



Annual report setting out the
activities of the National
Safeguarding Adult Board Chairs
Network between April 2024 and
March 2025

National Network of Safeguarding Adult Board Chairs

Annual Report 2024-2025

Michael Preston-Shoot

Section One: Introduction

The Network (NSCN) was established in 2009 as a peer support group for independent chairs. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance, which accompanies the Care Act 2014, states that where possible the chair should be independent, but this is not a requirement, and the Network opened up membership to all SAB chairs in 2016. The Network is also open to independent scrutineers where they have been appointed by SABs. Although the statutory arrangements are different, the Network also welcomes members from the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and Wales. As the accounts reported later in this annual report show, NSCN has had 95 members during the year, representing the vast majority of the 136 SABs in England.

NSCN provides an opportunity for sharing resources and information, enabling formal and informal relationships to develop where Chairs can support one another and learn from each other. Its purpose is to provide support, advice, guidance and professional development for members, and to contribute to policy development locally, regionally and nationally. A key aim for NSCN is to invite speakers to each of the quarterly meetings who will support the continuous professional development of SAB Chairs and sector-led improvement.

In 2024/2025, NSCN was co-ordinated by Professor Michael Preston-Shoot. Siân Walker-McAllister, previously joint convenor, provided administrative support. They were supported by an Executive comprising NSCN leads from each of the nine regions in England, together with the LGA Partners in Care and Health (PCH) safeguarding lead.

As a national Network we have maintained positive links with other Networks which include the SAB Business Managers Network (NBMN), the NHS SANN (Safeguarding Adults Network), ADASS policy leads and the SAR Reviewer Peer Network.

NSCN has continued to meet quarterly, virtually, with the Executive meeting in between Network meetings to agree meeting agendas and to take forward agreed work streams. As a community benefit society, NSCN is owned by its members, to whom the convenors are accountable. A decisions log is now available in the member area of the Network's website, which is updated after every quarterly meeting. A revised constitution for the Network was approved by members in September 2024 and is included as an appendix in this annual report. The constitution is reviewed annually. The Annual Report remains a core component of the Network's governance, giving accountability to its members.

Section Two: A Network Retrospective Overview 2024-2025

Midway between each main NSCN meeting, the Executive reviewed progress on agreed priorities, received updates on NSCN task and finish groups and on its financial position, and discussed a report from the convenor. The agenda for the forthcoming NSCN meeting was agreed.

Four main NSCN meetings took place in 2024/2025 that provided opportunities for general discussion, support and updates from the Regions, NSCN task and finish groups and from other safeguarding networks. A report from the NSCN convenor was received and discussed at each

meeting. As well as taking key decisions and reviewing progress on NSCXN priorities, meetings had presentations and full discussion on the following:

June 2024

Jonathan Senker from Voiceability gave a presentation, now available on the members' area of the website. NSCN members agreed to support the campaign advocating that the Secretary of State use their power to direct NHS England with respect to transforming care.

Lella Andrews, CQC, gave a presentation on findings from the first local authority assurance visits, some reports of which have been published with others due to follow shortly. The presentation is now available on the members' area of the website.

The annual report for 23/24 was approved for publication and dissemination. This has been uploaded into the open access part of the NSCN website and has been disseminated to DHSC, Home Office, ADASS, PCH, SCIE, SANN and our links with the police and with the SAB business managers' network.

The SAB survey was approved for publication. This has been uploaded into the open access part of the website and had been shared with DHSC, Home Office and Ministry of Justice.

September 2024

A presentation on exploitation was given by Kerry Cooke (Newcastle Council) and Monique Lhussier (Northumbria University). The work highlighted the systemic approach delivered by Newcastle and the Region. The Presentation is hosted on the NSCN website, open pages.

A well-received presentation on self-neglect was given by David Orr (University of Sussex) on the wide ranging research which in particular has focused on taking the views of all stakeholders, including people with lived experience, on multi-agency partnership working. The presentation is hosted on the NSCN Website, open pages.

Claire Portlock presented on current work in the Home Office on homelessness. which was well received. NSCN members were requested to complete a template on SAB responses to the joint ministerial letter on homelessness and rough sleeping.

December 2024

Zoe Taylor, Mark Ford, both of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and Vicky Murphy (Nottingham City), presented on their work relating to meeting the health and social care needs of prisoners. This included work on developing an adult safeguarding charter, which will be shared in draft form for NSCN members to comment on. Various challenges were noted, including short notice releases, information-sharing about placements in approved premises, and ordinary residence. Heather Roach then presented on the work of the criminal justice task and finish group – the presentation has been

posted on the NSCN website (member area). Five recommendations were endorsed and will be the focus of a forthcoming meeting between NSCN (Heather and Michael) and MoJ.

Gill Taylor presented on the Museum of Homelessness Dying Homeless Project. The presentation has been posted on the NSCN web pages (open access – resources). It was suggested that the presentation, and the concerns arising from it, should be included in the next expert reference group on homelessness. It was agreed that it would be useful for a list to be collated of those SABs/local authorities that were developing or undertaking homelessness fatality reviews. Gill will lead on producing such a list to which Michael will add from the SAB returns on responses to the joint ministerial letter. It was suggested that SABs might seek to engage with coroners to propose inquests into all deaths of people experiencing homelessness. Michael then presented a brief overview of emerging SAB responses to the joint ministerial letter (the closing date had been extended). Findings were positive, especially regarding SABs having nominated person holding responsibility for homelessness, and SABs having established their role in governance relating to this concern. All SABs had processes in place to consider SAR referrals and some had completed reviews involving homelessness. There was more variation in terms of inclusion of homelessness in strategic plans and annual reports. (The final analysis of the survey findings is reported further below).

Lerryn Udy presented on the work undertaken by South West Ambulance Service Trust to strengthen its adult safeguarding practice. There was a particular emphasis on co-production. There was anecdotal evidence of the impact of RCRP on paramedic services, including at times lack of police back-up for ambulance crews. There is a National Safeguarding Ambulance Group. Lerryn agreed to pass on detail to Michael so that contact can be made.

March 2025

Kate Spreadbury and Alison Ridley presented on mentoring of reviewers. 41 SABs had used the reviewer network to find reviewers. Some SABs meet with their reviewers regularly to provide support. It was agreed to update the expression of interest for an Essential SAR Guide to include a focus on mentoring, on what SABs should include in contracts and their own procedures, skills for mentors and top tips.

Susan Mein presented on the work of the UK Health Security Agency. The presentation has been posted on the members' area of the website. There are regional advisers from the agency – a list will be sent to NSCN members so that regional groups can make connections.

Scott MacKechnie, Emma Gibson and Jodi Evans presented on safeguarding in sport, and the work of the Ann Craft Trust. The presentation has been posted on the members' area of the website. There are regional sport welfare officers, details will be circulated so that regional groups can make connections.

