery of the duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Bill – on the provision of support within domestic abuse safe accommodation. The Domestic Abuse Forum is leading work to agree funding proposals for Gateshead allocation.

- **Homelessness**

Homelessness and supporting homeless households was a significant area of work for safeguarding partners during 2020/21. The Housing Options service was part of The Gateshead Housing Company during the reporting period, and has subsequently moved to Gateshead Council. In the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the Housing Options service offered advice and support to 2793 households. In the same period, the service assessed 1707 homeless households of which 1676 households were accepted as being owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The service also placed 600 households into temporary / emergency accommodation as it responded to those in crisis.

The 2020/21 rough sleeper count for Gateshead was zero, in comparison to 10 in 2018. This reduction has been achieved in partnership with Oasis Community Housing following three rounds of successful funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The funding delivers units of Housing First Accommodation and outreach support for rough sleepers. Oasis Community Housing respond to reports of rough sleeping and carry out regular early morning checks of identified rough sleeping hotspots. In addition to this they provide additional longer-term support and resettlement to rough sleepers have been housed into council accommodation.

Gateshead Council Housing Options and Newcastle Gateshead CCG have jointly funded a 12-month pilot to create a Mental Health link worker

co-located with Oasis Community Housing at Basis. The post is funded from October 2020 to September 2021 and is managed through Mental Health Concern, commissioned by the CCG. The link worker will work with clients experiencing mental ill health and support homeless case workers with advice, guidance and signposting. In addition, this will help inform our learning around supporting health needs for this group and helps bridge a current gap identified whilst primary care networks are established and developed by the CCG.

- **Multiple and Complex Needs Transformation Initiative**

The Gateshead Health and Care System Board, with support from the Gateshead SAB, commissioned the Gateshead Multiple and Complex Needs Transformation Initiative. Several members of the SAB were included on the project oversight panel.

The [final report](#) aims to describe what a better, healthier system would look like and feel like. It presents an approach that puts 'People @ the Heart' by combining a series of drivers for change.

Aspects of the report have been included within the revised Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures. For Example, the new multi-agency safeguarding adult procedures refer to Adults @ the Heart of Safeguarding.



- **Serious Provider Concern Process and Provider Failure process**

Following early learning from the Whorlton Hall abuse scandal in County Durham, the SAB committed to reviewing and updating the Gateshead Serious Provider Concern process and Provider Failure process. Both processes are managed jointly between Gateshead Council and Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group. The updated documents were approved by the SAB during the reporting year, and provide greater clarity about roles and responsibilities when managing concerns about providers and provider failure. The SAB has also sought assurance from Gateshead Council and Newcastle Gateshead CCG regarding the processes and arrangements in place for vulnerable adults placed in Care Settings outside of the Gateshead area.

- **Community Engagement and Communication**

- **Safeguarding Adults Week**

Gateshead SAB Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week was held in November 2020 to coincide with the national safeguarding adult awareness events co-ordinated by the Ann Craft Trust. Although the Covid-19 pandemic reduced opportunities for face to face activities outside

of 'bubbles', Gateshead organisations were still keen to be involved in Safeguarding Adults Week and use the opportunity to raise awareness about different aspects of Safeguarding Adults. Highlights of the week included:

- ✓ Gateshead Millennium Bridge was lit up purple all week as a visual symbol to raise awareness of Safeguarding Adults
- ✓ Launch of the Northumbria Missing Adults Protocol
- ✓ Two virtual Safeguarding Adults Champion network events – providing an opportunity to engage with our Champions and raise awareness about safeguarding work in Gateshead
- ✓ Resource pack sent to all partners containing key messages and potential activities. This resulted in safeguarding news articles on partner websites, newsletters and staff briefings
- ✓ Various awareness raising activities undertaken by providers. For example, service users from Shadon House, Southernwood Promoting Independence Centre and Phoenix Day Centre took part in activities during the week to help raise awareness about safeguarding adults. This included coffee and quizzes, wordsearches, safeguarding tree and awareness raising sessions.



