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Annual report setting out the activities of the National Safeguarding Adult Board Chairs Network between April 2023 and March 2024

National Network of Safeguarding Adult Board Chairs

Annual Report 2023-2024

Michael Preston-Shoot and Siân Walker-McAllister

**In Memory of Fran Pearson**

Fran was a former convenor of the Network and a much loved and respected independent chair of several SABs. She had also previously been the chair of the London regional group of independent chairs. Sadly, Fran died suddenly in July 2023. Network members contributed to a book of condolence, which has been given to her family. A webinar will be hosted by the University of East Anglia in October 2024, with speakers from across the Network who will offer presentations on safeguarding themes that represent Fran’s commitments, passions and interests.

**Section One: Introduction**

The Network 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.

The national Network 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 the Network 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 2023/2024, the Network continued to be co-ordinated by two individuals – Professor Michael Preston-Shoot and Siân Walker-McAllister. They were supported by an Executive comprising Network leads from each of the nine regions in England, together with the immediate past convenor and 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, the NHS SANN (Safeguarding Adults Network), ADASS policy leads and the SAR Lead Reviewer Peer Network.

The Network 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, the network is owned by its members, to whom the joint 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 terms of reference for the Network was approved by members in September 2023 and is included as an appendix in this annual report. The Annual Report remains a core component of the Network’s governance, giving accountability to its members.

**Section Two: A Network Retrospective Overview 2023-2024**

Four main network meetings took place in 2022/2023 that provided opportunities for general discussion and updates from the Regions and from other safeguarding networks. As well as taking key decisions; we had presentations and full discussion on the following:

**June 2023**

Jane Winter(Analytical Section Head, ASC Statistics Data & Analytics) from NHS England gave a presentation that described the work being done to improve data collection for the Safeguarding Adults’ Collection (known as SAC) which is submitted annually to NHS Digital by local authority Adult Social Care. The aim is to improve data consistency, for which guidance has been given to local authorities and to broaden the content. Gary Vaux gave a presentation questioning how DWP responds to adult safeguarding concerns – as partners and as referrers. Reference was made to SAR Billy and SAR Valentina (Nottingham City SAB), and to a DHR (Sarah – Liverpool). Network members reported diverse experiences of liaison with DWP Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders. Concern was expressed about the current consultation regarding a central reference point as proof of concept – its scope and how it had been set up. Clare Edgar (DASS Southampton and Chair of the ADASS Safeguarding Policy Network) gave a presentation that covered a range of issues, including Mark Rowley’s letter regarding the police response to mental health crises, referrals into and from secondary mental health providers, and how local authorities are working within an integrated care system.

**September 2023**

A response was provided to the Network by DHSC Civil Servants, following the escalation of 2 SARs, setting out actions being taken forward There was also discussion on the revised SAR Escalation Protocol which was approved.

Dr Geraldine Strathdee & Linda Bullivant presented on DHSC work and Rapid Review into data and evidence on mental health inpatient pathways.

The Network received an update on Fire & Rescue services and safeguarding as well as contributing to a discussion on safeguarding in prisons and agreement to develop and expand on a Criminal Justice Task & Finish Group to consider all matters in respect of police, probation and prisons and safeguarding adults.

**December 2023**

Two of our colleagues – Lesley Jeavons (Durham SAB) and Heather Roach (Norfolk SAB) presented on the SARs in their areas on Whorlton Hall and on Cawston Park (SAR Joanna Jon & Ben). There was long discussion on the learning and outcomes of these reviews and consideration given as to how SAB Chairs are able to seek assurance within their areas about hospital care and residential care for people with complex needs**.**

Dr Alison Gardner (Asst Professor Public Administration at Nottingham University) presented on ‘Cognitive Impairment & Exploitation’ - research from Nottingham University.

Mike Taylor (Independent Member of Home Office Panels) presented on Modern Slavery Risk Assessment and Due Diligence for Adult Social Care. He highlighted the recently published Guide for Commissioning Officers and the Brook House Inquiry concerning safeguarding of those detained in Immigration Removal Centres and Prison pending deportation.

**March 2024**

A presentation was given on the Network & DWP Memorandum of Understanding developed and arising out of 2 Nottingham SARs and work DWP are doing on trauma-informed approaches with claimants. Michael Preston-Shoot presented on the outcomes of the 2nd national SAR Analysis which will be fully published in May 2024.

**Section Three: Working with our Partners**

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

Network Convenors have been meeting regularly with PCH and have contributed to discussions about their safeguarding work, research, surveys and webinars on the impact on safeguarding in areas such the cost of living crisis/winter pressures, discriminatory abuse, 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.