Mike Ward introduced his proposal for a project on engagement which was welcomed. Some SABs have their own guidance on engagement, which it would be useful to collate and pull together in any national briefing. It was agreed to convene a task and finish group to scope out terms of reference for a project on engagement, the end outcome to be a briefing. This should take a broad approach to

engagement. Members will be invited to join the task and finish group once Mike Ward and Michael Preston-Shoot have drafted terms of reference.

The Network's contribution to Partners in Care & Health (PCH) work on key safeguarding themes

The NSCN convenor has been meeting regularly with PCH and has contributed to discussions about their safeguarding work, research, surveys and webinars on the impact on safeguarding in areas such as transitional safeguarding, organisational abuse, and homelessness. Adi Cooper from PCH is also a SAB Chair, Executive Member and Director of the Network. In promoting our national work on safeguarding we always try to dovetail the work of the Network with that of PCH.

NSCN has contributed to three expert reference groups. In conjunction with CQC and PCH, NSCN has contributed to an expert reference group on organisational abuse, taking forward service improvement priorities identified in the second national analysis of SARs (NA2). The group has commissioned research on definitions of organisational abuse, and on multi-agency working – two themes identified in NA2. This research is due to report at the end of March 2025. Discussions are underway on reviewing with SABs the impact and outcome of SARs they have completed on organisational abuse. A well-attended webinar on organisational abuse was held in October 2024.

The expert reference group on homelessness has continued. It has contributed to webinars, the updating of the section on homelessness in the Pan-London procedures, and the cross-government consultation for a new strategy on homelessness and rough sleeping. NSCN has conducted a survey on how SABs have responded to the joint ministerial letter on homelessness, issued shortly before the 2024 General Election. The survey achieved a 49% response. Overwhelmingly SABs have responded with clear governance arrangements for homelessness and rough sleeping, with nominated SAB members holding designated responsibility. 76% of responding SABs had included homelessness as a strategic priority or had plans to do so. 77% of SABs that responded had included homelessness in annual reports or were intending to do. 41% of SABs had either commissioned or completed SARs that featured homelessness. The remainder detailed the processes in place for considering referrals. A few SABs also referred to the development of homelessness fatality reviews.

The expert reference group on transitional safeguarding, in partnership with Research in Practice, has continued to meet. It continues to organise webinars.

Meetings with DHSC, Home Office and Ministry of Justice

The Network convenors has met regularly throughout the year with civil servants in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Home Office, sometimes joined by Sola Afuape and Fiona Bateman (with DHSC) and Heather Roach (with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice). Some discussions have also involved civil servants from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The convenor has also responded to occasional requests, outside the normal sequence of meetings, for information relating to government policy priorities and/or parliamentary questions.

One positive development this year, reflecting NSCN's reach, has been engagement with MHCLG on homelessness and rough sleeping. Another has been engagement with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Care and Justice safeguarding leads in the Ministry of Justice. This has tied in with the work of NSCN's task and finish group work on criminal justice, chaired by Heather Roach, and has enabled collation of evidence and discussion on how well the health and social care needs of prisoners are met, whilst in custody and on release. NSCN and HMPPS safeguarding leads are now working on a memorandum of understanding, having provided advice on a draft safeguarding charter.

The following adult safeguarding issues and concerns have been covered.

- The findings and service improvement priorities identified in NA2. A briefing on the NA2 service improvement priorities that are directed to DHSC was sent to DHSC following the result of the General Election. A detailed response to these service improvement priorities is awaited.
- Building on the findings of SARs into organisational abuse, including a focus on lack of compliance with statutory guidance on roles and responsibilities, especially on placing commissioners, relating to out of area placements.
- Revision of the SAR escalation protocol. A detailed response to recent escalations (see section four below) is awaited.
- The absence in England of an adult safeguarding power of entry, and of a national system for responding to alleged abuse/neglect by people in positions of trust.
- Honour-based violence.
- Commentary and advice on a victim's protocol, quality assurance of Home Office contractors providing accommodation for asylum seekers, provision of information for SARs from government departments, safeguarding guidance and dispute resolution procedures.
- Safe Care at Home.
- Care home closures.
- Cuckooing and the possible implications for adult safeguarding of the government's proposal to make this a criminal offence.
- Prevention of, and responses to homelessness, including a focus on accommodation for individuals who are granted leave to remain, SAB responses to DLUHC recommendations, and advice on the proposed new cross-government strategies for homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Reform of the Mental Health Act 1983/2007, with specific reference to possible inclusion of a statutory duty for SABs to seek assurance about the effectiveness of adult safeguarding in mental health provision. Proposals in the draft Mental Health Bill have been considered, with specific reference to resources of places of safety and mental health beds.
- The future of deprivation of liberty safeguards and liberty protection safeguards.
- Review of the findings and outcomes of CQC assurance arrangements of Adult Social Care, including whether there is a gap in law and policy relating to the level of effectiveness of SABs.
- Modern slavery in care settings. Network members have identified concerns and the convenor, with Professor Keith Brown, wrote to ministers in DHSC, the Home Office and the

Department for Business and Trade. The letter drew attention to this issue and supported a proposal from the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) that its remit should be extended to cover modern slavery in care settings. Positive responses from the ministers were received that indicated how government was proposing to address the concern.

- Quality assurance of provision of accommodation for people seeking asylum, and provider responses to care and support needs and safeguarding concerns, and to prevention and protection from abuse/neglect.
- Right Care Right Person, including the development of guidance for social care. Deborah Cohen and the convenor have commented on draft guidance, responded to requests for information from civil servants, and identified evidence of impact.
- Commentary on draft guidance for police forces on information sharing.

The convenor has also attended the Chief Social Worker's forum, meetings of ADASS policy leads, and the monthly meetings of the NHS Safeguarding Adults National Network (SANN). The convenor has also held discussions with Adult Protection Committee chairs in Scotland and with civil servants for the Scottish Government. These discussions have focused on the findings and service improvement priorities from NA2, on modern slavery in the care sector, on training for reviewers and on quality assurance of SARs.

Section Three: Updates on Network Work Streams

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)

The Network has continued to host the SAR library on its web pages. From January 2024 members have been encouraged to submit reviews for inclusion using a template form. This has been designed to make it easier to search the library. The library still only contains around half of all completed and published SARs in England and Network members, along with Board Business Managers are encouraged to ensure that reviews are sent for inclusion. The library is a valuable resource for learning and for research.

During 2024-2025 the escalation protocol with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has once again been reviewed and revised. The Network has continued to escalate recommendations from SARs to DHSC. The Department's responses have been delayed first by the General Election and secondly by the new government requiring time to determine its policies relating to social care and safeguarding whilst working on the Mental Health Bill. As a result, at time of writing this annual report, a detailed response to the escalations is still awaited.