“We had a very proactive afternoon for the safeguarding week. We had afternoon tea with cream cakes. I made a leaflet for every individual to take away and used visual cards and talked about what was on the card. Every service user had a story about being scammed in their home.”



- **Communication during Covid-19**

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic the SAB endeavoured to keep partners up to date with essential and accurate safeguarding information. The Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Business Manager worked with Business Managers across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear to create [Practice Guidance for Safeguarding Adults during Covid-19](#). This re-iterated that safeguarding adult's duties continued to apply and as far as possible it was business as normal. A [Safeguarding Adults training factsheet](#) was produced, with the aim of helping organisations who needed to quickly train up volunteers and redeployees during the pandemic.

The [www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk) website was updated with a Coronavirus section, keeping all of our information in one place. Communication updates were provided via our email circulation lists and our Safeguarding Adult Champions. A Covid-19 update was provided at every SAB meeting by Directors from Public Health and the Gateshead System. Safeguarding Adults was actively promoted during the pandemic, with Safeguarding Adult information and banners placed at testing sites and vaccination hubs

SAB Partners all played a vital role in sharing essential information. For example, Connected Voice Advocacy led a local campaign to challenge the myth that advocacy was no longer applicable due to the Coronavirus Act.

### ➤ **Improved Operational Practice**

- **Responding to Covid-19**

The commitment of partners to ensuring that safeguarding adults remained a priority in Gateshead during the pandemic was extraordinary. Whilst face to face safeguarding visits continued where necessary, our practitioners and partners developed online working practices and solutions that have enhanced multi-agency working and will undoubtedly continue beyond the pandemic.

- **Gateshead SAB Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures**

The first draft of the Gateshead SAB Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures was showcased with the Quality, Learning and Practice Group on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021. This followed an intense period of development work in partnership with Tri-X who are the company hosting the online policy and procedures. A multi-agency task and finish group then worked on the final amendments, with the final [Gateshead SAB Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures](#) approved by the SAB in May 2021.

- **Multi-Agency Exploitation Hub**

Northumbria Police led on the review of the regional multi-agency Exploitation Hub which supports the six Local Authorities and Health colleagues to continue to work together to provide a multi-agency response to those at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation and all aspects of Modern Slavery. A re-launch of the Hub is expected to take place in Autumn 2021. A consistent chair from Northumbria Police chairs the SAB Joint Strategic Exploitation Group and has a focus on all age exploitation, learning from practice and improving collaboration across partnerships.



- **Organisational Abuse**

Work has commenced on the development of more comprehensive practice guidance on Organisational Abuse. This arose initially from the Whorlton Hall abuse enquiry in County Durham, but the importance of this work has been highlighted by recent and ongoing organisational abuse cases within Gateshead. There is understandable concern about the potential of 'hidden harm' in care settings during the pandemic, which is starting to become evident now that restrictions are lifting. There is anticipation that this will become more apparent over the ensuing months, linked also to the state of the social care market which has experienced unprecedented pressures.

An initial workshop was held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021, the aim of which was to understand definitions, our current processes, local prevalence and national and regional practice. The workshop went on to identify gaps / issues and local considerations that we needed to address. Initial practice guidance has been incorporated within the new online Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures, but it is recognised that further work is required on how we work together on organisational abuse enquiries.

Northumbria Police have highlighted an ongoing organisational abuse investigation into the care of residents in a Gateshead Care Home. Northumbria Police are working closely with Gateshead Council Adult Social Care (ASC) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). There has been a joint approach to supporting victims, with Adult Social Care assessing the victims capacity and identifying who is able to give evidence. At a Strategic Level there has been engagement and collaboration at Director level with a Gold and Silver command structure implemented involving ASC, Police, CCG and CQC. This has allowed for early discussion and collaboration around the investigative strategy, information sharing and support to families. This is an excellent example of partners collaborating at an Operational, Tactical and Strategic Level to respond to concerns of Organisational abuse. Learning from this case will support the further development of our approach to organisational abuse.