**Meetings with DHSC & Home Office** The Network joint convenors have met regularly throughout the year with civil servants in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Home Office. Some discussions have also involved civil servants from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The joint convenors have also responded to occasional requests, for example from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). The following adult safeguarding issues and concerns have been covered.

* Safe Care at Home Review – findings, recommendations and outcomes of recommendations.
* Oversight of safeguarding adult reviews (SARs) and advice on the scope of a national analysis of reviews.
* Investigations into organisational abuse.
* Prevention of, and responses to homelessness, including a focus on hospital discharge and homelessness, accommodation for individuals who are granted leave to remain, SAB responses to DLUHC recommendations, and repeal of vagrancy legislation.
* 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.
* Introduction of CQC assurance arrangements of Adult Social Care. Some Network members have engaged with PCH in its work to support local authorities to prepare for assurance visits. The joint convenors have commented on the scope of assurance visits as proposals have been developed.
* Modern slavery in care settings. Network members have identified concerns and the joint convenors have worked with ADASS to provide detailed case studies.
* Migrant Victims protocol.
* Provision of accommodation for people seeking asylum, and provider responses to care and support needs, and to prevention and protection from abuse/neglect.
* Regulation and quality of supported accommodation.
* Safety in care homes.
* Pressure ulcer protocol.
* Right Care Right Person, including the development of guidance for social care. Deborah Cohen and the joint convenors have commented on draft guidance, responded to requests for information from civil servants, and identified evidence of impact.
* Public health and social care – raising awareness of the contribution of public health to adult safeguarding and social care more broadly.

The joint convenors have also attended the Chief Social Worker’s forum, meetings of ADASS policy leads, and the monthly meetings of the NHS Safeguarding Adults National Network.

**Section Four: Outcomes of Network Priorities for 2022/2023**

Twelve priorities were identified for the network in its last annual report. An update on progress is provided here.

**Improvement Priority One:** *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. This work is ongoing.

**Improvement Priority Two:** *the national Network should collate examples of successful approaches to involving people with lived experience of adult safeguarding in the work of the SAB*. This priority has been combined with improvement priority five and an update is provided below.

**Improvement Priority Three:** *the national Network should consider collating and disseminating different approaches to collecting, collating, moderating and validating evidence of effective adult safeguarding, and the added value that SABs contribute*. The most recent survey of SABs has provided evidence of how Boards are approaching performance reporting. Demonstrating the difference that SABs make remains an ongoing challenge.

**Improvement Priority Four:** *the national Network should consider collating examples of best practice of how SABs are working with other strategic partnerships and boards*. The Network conducted a survey of SABs in late 2023/early 2024. The survey report will be published on the network’s website in May 2024. It contains examples of how SABs have engaged with other strategic partnerships. The survey report will be discussed at the Network’s June 2024 meeting.

**Improvement Priority Five:** *following on from improvement priority two, the national Network should consider exploring how to evaluate the impact and outcomes of the involvement of people with lived experience of safeguarding*. Two members of the Network’s Executive (Fran Pearson and Diane Hampshire) began work on the involvement of people with lived experience. The project that they had envisaged was delayed by Fran’s sudden death. However, the aforementioned survey has enabled collation of examples of how SABs are seeking to involve people with lived experience of safeguarding. Diane Hampshire is leading on this work, supported by other Network members.

**Improvement Priority Six:** *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*. Discussions have taken place with the Home Office and with NHS England to ensure that nationally, the interface between SARs, PSIRF and DHRs is acknowledged. Contact will be made with the Department for Education to open up discussion regarding the links between SARs and Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews. Some SABs have 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 continues in 24/25. The most recent survey provides a snapshot on how SABs are managing SARs, including where criteria from other review processes have also been met.

**Improvement Priority Seven:** *the national Network of SAB chairs should work with SCIE to ensure that, once launched, use of the complete and revised set of quality markers is supported and evaluated*. The Network contributed to the finalisation of the quality markers and has promoted their use. The Convenors meet with SCIE regularly and recent discussions have focused on training and accreditation of reviewers. The most recent survey has provided information about how the quality markers are being used.

**Improvement Priority Eight:** *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*. A repository has been 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.