The following table lists the use of the escalation protocol that the Network has agreed with DHSC. The focus on alcohol-dependence and self-neglect corresponds with several of the service improvement priorities for DHSC arising from the second national SAR analysis (NA2). Other SARs more recently have also featured this issue (Croydon SAB SAR Ben; Sheffield SAB SAR Sam).

The service improvement priorities from NA2 directed to DHSC also contained recommendations related to:

- The absence of a national PIPOT system
- Lack of compliance with statutory guidance on out of area placements
- Shortage of placements for people with complex needs.

Several SARs subsequently have highlighted the need for a national response to these issues. They include Staffordshire and Stoke SAB SAR Clive (PIPOT and out of area placements); Kent and Medway SAB SAR Stephen (placement shortage for people with overlapping needs involving mental health, autism and/or learning disabilities). Other SARs shortly to be published will also highlight these concerns. In short, the evidence is mounting relating to the service improvement priorities that have been identified.

Initiating SAB	Date	Issue	Outcome
Croydon (with Bromley and Kingston) SAR Sylvia	2023	Lack of provision of Tier 4 beds. Need for strong guidance on preventing and safeguarding young adults from exploitation. Focus on transitional safeguarding in a context of provision of mental health.	Awaited
Wigan SAR Una	2024	Absence of a national PIPOT system. Need to stress safeguarding duties on NHS Trusts when they are defending litigation.	Awaited
Kingston SAR Ella	2024	To request publication as quickly as possible of guidance under development on fabricated and induced illness affecting adults.	Awaited
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole SAR Simon	2024	NHS England to ensure more timely transfer of primary care records when an individual moves and registers with the new GP. This concern about delay of primary care records has also surfaced in other SARs, for example SAR Anthony and Mary (Cornwall & Isles of Scilly SAB).	Awaited
East Riding SAR William	2024	The lack of national guidance on how to apply safeguarding thresholds to people who self-neglect due to chronic drinking. An additional feature in this case is that William was Deaf. The SAR invited an answer to the following question. How can local and national improvements be made to promote understanding and education so BSL is recognised as a language in its own right? The Network's recommendation here is that chapter 14 in the statutory guidance (the safeguarding chapter) should include much more emphasis on communication.	Awaited
Wakefield SAR Steven	2024	The need for improved guidance on using the Care Act, Mental Capacity Act and Mental Health Act with this complex client group (alcohol-dependence and self-neglect); <u>or</u> new legislation to better meet their needs.	Awaited
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough SAR Declan	2025	The shortage of appropriate mental health placements. Similar themes have been identified in other SARs (Croydon SAB – Sylvia; Kent and Medway SAB – Stephen; Surrey SAB – April.	Awaited

The full report of NA2, alongside an executive summary and six seven-minute briefings have been published by the Local Government Association. There are specific improvement priorities recommended to DHSC regarding adult safeguarding law, policy and guidance. A detailed briefing was sent to the new government on these recommended service improvement priorities, together with the evidence-informed foundation for suggested law and policy reform and revision.

All 136 SABs provided details of completed reviews for the second national analysis of SARs, which covered the period April 2019 to March 2023. The Network therefore possesses a comprehensive picture of the volume and scope of review activity, and the complexities involved in adult safeguarding.

NA2 also recommended improvement priorities for the Network to take forward with members. In partnership with members of the NBMN, four workstreams have been established and will undertake important work in 2025/2026. The four workstreams cover service improvement priorities identified in NA2 and other adult safeguarding work. They are:

1. To detail the components of the four domains, used in NA1 and NA2, for positive adult safeguarding practice, namely direct work with individuals and their families, inter-agency collaboration, organisational support for practice, and governance.
2. To develop proposals for regional and national summits on adult safeguarding, involving government departments and SAB statutory partners.
3. To collate and develop approaches to demonstrating the impact and outcomes of SAR findings and recommendations.
4. To review the adult safeguarding provisions of the Care Act 2014 and its statutory guidance, ten years on, and to publish a briefing.

NSCN also invited expressions of interest for developing an “*Essential SAR Guide*.” This guide, a recommendation from NA2, is designed to build on the SCIE Quality Markers, to collate best practice on commissioning and supporting reviewers, involving people with lived experience and their families, managing the review process, and disseminating and tracking the impact and outcomes of recommendations. This proposed guide will also address a longstanding NSCN improvement priority, namely to review different methodologies and to ensure, as recommended in NA2, that SARs build on rather than simply repeat prior learning. An appointment has to date not been made and the expression of interest has been circulated again.

Meanwhile, the findings of NA2, with their implications for governance and for practice, continue to be disseminated at webinars and conferences arranged by individual SABs, regional groups, and partner agencies (ADASS and/or NHS England regions).

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Professor Michael Preston-Shoot, on behalf of the Network, updated his evidence to the House of Commons DWP select committee following the General Election. Led by Lesley Hutchinson, the Network has continued to engage with DWP, with a memorandum of understanding about how DWP will engage with adult safeguarding now signed and publicised on NSCN’s web pages. This has been a

very positive development, with increasing engagement with SABs by DWP's advanced customer support officers.

Safeguarding Boards of National Charities

A representative of the network of safeguarding boards of national charities now attends NSCN meetings. A joint meeting of the two networks has not yet been held but is planned.

SARs and Coroner Inquests

A project was initiated by the SAB Business Manager Network (NBMN) to develop guidance on how to manage the interface between SARs and coronial inquests. A small group of independent chairs supported the development and finalisation of this guidance, which has now been published on NSCN's web pages.

Fire Prevention

Sue Redmond has led for the Network on collaboration with Fire and Rescue Services nationally, through Donna Bentley. Discussions have focused on learning from SARs that have featured fire-related deaths, on raising awareness about the contribution of Fire and Rescue Services to fire prevention, and on disseminating guidance, survey templates on awareness of fire-related risks, and toolkits. Sutton SAB and Bi-Borough SAB, for example, have developed survey templates and questionnaires on learning and development, following SARs that featured fire-related deaths. SANN is nearing completion of an e-learning training package. NSCN has provided some input into this development. A web page has been created on the Network's website that will contain available guidance and resources when sent in by SABs..

The second national analysis of SARs contained findings related to fire prevention and fire deaths. These findings were presented to the National Fire Chiefs Council. SABs are encouraged to include learning from fatal fire reviews and to link into Fire and Rescue Services regional groupings.

Prisons, Probation and Criminal Justice

The Criminal Justice Sub-Group has continued to meet throughout 2024 to identify both good practice and the challenges associated with prison establishments and the relationships with local SABs.