- **MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)**

The Gateshead MARAC was evaluated in Autumn 2020. The MARAC sub group now reports into the re-established Strategic Domestic Abuse Forum. MARAC continues to meet virtually weekly and as ever there is always excellent representation from all agencies. The MARAC averages around 12 cases per week and therefore over 2020 it has safeguarded over 600 victims.

- **Forensic Examination Project**

Newcastle Gateshead CCG have been working alongside NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) to establish a regional network for

examination of non-accidental injuries sustained by adults. During 2020 the NHSEI North Regional Safeguarding Team established a working group to develop proposals to implement a forensic network of trained clinical staff across the region. Two half day workshops were held in early 2021. An evaluation of this work has led to the successful application for funding to roll out training to primary care settings to increase forensic awareness of patients who present with injuries.

➤ **Implementing Mental Capacity Act (MCA) / Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)**

• **Maintain compliance with Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards**

Gateshead Council, as DoLS Supervisory Body, continues to remain legally compliant and there are no local backlogs.

Gateshead Council remains committed to investment in the DoLS staff team responsible for the processing and managing of all DoLS applications, ensuring there is the ability to meet most of our demands “in-house”, thereby improving efficiency.

• **Statutory advocacy service response to Covid-19**

Advocacy remained a commitment throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Feedback from our commissioned statutory advocacy service Connected Voice Advocacy highlighted that none of the statutory advocacy services stopped, and in fact many advocacy services were in more demand than ever. With government guidance changing regularly the service had to make sure the team were promptly informed and equipped to undertake their key work.

• **Preparation for implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards**

The landscape with respect to the proposals for the introduction of the Liberty Protection Safeguards via the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 continues to be fluid and ever changing and is being closely monitored by partners within Gateshead. Our Gateshead Council Adult Social Care Manager is the Chair of the regional DoLS steering group and is also on the national DoLS Leads group

# Our Performance 2020/21

## Safeguarding Adults Headline Performance

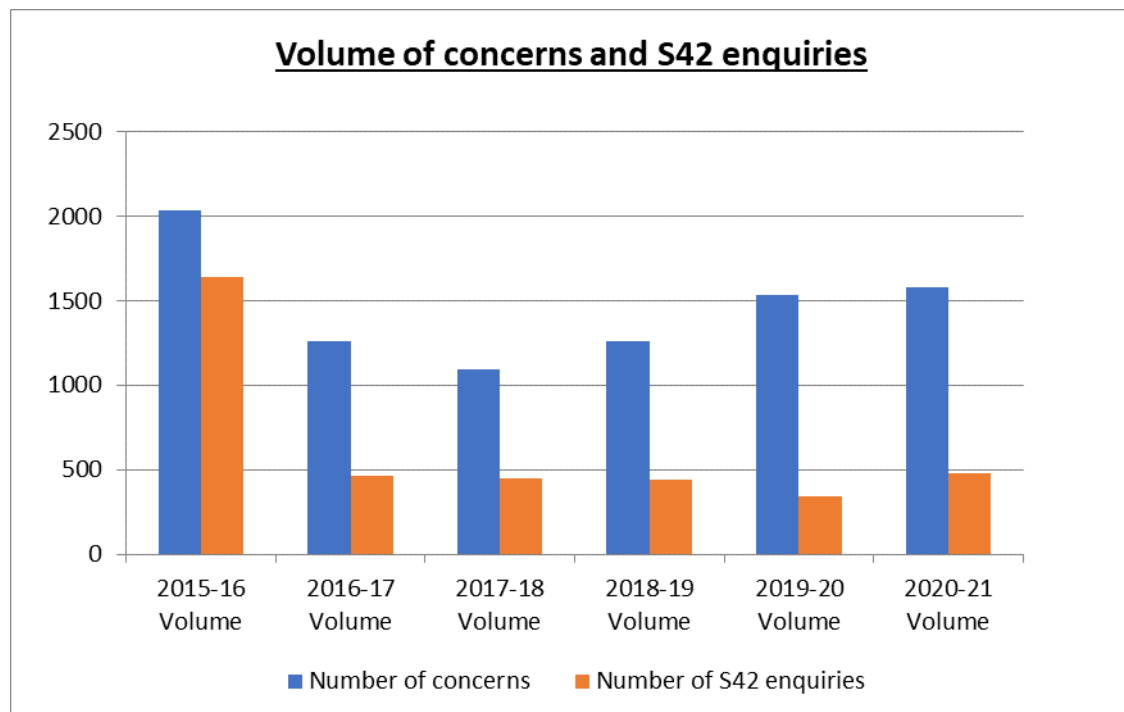
A summary of the headline performance information is provided below.