**Improvement Priority Nine:** *the national Network of SAB chairs should develop a briefing on innovative approaches to disseminating learning from SARs and capturing impact and outcomes*. Network meetings have included presentations on how SABs might approach dissemination of SAR learning and the seeking of assurance of what has changed following implementation of recommendations. A Network meeting received a presentation on how care providers can implement learning from SARs. All presentations are posted on the members’ only area of the website. The 2023/2024 survey of SABs has provided some data on how Boards are approaching dissemination of SAR learning and capturing outcomes of SAR recommendations. The findings and recommendations of the second national analysis also provide useful evidence. Both the survey and the national analysis will be discussed at the Network’s June 2024 meeting, from which new improvement priorities for the Network will be identified.

**Improvement Priority Ten:** *the national Network of SAB Chairs, in partnership with the national Network of Business Managers and the national SAR Peer Reviewer Network agreed to publish a link to various SAR review methodologies.* This work remains to be completed. The second national analysis of SARs will prompt further work on methodologies, especially to ensure that reviews build on prior learning.

**Improvement Priority Eleven:** *the national Network should work with CHIP to develop further resources for sector-led improvement that will capture the evidence of the differences that reviews are making to policy and practice*. Network members have supported CHIP (and now Partners in Care and Health [PCH]) to develop resources for sector-led improvement. These have been published by the Local Government Association and the Network’s website contains links to these resources. The Network continues to support PCH in its sector-lead improvement work.

**Improvement Priority Twelve:** *the national Network of SAB chairs, in partnership with the national Network of Business Managers, should work with CHIP (now PCH) to identify what specific resource development and provision would be helpful within the resources available*. The joint convenors meet monthly with CHIP/PCH and other partners to agree priorities for further sector-led improvement work. Network members actively contribute to the agreed priorities.

**Section Five: 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 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 2023-2024 the escalation protocol with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has been reviewed and revised. This had been an agreed priority following the last annual report. The Network has now escalated recommendations from four SARs to DHSC. The Department’s responses have been presented at Network meetings and are available in the members’ area of the website.

The following table lists the use of the escalation protocol that the Network has agreed with DHSC.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Initiating SAB | Date | Issue | Outcome |
| Durham | 2022 | Absence of a safeguarding power of entry. | No immediate change to Care Act 2014 but further consideration as part of the Safe Care at Home Review. |
| Surrey | 2022 | Duty of candour with families considering a placement. | Discussed with CQC. Reference also to research on resident on resident violence. Request for discussion with SAR author. |
| Teeswide and Newcastle | 2023 | Definition of exploitation and development of national guidance. | Discussed with Home Office to inform work on Safe Care at Home and on domestic abuse. |
| Various | 2023 | Practice guidance and advice on: definition of care and support needs; duty to cooperate; data collection; safeguarding people who do not have care and support needs; section 42 safeguarding concerns and enquiries. | No immediate change to Care Act 2014 but to be reviewed once the findings of the second national analysis of SARs are known. Partners in Care and Health funded to provide webinars. |

Key areas of interest, that reflect the issues escalated to DHSC, have been explicitly included in the scope of the second national analysis of SARs. The findings and recommended improvement priorities were reported at a webinar in March 2024. The full reports will shortly be published by the Local Government Association but meanwhile are available in confidence to Network members. There are specific improvement priorities recommended to DHSC regarding adult safeguarding law, policy and guidance, which will be discussed with civil servants in the Network’s regular scheduled meetings.

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. This national analysis has recommended improvement priorities for the Network to take forward with members, the outcomes of which will be reported in the next annual report.

*Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)*

Michael Preston-Shoot, on behalf of the Network, appeared before the House of Commons DWP select committee. The focus was on whether DWP should have a statutory duty with respect to adults at risk and on how better to identify and respond to claimants who appear to be adults at risk.

As a result of two SARs published by Nottingham City and the initiative of Nottingham City SAB’s independent chair, Lesley Hutchinson, the Network engaged with DWP to develop a memorandum of understanding about how DWP will engage with adult safeguarding – both the referral of adult safeguarding concerns and involvement in enquiries (section 42) and participation in SARs (section 44). This memorandum of understanding has now been signed off by both the Network and DWP, and is available in the members’ area of the website. It is a very positive development and builds on the engagement with SABs by DWP’s advanced customer support officers. The Network will now be attending DWP’s operational engagement stakeholder forum meetings.

*Safeguarding Boards of National Charities*

Reaching out to third sector organisations had been a priority adopted following the last annual report. The Network has held a several discussions with independent chairs of national charities, the outcome of which has been agreement for a representative to attend Network Executive meetings and for joint meetings to be held at least annually to share perspectives on topics of mutual interest. It is planned to hold the first joint meeting in Autumn 2024.