A survey of all SABs has taken place to identify key areas of concern and also to highlight best practice between SABs and prisons. Some of the key areas from the survey relate to the engagement with SABs, difficulties in the transition of prisoners from prison to communities, the assessment of their care and support needs, inappropriate accommodation and support, an ageing prison population and frequent delays in criminal justice processes. This work has been shared with the Ministry of Justice.

The sub-group has identified some excellent examples of joint working and heard first-hand about the well-established safeguarding process and links into the SAB, developed in the Royal Borough of Greenwich involving three prisons – Belmarsh, Isis and Thameside. In Nottingham City a joint working protocol has also been developed between the local prison and the SAB and in other areas SABs have made significant efforts to engage with their prison establishments by holding specific events to develop the relationship further.

The sub-group also heard the circumstances surrounding SAR X, a review into the release and subsequent challenges posed by an aged sex offender in Norfolk. The SAR identified many of the challenges that were evident nationally and helped develop an overall report and recommendations which have been shared with HMPPS.

The final report into safeguarding boards and prisons was presented to the December meeting of the national SAB chairs network with five recommendations which focused upon –

- Developing a national MOU with HMPPS in respect of safeguarding in prisons
- An expectation that prisons would actively participate in SAB activity
- Clearer guidance to be developed in relation to “ordinary residence”
- Establish a system where prisoners are not homeless upon release
- Develop a repository of good practice.

The national SAB chairs network accepted the five recommendations and are now in dialogue with HMPPS to develop these recommendations further, including the possibility of a regional event during 2025.

Policing and adult safeguarding

Ivan Powell has continued to represent the Network with the College of Policing and the National Chief Police Council and has been meeting with the new National Police Chiefs Council lead on ‘adults at risk’ - Chief Superintendent James Gale from Devon & Cornwall Police.

Ivan has supported James Gale and his team with the development of a survey for all forces which is designed to be a baseline position for each force on follow up to ‘The Poor Relation’ HMICFRS inspection, including position statements on policy, training and data.

Ivan Powell and Michael Preston-Shoot have provided advice on a draft force-wide policy on information-sharing.

Suicide prevention

Deborah Cohen has established this task and finish group. Initial work of the group concluded with three recommendations, which were approved at NSCN’s March 2025 meeting. The recommendations are:

1. The Network invite Professor Sir Louis Appleby, the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Network lead, to a meeting to present on his work.
2. The role of the SAB in suicide prevention is included in the forthcoming updated guide for being a SAB independent chair.

3. The group has not thus far considered the ramifications of the Assisted Dying Bill which is currently in Parliament. It is recommended that, if the Bill is enacted, that there is a separate discussion about the implications for safeguarding.

Members were reminded to include public health leaders in Board meetings.

Involvement of people with lived experience

This work began as an improvement priority for the Network in 2023/24. The work of this task and finish group continues, led by Diane Hampshire and Sue Smith. A survey of how SABs are engaging with people with lived experience has been completed. A link has been established with a NBMN community of practice. A toolkit is now being compiled. Its contents are likely to include the following:

1. Top 10 Tips for working with those with lived experience (draft)
2. Terms of Reference for an 'Experts by Experience' group
3. Brief outline of examples of what's 'out there'
4. Links to You Tube videos
5. Job description of 'lay' board member/s
6. Engagement questions to ask service users/ those with lived experience (Examples)

SAB Survey

The survey of SABs undertaken in the Autumn and Winter of 23/24 was published in Summer 2024. It addressed several of the improvement priorities recorded in the last two NSCN annual reports. For example, it provided evidence of how Boards are approaching performance reporting. Nonetheless, demonstrating the difference that SABs make remains an ongoing challenge. The survey report also contains examples of how SABs have engaged with other strategic partnerships and boards.

In relation to SARs, the survey has detailed how the SCIE quality markers have been used and has provided some data on how Boards are approaching dissemination of SAR learning and capturing outcomes of SAR recommendations. As already mentioned, work is now planned for an essential SAR guide that will provide a further briefing on standards of best practice with respect to commissioning SARs followed by involvement of people with lived experience and their families, delivery, dissemination of findings, and evaluating the impact of learning and recommendations on practice improvement and service development.

Section Three: Outcomes of Previous Network Priorities

In its last annual report, NSCN provided an update on improvement priorities that had been agreed from 2022/23. A further update on progress is provided here for those priorities not covered in the previous section.

Improvement Priority: *the national Network should collate and publish on its website a selection of tools that SABs use to collate and analysis performance data as part of its statutory mandate to seek assurance about the effectiveness of adult safeguarding.* Some tools have been developed and added

to the website. The aforementioned SAB survey provided detail of how some SABs are approaching data collation and performance analysis. Work is underway in some regions to strengthen data reporting from statutory partners, especially the police. Preparation for CQC assurance visits has also led to an increased emphasis on how the quality of safeguarding is assured. A review in 2025/26 of the outcomes of CQC assurance visits will provide an added impetus to the collation of approaches to data collection and review.

Improvement Priority: *the national Network of SAB chairs should engage in discussions with the Home Office, Department for Education and NHS England to explore how the requirements of different review systems might be more closely aligned to ensure that the potential for learning is maximised.* In the last annual report NSCN reported that discussions had taken place with the Home Office and with NHS England to ensure that nationally, the interface between SARs, PSIRF and DHRs is acknowledged. Some SABs had also developed protocols locally for how learning from different review systems will be shared and how decision-making should occur when the criteria for some or all of the different reviews appear to be met in individual cases. This work has continued in 24/25. The aforementioned SAB survey provided a snapshot on how SABs are managing SARs, including where criteria from other review processes have also been met. NA2 also provided data on the number of joint reviews (for example, DHRs and/or Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews with SARs), and challenges involved in managing parallel processes. Contact has yet to be made with the Department for Education on this topic. However, NSCN has engaged with the National Independent Safeguarding Board Wales on the Welsh approach to reviews. Michael Preston-Shoot also contributed to a conference in June 2024, and to a subsequent publication, on learning across statutory review practice¹.

Improvement Priority: *a repository of information about available reviewers is being placed in the members' only area of the national Network of SAB chairs' website. The national Network should work with members and partners to develop this resource, and to develop training and mentoring for individuals who wish to undertake SARs.* In 2023/24 a repository was developed and is available in the members' only area of the website. With the agreement of those potential SAR authors whose details are included in the repository, it has also been made available to the Business Managers' Network. Additions to the repository are included when new SAR authors step forward. Requests from SABs for SAR Reviewers are also regularly included in monthly Network mail shots. In 2024/25 members of the Network have supported the SCIE training programme for new reviewers, offering sessions within the programme and opportunities for mentoring and shadowing.