- **Volume of Concerns and Enquiries**

For a Concern to progress to a Section 42 Enquiry it must meet the statutory criteria. The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- As a result of those care and support need is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

In 2020/21 there were 1581 Safeguarding Adult Concerns which led to 477 Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries. In percentage terms, 30.2% of Concerns led to a Section 42 Enquiry. The number of concerns progressing to an enquiry is lower than the 2019-20 NE (42.5%) and England (34.0%) averages.



During this reporting period the country went into three lockdowns due to a global pandemic (Covid-19) resulting in restrictions that were imposed over a period of months in order to contain the virus. These restrictions did impact upon the health and safety of many adults and their families. During the first

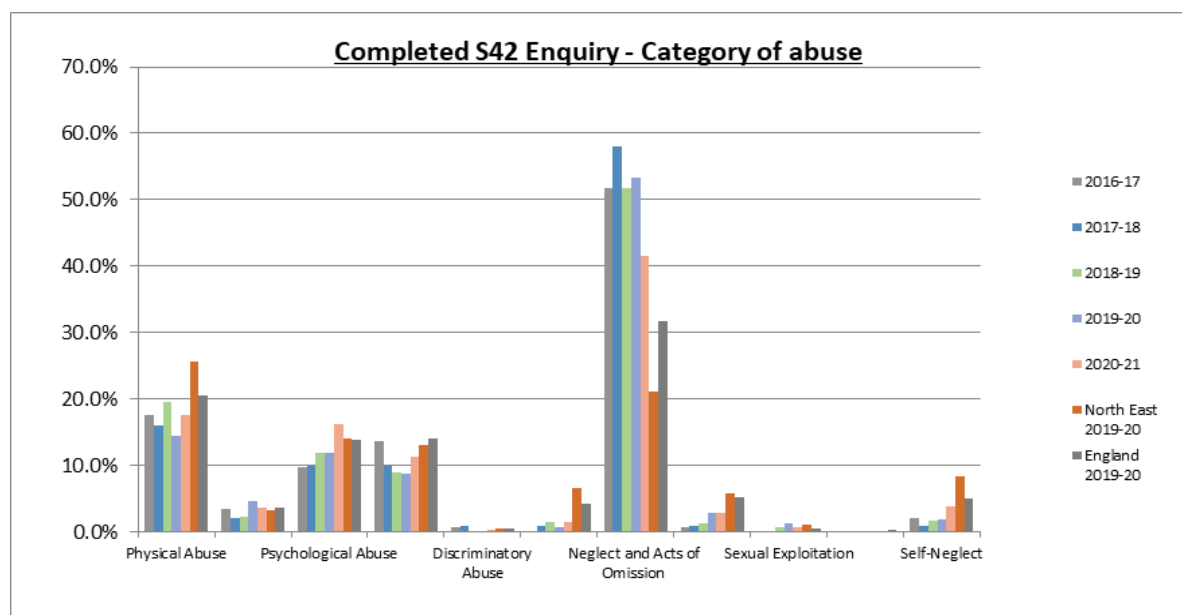
lockdown period there was an initial reduction in adult safeguarding concerns in Gateshead. The issue of hidden families and adults at risk became a key theme of the pandemic in many cases this meant that people were in a position where they had to self-isolate. Despite a significant reduction in safeguarding S42 Concerns during the first lockdown in April and May 2020, which replicated the national picture as demonstrated by the [Local Government Association Covid-19 Adult Safeguarding Insight report](#), a subsequent increase in safeguarding activity the rest of the year resulted in an overall slight increase in the overall volume of Concerns and Section 42 Enquiries.