*SARs and Coroner Inquests*

A project was initiated by the SAB Business Manager Network to develop guidance on how to manage the interface between SARs and coronial inquests. The last annual report referred to this work. Subsequently, a small grouping of independent chairs is now supporting the development and finalisation of this guidance, a draft of which will be circulated to Network members for comment and eventual endorsement in Summer 2024.

*Fire Prevention*

Sue Redmond has led for the Network on collaboration with Fire and Rescue Services nationally, continuing a focus from the last annual report on disseminating learning from fire deaths. Fiona Bateman and Michael Preston-Shoot have supported this work, as have SAB Business Managers. The purpose is to learn from SARs that have feature fire-related deaths, to raise awareness about the contribution to Fire and Rescue Services to fire prevention, and to disseminate guidance and toolkits. The second national analysis of SARs contains findings related to fire prevention and fire deaths. Some SABs have completed workforce surveys and the development of questionnaires and toolkits that focus on fire safety awareness. A web page is being created on the Network’s website that will contain available guidance and resources. Network members are encouraged to let Michael Preston-Shoot have resources to upload into the designated website page.

*Prisons, Probation and Criminal Justice*

The Network has established a task and finish group to explore how SABs can engage purposefully with prisons in their area, seeking assurance that prisoners’ health and social care needs are met, and that they are safeguarded, both whilst detained and in discharge planning and follow-up. Established in 2023, and led by Heather Roach, its current focus is the relationship between the prison service and SABs, building upon the work done previously by Mark Godfrey and continuing to promote adult safeguarding through the new National Police Chiefs Council lead. The significant change in police policy in light of the Right Care Right Person approach is also being monitored through the sub-group.

A short survey of all SABs has taken place to identify the key areas of concern and also 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. The aim of this work will be to approach to the Ministry Of Justice to develop a national Memorandum of Understanding between SABs and prisons and to seek to address some of the areas identified.

The most recent SAB survey contains information from individual Boards that will contribute to this focus. Links can be made with the National Social Care Prison Board following discussions held with DHSC/Chief Social Worker’s Office.

*Policing and adult safeguarding*

Ivan Powell has continued to represent the Network with the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs’ 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. CS James Gale is in the process of reinvigorating the national and regional police adult safeguarding leads meetings.

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. (It is anticipated this is likely to be a low base but will give good grounding for more urgent progress).

The College of Policing has yet to establish an adult safeguarding training programme for policing (‘Poor Relation’ recommendation) with the sole exception of the Public Protection Leaders programme which is aimed at Chief Superintendents/ Superintendents and senior police staff equivalents. The adult safeguarding and policing element remains well received and will hopefully support James Gale in his leadership role.

**Section Six: Updates from the Regions**

**East Region** SAB Chairs meeting was re-established during 2023 and now meets on a bi-monthly basis and has revised terms of reference.

Subject areas discussed by the network have included issues around the backlog of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, Hearing the Voice of people with lived experience and the increasing numbers of Safeguarding Adult Reviews that all the boards are experiencing.

A project led by Partners in Care and Health has been undertaken with the seven SABs to identify whether each are meeting their statutory duties and to support the region in developing best practice by comparing how each is operating across the region.

**East Midlands** - Has a secretariat as well as a Regional Chair and a separate member of the Executive. It has contributed to the development of a revised SAR Escalation Protocol and implementation and has promoted access to SCIE’s ‘SARs in Rapid Time’ approach. The region has provided a briefing on new ICS arrangements and implications for multi-agency safeguarding, circulating the ICS partnership and assurance checklist for SABs. It has reviewed safeguarding implications arising from COVID-19 & Long COVID; cost-of-Living and shared intelligence about demand and responses as well as sharing SAB experiences of safeguarding arrangements for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, shared ‘Top Tips’ for CYP Safeguarding Partnerships & SABs to consider in Business Planning and Priority Setting. The region provides regular 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 region has also addressed the following matters

* safeguarding in specialised ‘out-of-area’ placements and sharing outcomes from SARs including Cawston Park & Whorlton Hall as part of Lessons Learned approach.
* ‘Right Care Right Person’ – sharing experience of the approach being adopted, in relation to mental health, and shared concerns about ‘people at risk’ falling through service gaps.
* contributed to the Criminal Justice Sub-Group, providing evidence about effective pathways from HMPs to community in order to develop key escalation themes for national discussion with the Ministry of Justice and for developing a national protocol between SABs and HMPs.
* the new CQC Inspection Framework for Local Authorities and Care Providers with feedback from Chairs involved in initial pilots
* CQC Standards and & Quality Issues in Care Homes being considered as safeguarding – a rationalised approach being developed

Development of regional multi-agency data sets for Performance Management/Assurance and Benchmarking purposes by SABs that shared their approach including the development of a Dashboard with highlighted areas to support scrutiny, challenge and assurance.