Section Four: Outcomes of Priorities for 2024/2025

For the sake of triangulation, updates are provided here with detail provided in section two above where relevant.

Recommendation One: *the Network should consider how to improve the diversity of its membership.* This work is ongoing.

¹ Conference, June 2024, organised by UK Prevention Research Partnership, followed by a Vision Policy Briefing, Learning Across Statutory Review Practices.

Recommendation Two: *Network members should consider how wider membership of SABs can be improved in respect of:*

- *following DHLUC guidance, how strategic housing may be represented.* SAB responses to the joint ministerial letter have been collated, with good evidence of how housing is represented on Boards.
- *following the recently implemented MoU with DWP, how local DWP can be better represented.* Good evidence is emerging of DWP representation and contribution to the work of SABs.
- *prison services, how representation on SABs may improve wider engagement with prisons, particularly to support preventative safeguarding for those prisoners with health and care needs and also those who are preparing for discharge.* This work has been taken forward by the criminal justice task and finish group, as reported above.
- *Regional consideration, through having a Lead SAB in the region, linked to the main Ambulance Service representation (in the area where a local ICB is the main regional commissioner for the Ambulance Service).* The SW region is one example where there has been a regional focus. South West Ambulance Service Trust also presented at an NSCN meeting, as reported above, to continue the focus on this recommendation.
- *CQC engagement, with similar consideration to be given to CQC which covers wide regional areas; to be supported by regular CQC attendance at the Regional SAB Chairs' Network.* SAB Chairs have engaged with PCH in their work on preparing for and learning from the outcome of CQC inspections. Adi Cooper facilitated six workshops in 2024/25.

Recommendation Three: *the Network should continue with the task and finish group activity that was commenced as a priority following the previous survey, with a particular focus on collating examples of good practice in involving people with lived experience.* The work of the task and finish group has been reported above and continues.

Recommendation Four: *SABs should review the SAC returns annually as part of their data analysis and performance review. The Network should use the free text comments from the survey as a springboard to collate tools to support the collection and analysis of performance data.* This will be covered in the next SAB survey. Some SABs have developed action plans to address the service improvement priorities recommended from NA2, of which this was one.

Recommendation Five: *the Network should continue to engage in discussion with NHS England Digital, DHSC and ADASS with a view to strengthening national data collection and analysis about adult safeguarding.* This was also a service improvement priority directed at DHSC from NA2. A detailed response from DHSC to the service improvement priorities identified in NA2 is awaited.

Recommendation Six: *the Network should continue to engage in discussions with DHSC on policy and practice regarding section 42.* This too was a service improvement priority directed at DHSC from NA2. Meanwhile, evidence about section 42 will form part of the workstream, reported above, that will result in a briefing for government about the adult safeguarding provisions in the Care Act 2014 ten years on.

Recommendation Seven: *the national Network and individual SABs should address the improvement priorities from the second national analysis and report on changes to policies and practice, including quality assurance, in their annual reports. This should be undertaken jointly with the SAB Business Managers' Network.* NSCN and NBMN have worked collaboratively on developing the expression of interest for the essential SAR guide, and on developing the terms of reference for, and membership of the four workstreams that have emerged from NA2. The four workstreams will conclude their work in 2025/26.

Recommendation Eight: *the Network should disseminate to partners, including government departments, the outcomes of the work of the task and finish group focused on prisons, probation and adult safeguarding.* This has been reported earlier in this annual report, with positive engagement now established with the Ministry of Justice and with good evidence of how SABs are engaging with, and experiencing engagement with prisons and probation.

Recommendation Nine: *the Network should collate from members concerns about accommodation provided for people seeking asylum, aftercare when a right to remain is granted, and provision to meet their health and social care needs, to be shared with the Home Office.* This subject has been a regular topic of discussion in meetings with Home Office civil servants.

The Network recognised the need to update the “rough guide” for independent chairs. Fiona Bateman and Siân Walker McAllister have been drafting and consulting on a new essential guide for SAB Chairs and this work will be presented at the NSCN meeting in June 2025, for publication thereafter.

One purpose of the Network is to act as a support group for members. To further facilitate this, Network members were invited to identify areas of specialism and expertise that they would be prepared to offer both to newly appointed and more established chairs. This work began, with some Network members providing support and mentoring when requested. However, NSCN does not yet have a detailed list of the expertise contained within its membership.

Section Five: Updates from the Regions

East

The Eastern Regional SAB chairs has continued to meet on a quarterly basis and has been extended to now include the business managers from each of the various boards.

Following the regional self-assessment exercise facilitated by Partners in Care and Health in 2023 the region has continued to discuss some of the areas that several of the boards have found challenging and in September 2024 the focus of the meeting was around developing strategies that dealt with issues of race/discrimination. Claire Charlwood (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer) from Norfolk County Council attended the meeting to share the work she has been doing with the Norfolk SAB to identify the impact of Norfolk's multi-agency safeguarding policies on all sections of the community and to identify whether there was any disparity between the community and the quantity of safeguarding referrals received.

The regional network has also received updates around the work done by Patrick Hobson on behalf of ADASS in relation to safeguarding concerns and conversion rates. Other areas of safeguarding discussed at the meetings have included the resourcing of boards in general, delays in DHRs and the on-going Lampard enquiry.

In February 2025 Partners in Care and Health delivered a workshop for the regional chairs and board business managers to assist in the preparation for the forthcoming CQC assessments. Feedback from this event was extremely positive.

London

At the start of the year the London Chairs network expanded its membership and remit and assumed leadership for supporting statutory partners and local SABs to work across the region to prevent abuse and neglect. We had regular attendance by representatives of the SAB board managers network, Principal Social Workers' group, as well as strategic leads within the police, MOPAC, NHSE and ICBs, and DWP.

During 2024-25 the group was co-chaired by Claire Solley and Fiona Bateman. The group is supported by Jane Simmons and Alicia Diaz of London ADASS. Adi Cooper also led a task and finish group revising the pan-London policies and procedures. In addition, several chairs agreed to act as representatives at the following regional groups:

- London Criminal Justice Board- actively supporting planning for the SDS40 early prison releases in September and October 2024 and working at sub-group level with MOPAC to support safeguarding adults in custody and the Prison Service's sub-group.
- London Children Safeguarding Partnership
- London Voices expert by experience group- who have played an active role in peer evaluations as part of the CQC prep work.
- Asylum Seeker hotels and safeguarding group- exploring accountability frameworks and training for accommodation providers to ensure their practice is consistent with legislation and local safeguarding policy following learning from CSPR/ SARs.

The group met on four occasions, receiving feedback on the activities of the above partnerships. We also discussed regional responses to the following topics:

1. Fire Safety- building on work completed by the SAB Board managers network to collate learning from all fire safety SARs in the region. This work was used to inform NSCN discussions with National Fire Chief Council led by Sue Redmond.