Anecdotally, throughout the pandemic our key safeguarding partners highlighted that in addition to an overall increase in volume, there appeared to be an increase in the complexity of cases.

- **Categories of Abuse**

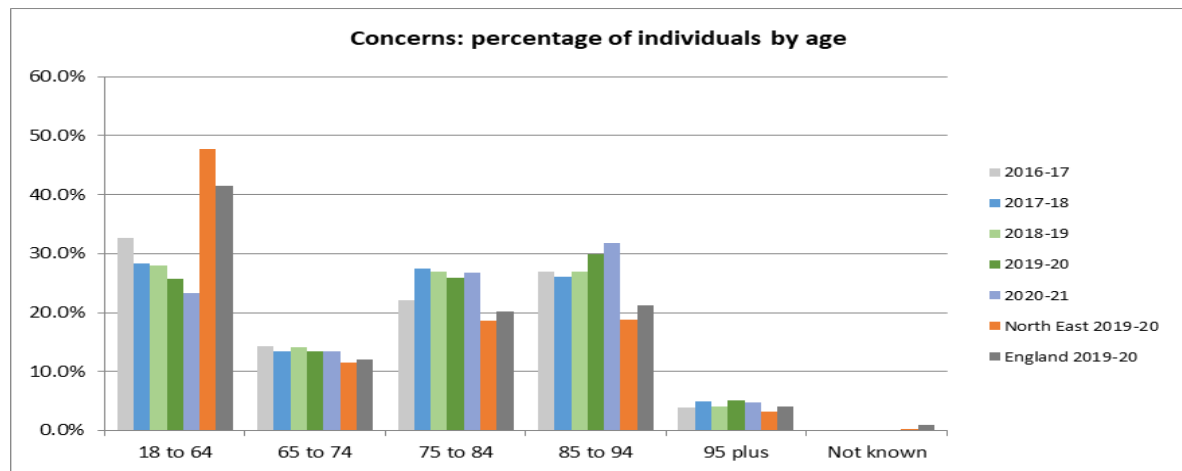
Utilising a count of completed Section 42 Enquiries, and allowing for multiple recording of abuse, the most common category of abuse in Gateshead continues to be Neglect and Acts of Omission which represented 41.5%. This was followed by Physical Abuse (17.7%) and Psychological (16.2%).

Neglect and Acts of Omission in Gateshead continues to be an outlier compared to North East and England averages, however this has reduced from the levels of previous years where over 50% of cases were recorded in this category.



- **Age**

In Gateshead, 76.7% of Concerns were raised for adults aged 65 and over.



### Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

For the period April 2020 to March 2021 Gateshead Council received 2275 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard applications. This was a slight increase in activity from the previous financial year (2211) and compared to activity from previous years represents a steady increase on the demands placed on local authorities in meeting statutory obligations.

The highest rate for DoLS applications remains with those over the age of 65. Within Gateshead this represents 2026 applications (89% of all applications) for those aged over 65 and 249 for those under 65.

There were 434 applications which have not been authorised, due to various standard reasons. The primary reason for non-authorisation of a DoLS was down to a 'Change in Circumstances', which took place in 337 cases.

Our demographics remain in accordance with previous data with predicted higher percentages of those 85+ being more likely to be subject to DoLS authorisations, (41%) and those more likely to be female (61%).

## Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)

The SARCC Group is responsible, on behalf of the Gateshead SAB, for statutory SARs introduced by the Care Act 2014. All reviews and enquiries are reported back to the SAR Group for scrutiny and challenge. Learning from reviews is fed into the Quality, Learning and Practice Group when there are specific actions or learning that needs to be taken forward.

During 2020/21 the SARCC received 8 Safeguarding Adult Referrals. Of those:

- 0 progressed to a SAR
- 1 resulted in other reviews

A review was undertaken by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, involving an audit Section 42 Enquiries, to identify improvements to the hospital discharge process. The case also resulted in the establishment of a multi-agency task and finish group to develop bespoke Gateshead pressure damage safeguarding procedures.