2. Implementation of Right Care Right Person and reviewed the police's new tool to support improved referrals and joint working with Local Authorities to better safeguard adults.
3. Carers and Safeguarding.
4. Cultural Competency- in light of learning from SARs in Newham and Brent.
5. Homelessness and safeguarding- collating good practice examples in response to the Ministerial letter sent in May 2024.
6. Prisons and safeguarding- developing local cooperation in response to learning from Heather Roach's work for NCSN.
7. Safeguarding in higher and further education- working with OFSTED to better understand how standards and good practice can be better regulated.

The network shared good practice guidance on a range of topics, including information sharing and SAR guidelines. It also escalated one SAR (Sylvia- Croydon SAB) via the NSCN to the DHSC for further action nationally. SAB managers network also explored common themes reported by partners through the self-audit partnership tool [SAPAT] to support our forward plan. Finally, the network also facilitated a regional safeguarding conference during safeguarding week. There were 4 presentations from experts covering learning from the second national SAR analysis, NHS Case File Review Tracker, Neglect and Acts of Omission, Domestic Abuse and Transitional Safeguarding. Feedback from the 691 attendees from across partners London wide was very positive, with the majority staying engaged throughout the entire conference and out of the 164 responses we received to the post conference survey, 95% of attendees stated they had learned something valuable.

East Midlands

The region has business support which is helping to support and drive the work of the Region. During the year the East Midlands Region has implemented the National SAR Escalation Protocol and identified a number of common themes for escalation to the National Network. The Region has reviewed the National SAB Chairs Network Priorities together with the Improvement Priorities from the Second SAR Analysis and agreed on local, regional and national actions to prioritise within a regional plan. The Region provides regular monthly news updates to its members based on information sources from National SAB Chairs Network/ Convenors, Reviewers Network, SCIE, ADASS, LGA, NHS and other statutory and VCSE agencies involved in safeguarding and public protection. The group continue to link in with the East Midlands ADASS Community of Practice and the newly formed East Midlands SAB Managers Network. The Region has also addressed the following matters:

- Cross-referencing of SAR themes across the East Midlands region, with the following common themes identified as ones to prioritise:
- People with mental ill health not being able to access appropriate help
- Self-neglect
- MCA assessments and executive functioning
- Severe and Multiple Disadvantage / Making Every Adult Matter
- Lack of engagement
- Lack of multi-agency risk management

- Alcohol and substance misuse
- SAB Guidance on the Interface between SARs and Coronial Processes – consideration of a regional approach, agreement to reference within local SAB SAR Guidance, sharing experience of local approaches and existing arrangements with individual Coroners.
- SAR Methodologies – reviewed local approaches and noted concerns about the high number of referrals and associated costs with completing each review.
- Discussed the Ministerial Letter on Homelessness and Rough Sleepers.
- Kept a watching brief on the implementation of Right Care Right Person.
- Considered whether there was concern regionally about modern slavery and care workers.
- Attended a regional East Midlands CQC Inspection Framework Workshop for Local Authorities – the workshop highlight the learning for SABs and the areas of preparation for future inspections.
- Shared the Assurance Template for Prisons developed by Northamptonshire with individual Boards adopting this, as well as discussing SAB and Prison arrangements across the region in response to the national Criminal Justice Subgroup.
- Proposed a regional Data Dashboard workshop to look at key metrics and best practice examples to be scheduled for 2025.

North East

The group continued to meet quarterly throughout the year and saw a notable change in membership with a high turnover in SAB Chair roles across the region.

It was agreed, to enhance the richness of the discussions and be more inclusive, that the SAB Business Managers would be invited to attend the Network meetings, with a shorter element of each meeting for SAB Chairs only. With this enhanced membership it has enabled good discussion regarding national priorities and how this work could be shared to utilise resources more effectively and avoid duplication.

The Northeast Regional group's work has focussed on:

- Learning from and receiving updates on significant National SARs, including Whorton Hall
- Learning from Local, Regional and National cases and identifying local actions from recommendations
- Disseminating updates and learning from the National Network
- Close scrutiny and review of local SARs to assess whether there are any matters for escalation.

North West

North West Region has 24 Safeguarding Adult Boards and covers the areas of Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside. We have restructured during 2024/25 following the retirement of our previous Chair and recruited a new Chair in November 2024 and have been meeting quarterly as a network, with the support of NW ADASS for administration.

We have held a **CQC Assurance Workshop**. Assessing how local authorities meet their Care Act duties is a new responsibility for CQC and following the initial pilot sites in May 2023 and subsequent roll out to all 153 local authorities was underway, we wanted to focus on the learning from this. The NW Network were particularly focussed on Theme 3: How the local authority ensures safety within the system (safe systems, pathways and transitions and Safeguarding). We have collated the positive findings and areas for improvement and shared these with the Care and Health Improvement Adviser (Safeguarding Adults) for Partners in Care and Health (PCH), Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS). Once nationally collated these will be shared for consideration to the CQC via the National Network.

Ongoing concerns in regard to the delays in the implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards and the impact of this have been discussed by SAB Chairs. We focussed the Network discussion on **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards** and the **Mental Health Capacity Act** with subject matter expertise from both National and Regional Leads and areas of concern escalated. A resulting outcome that the NW DoLS Network will meet with the NW SAB Business Managers Network regarding opportunities for collaboration.

We were also delighted to host the NW ADASS Safeguarding Conference: **SARs, DHRs and the Coronial Process** in the North West Region which allowed us to explore opportunities for future collaboration and learning on these topics, following discussion with National subject matter experts.

Over the past year, Individual NW SAB chairs have raised a number of areas of concern that are impacting in their board areas, these include Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and the delays in Liberty Protection Safeguards, Right Person, Right Person, Safeguarding in A&E Departments, Mental Health Crisis support, SAB funding to meet statutory functions, NHS restructuring impact, ongoing pressure and quantity of SARs and referrals.

In Cumbria they have recently completed a self-neglect themed SAR covering 6 cases. The outcomes from this they feel will be relevant for the NW Region and National discussion. The structure of the Cumbrian Partnership was a particular issue and their response to the Local Government Reform in the splitting of Cumbria into two new Local Authorities. After two years of debate, they have now secured the future of the Board as a single entity with all partners across the two new Local Authority footprints.

South East

SE region is unique in its approach of combining managers and chairs. As a result, we have good representation and attendance. Most meetings are attended on average by 15 persons. The joint approach remains popular with attendees, and the regional group has agreed upon two chairing roles representing managers and SAB chair's role. In the past 12 months strong connections have been formed with SE region ADASS, NHS England and regional prisons. The network has developed processes to share good practice and held discussions to enhance practice across the region where a SAB has demonstrated good practice. Shared learning from SARs is an area of focus and the region has raised identified concerns from SARs to the national board for consideration and onward national

attention. Above all a good relationship has developed within the network which has led to boards communicating more regularly outside the meetings to support one another and share ideas and practice. This network collaboration, support and friendship remains for me the most important achievement and has provided the platform for the development of regional support and trust.

South West

The southwest chairs group have continued to meet throughout 2024 and 2025, three weeks prior to the national chairs meeting. Over the coming year the southwest chairs group will be holding their meetings after the national chairs meetings.

The southwest meetings are well supported and are beneficial for all attendees, especially the Independent SAB Chairs.

Our meetings include safeguarding colleagues from the Southwest Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST) and Southwest NHS England. Following their restructure and establishment of new posts, the SWAST are now also regularly attending Safeguarding Adult Board meetings across the region.

Over the past year, individual SW chairs have raised a number of areas of concern that are impacting in their board areas. These issues have been standing agenda items throughout the year: these include the CQC Local Authority Assurance Inspections and LA Peer Review Inspections, Right Person, Right Place, the availability of Police Safeguarding Data, Adult Exploitation and Southwest SAR Escalations.

A number of the above issues are live issues and will continue to be discussed in upcoming meetings.

Other subjects that have been raised and discussed throughout the year include Homelessness (following the publication of the ministerial letter), the development of a protocol between MHHRs and SARs, following the outcome of some CQC Local Authority Assurance Inspections the publication of Board minutes, Multi Agency Risk Management meetings and PIPOT policies.

West Midlands

West Midlands regional SAB Chairs have recently held a development workshop where it was agreed that moving forwards SAB chairs would meet quarterly for two hours, followed by immediate one hour meetings with business managers and safeguarding leads. This workshop also had a focus on the relationship between the National Network and the region given the more structured approach to national work since the introduction of the national convenor's roles. The region agrees an annual workplan which includes a review of the regional safeguarding procedures. The region is supported by Sarah-Hollinshead-Bland in her capacity as the regional ADASS representative.

The region provides updates to members from national network and its convenors; to the SAR Reviewers Network, SCIE, ADASS and the LGA.

The region has benefitted from the addition of an Independent Chair with experience as an inspector with CQC, consequently she is exploring with the inspectorate and regional Chairs on revising regional liaison arrangements.

During the reporting year the region has held focussed sessions on:

Homelessness and Safeguarding including:

Birmingham's approach to homelessness mortality reviews and the integration of learning into board activities.

The ministerial letter on homelessness, including regional responses in turn leading to a discussion on governance.

Right Care Right Person Policy including:

The impact of the Right Care Right Person policy on ambulance services and the need for better data to understand its collective effects on all partners and whether we should be seeing an impact by way of increases in section 42 enquiries for example.

CQC inspection experience.

The Patient Safety Framework.

Interface between HM Coroners and safeguarding adults reviews.

In addition the region held sessions on board development and governance, the National SAB presentation on experience of South West Ambulance Service, the Experience of Changing Futures Programme in Staffordshire and continues to develop understanding of responses to domestic abuse perpetrated by adults on parents.

Yorkshire & Humberside

The Yorkshire & Humber SAB chairs have continued to meet every 6 to 8 weeks over the past year with good attendance and input into the development of the agenda. We have continued to focus on the issues raised by the National Chairs network in order to challenge ourselves and the boards we represent to ensure we are able to mirror good practice. CQC assurance has been a key topic, sharing recent experiences and providing support to each other. A CQC workshop led by Dr Adi Cooper on behalf of PCH was very well attended with representation from every LA area and the majority of SAB chairs.

Key topic areas were identified at the beginning of the year with a separate topic being discussed at each meeting and a sharing of good practice. Examples of the key topics: Allegations against professionals (PIPOT/DASM), MARM/VARM – dealing with high level risk, impact of new children's arrangements, SARs and resources.

Overall the meeting is a 'welcome safe space' for SAB Chairs to receive peer support and to collectively explore safeguarding issues and share good practice.

Section Six: Financial Statement

As a fully established community benefit society NSCN must submit an annual financial return to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The Network's second such submission covers the period from the beginning of April 2024 to the end of March 2025. The statement of accounts submitted to the FCA is below.

Credits	Debits
Balance brought forward: £11,024.50	Convenor: £8000.00
85 subscriptions @£150: £12,750.00	Administration: £3900.00
3 subscriptions half year: £ 225.00	Web provision: £ 517.76
7 subscriptions part year: £ 525.00	Co-Operative sub: £ 144.00
2025/26 subscriptions: £ 175.00	Refunds: £ 225.00
Overpayment: £ 150.00	Tax: £ 805.60
Total Income: £24,849.50	Total Debits: £13,592.36

Balance carried for: £11,257.14

Note: HMRC have confirmed, in a letter dated 24th July 2024, that NSCN is not liable for corporation tax and annual returns will not be required. The position will be reviewed in May 2029 and the present position will continue as long as the only income is from member subscriptions.

The Network remains in a secure financial position and continues to be able to support the work of the convenor/s, the task and finish groups that have been established, and approved projects – the development of an essential guide for SAB Chairs, an essential SAR guide, and the workstreams to take forward recommendations from NA2. Network members have agreed to hold the annual subscription at its current level (£150 per member, regardless of the number of SABs a member chairs). For 2025/26 there will be no change in remuneration for the convenor/s.

As foregrounded in the last annual report, the Network has fully revised and updated its constitution and terms of reference, which have been published.

Section Seven: Governance

At NSCN's March 2025 meeting, members agreed that Lesley Hutchinson be appointed as joint convenor alongside Michael Preston-Shoot who will continue as joint convenor for one further year. Lesley's appointment followed invitations for expressions of interest. Michael will step down at the end of March 2026 once a new joint convenor has been appointed, to work alongside Lesley, following a further invitation for expressions of interest and an appointment process.

Siân Walker-McAllister will continue to provide administrative support. Michael Preston-Shoot will continue to act as treasurer. Siân and Michael, along with Adi Cooper, remain as Directors for the purposes required by the FCA.

Section Eight: Recommended Priorities for 2025/26

2025/26 promises to be a challenging year for adult safeguarding, not least because of the financial savings that must be found by ICBs and the government announcement regarding the abolition of NHS England, and the outturn of CQC assurance visits to local authorities. The implications for adult safeguarding of the passage of the Mental Health Bill, and of forthcoming government decisions on mental capacity and deprivation of liberty/liberty protection safeguards will need careful monitoring. Nonetheless, NSCN is now firmly established as an authority on adult safeguarding and is able to represent, and advocate for effective policy for practice. The first five priorities acknowledge these challenges and opportunities.

Priority One: to complete, in collaboration with NBMN, the four workstreams that take forward service improvement priorities for SABs and the Network from NA2.

Priority Two: to commission an essential SAR guide and to disseminate it widely once completed.

Priority Three: to disseminate widely the forthcoming essential guide for SAB chairs.

Priority Four: to undertake a survey of SABs in Autumn 2025, this to include a review of funding and consideration of the resources necessary for an effective Board, and of approaches by SABs to data collection and performance appraisal.

Priority Five: to review the outcomes of CQC assurance visits and their implications for effective governance of adult safeguarding.

The work of the task and finish groups will continue during 2025/26. The Network has also begun to consider the implications of artificial intelligence for adult safeguarding and will continue to review the impact of Right Care, Right Person and the government proposals on cuckooing. At the March 2025 NSCN meeting, a proposal from Mike Ward (Alcohol Change UK) for a project on engagement was approved.

Priority Six: to agree the scope, terms of reference and timeline to completion for the project on engagement.

Of increasing interest in the work of the expert reference groups is the role of culture and leadership. The leadership role of SABs, and of Chairs and Scrutineers, is suggested as a potential priority for NSCN to explore.

Priority Seven: to consider a project on the role of SABs in leadership and in creating a positive culture for adult safeguarding.

Appendix 1: National SAB Chairs' Executive Membership during 24/25

East Midlands (Jane Geraghty, Lesley Hutchinson and Scott MacKechnie)
East (Heather Roach)
London (Fiona Bateman)
North East (Vida Morris)
North-West (Shirley Williams and Michelle Creed)
West Midlands (Ivan Powell)
South East (Andy Rabey)
South West (Paul Yeatman)
Yorkshire & Humberside (Diane Hampshire)
Past Network Joint Convenor (Siân Walker-McAllister)
LGA ADASS PCH Programme (Dr Adi Cooper)

Appendix 2: National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs Network – Constitution

Objects & Purpose & of the Network

The National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs' Network ('the Network') is a nationally recognised body representing and providing a forum for SAB Chairs and Scrutineers from across England, facilitating working together wherever appropriate. SAB Chairs from other UK jurisdictions are also invited to join and participate

- The Network will promote good safeguarding governance and practice standards and collaborative working across the regions and with SAB Chairs/ Scrutineers.
- The Network will provide learning, support and peer mentoring opportunities for SAB Chairs/ Scrutineers and aims to offer a learning opportunity for continuous professional development at every quarterly meeting. *It is a requirement of the Care Act 2014 that Independent SAB Chairs provide evidence of their ongoing professional development and learning*
- The Network will take responsibility for circulating relevant material of interest on a monthly basis and for providing and maintaining an updated website which makes relevant papers available for the membership.
- The Network will also collaborate with the National SAB Business Managers' Network and with all agencies and professional bodies involved in safeguarding adults.

The organisational structure for the Network is a cooperative with all members having equal decision making opportunities. The Network is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority and will have its accounts audited every year with effect from March 2024

These Terms of Reference are effective from September 2024 and continue until March 2026.

Membership

The Core Members of the Network are the Chairs/ Scrutineers for all Safeguarding Adult Boards in England, whether or not independent. The Membership list is held by the Network Convenor(s) and the Convenor(s) will liaise with SABs to keep the Membership list up to date

- Chairs/ Scrutineers of Safeguarding Boards from other jurisdictions are also invited to join and participate in the Network e.g., Wales, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man

Safeguarding Chairs in other national organisations e.g., Faith Groups or VCS/ Charitable organisations meet annually with the Convenors and meet annually at a single Network meeting. A representative from that group is invited to observe at all meetings of the Network Executive. The Network took a decision that such individuals are not extended full membership of the Network

The Convenor(s) are appointed through a selection process overseen by the Network Executive. Terms of office will usually be for 2 years from April, unless an exception is agreed with the Executive and membership.

The Network has 3 Director roles, as follows, appointed biannually by Executive:

- Director & Convenor(s) – one role will be the appointed Treasurer
- Director (should only one Convenor be in role) – one role will be the appointed Company Secretary
- Independent Director – who is an independent advisor

All 3 Directors are signatories to the bank account

Executive

- The Executive is the lead governance group for the Network and generally meets every 8-12 weeks
- The Executive is drawn from those Independent SAB Chairs who coordinate meetings in each of the regions. The Executive will also include the Convenor, the Independent Director and the outgoing Convenor for the most recent period.
- The Executive will determine the agenda of its meetings and discuss matters which have been raised in the regions. It will also consider any referrals under the SAR Escalation protocol for consideration by the wider Network
- The Executive will appoint the Director roles every 2 years
- The Executive has the ability to coopt members for a period not greater than a year and this includes the representative of colleagues who work in safeguarding roles in the charitable/ faith groups sector
- Decisions made by the Executive will be recorded on the Network Decision Log which is kept in the Members' section of the Network website
- A note is kept of each Executive meeting and this is also posted in the Members' section of the Network website

Roles and Responsibilities

The Network is accountable for:

- Producing an annual work plan indicating deliverables.
- Producing an annual report.
- Exchanging information about practice, policy and research developments in safeguarding adults and promoting the adoption of best practice in terms of safeguarding arrangements with relevant partners.
- To collectively receive and respond to information on national and regional changes to strategic direction, legislative changes, guidance and good practice in safeguarding adults.
- To liaise with relevant regional and national groups on specific areas of common work, including central government departments.
- To set up 'Task & Finish' groups, as agreed by the membership, with a remit to undertake specific pieces of work in connection with the above core functions.

The membership of the Network will commit to:

- Attending, where possible, the majority of the scheduled Network meetings.
- Championing the Network within and outside of work areas.
- Sharing communications and information across all Network members, as appropriate.

- Notifying members of the Network, as soon as practical, if any matter arises which may be deemed to affect the development of the Network.
- Agreeing a list of those members with specialist knowledge and skills to support the Executive in the delivery of task and finish groups

Members of the Network will expect:

- That each member will be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner.
- To be given reasonable time to make key decisions.
- Open and honest discussions.
- Confidentiality of sensitive information that may be shared by members.
- Network Meeting Agendas will always indicate where items require key decisions to be made.

Working methods / ways of working:

- The Network will agree an annual programme of work with Task & Finish groups being convened for time limited projects as appropriate.
- Meetings will be held four times each year, virtually, with any additional meetings taking place by agreement of the membership.
 - Meetings will be Chaired by the appointed Convenor(s)
 - Agenda item topics will be agreed at the previous Executive Meeting.
 - Papers will be circulated one week in advance of meetings.
- Representatives will be invited to the Network from partner organisations from time to time as the agenda dictates.