**London** region meets quarterly throughout the year had strong attendance from chairs as well as good support from sub-regional groups. The network has now merged with London SAB to enable stronger means by which to address regional developments. The new group now has membership from ADASS, regional ICB representatives and from the Met Police as well as London Fire Brigade, London Ambulance, NHSE and housing safeguarding leads. Regionally our focus has been on revising the Pan-London policies, including developing regional SAR guidelines to provide uniformity and support practice improvements recommended following the 2 national SAR analysis reports.

The London region has also used the SAR escalation protocol to raise possible issues for national discussion following a large number of SARs in respect of fatal fires (now being addressed with the National Fire Chief Council and Sue Redmond, on behalf of the network). We have also contributed findings from sub-regional work on intra-familial financial abuse to inform the joint DHSC & Home Office ’Safe at Home’ review. We also met with NHS Digital’s outcome board to raise concerns that the current Safeguarding Adults Data Collection remains unfit for purpose.

Regionally we have been active in the development of regional policies to support safer implementation of the ‘Right Care; Right Person’ policy, working with Mental Health Trusts and the Police; we continue to seek assurance regarding the Met Police’s implementation of recommendations following the Casey Review. We held focussed discussions on the rise in street homeless populations, following the ending of the ‘everyone in’ policies during Covid, including seeking urgent practice changes to ensure safeguarding concerns arising within Home Office commissioned asylum accommodation are reported to local councils in line with national policy. We have also made representations to relevant national bodies regarding safeguarding risks associated with cost of living and workforce pressures.

**North East** regioncontinues to meet on a quarterly basis, though with a recent significant turnover in Board Chairs. Some areas are moving away from Independent Chairs to statutory agencies leading Boards. The region **u**tilises the Escalation Protocol well. There has been a focus on strengthening the relationship between the regional network and the Northeast and North Cumbria ICB/ICS; the ICB now attends the regional network meetings and already the benefits of this collaboration are being realised particularly from an intelligence and information sharing perspective. The region has been proactive in updating all members about the Whorlton Hall SAR throughout the year and in particular has triggered the need for Board Chairs to seek assurance in relation to safeguarding in respect of out of area placements, progress on the ‘Transforming Care’ agenda and commissioning of institutional type provision across social care and healthcare. In respect of ‘Right Care, Right Person’ members have noted the potential impacts on safeguarding activity from some of the national police changes. The region regularly receives feedback from the national Executive and national Network meetings and progresses and responds to any actions required.

**North West r**egion met via Teams on a 3 monthly basis. Attendance at Regional meetings is variable, but email/phone exchanges take place on a regular basis, particularly for new SAB Chairs. Giving support to and receiving from chair colleagues is encouraged.

The Region has the second highest number of local authorities in England. Key concerns and challenges in 2023/4 have been preparation for and development of ICB relationships and the positive integration of the Adult Health and Social Care agenda requirements.

There has been growing concern over the potential negative impact on safeguarding adults at risk and the capacity of staff in local authorities to respond and manage safely with anticipated increased workloads as a consequence of changes of ‘Right Care, Right Person’ programme. The view of the region is that this may lead to missed identification of safeguarding, and consequently poor outcomes for the person(s) at risk.

Asylum concerns have been discussed regularly, particularly as access to affordable and good standard housing is ‘unmanageable’ and waiting lists are already long for local residents.

**South East** region has brought Business Managers and SAB chairs together as one regional group. This has improved communication and relationships between the two groups; improved discussions around finding strategy-to-action solutions to issues; has initiated conversations about practicalities of Board operations, such as SAR methodologies and learning resources, as well as discussions about standardisation across the region and has given space for joint thinking and planning on issues, such as Modern Slavery, and how that might come to Board. The focus is upon regional practice and exploring methods to share/develop best practice on a regional scale, from local learning upwards (so issues occurring in one or more Board areas like Modern Slavery and Care Workers) and from national learning downwards (so thinking ahead to National SAR analysis report and developing a regional response for local Boards). The input and focus upon regional practice and inputs from NHS England SE region, Probation and Ambulance services relevant to Regional practice is a consistent theme within Regional meetings.

**South West** regional group has established a good working relationship with the Department of Work and Pensions across the region. Advanced Customer Support Leaders attended two of our meetings and provided updates on key issues and improvements that have been made to the service they provide to adults with care and support needs. An Advanced Customer Support Leader will now attend a meeting each year to provide a two way opportunity for chairs to raise awareness of relevant issues and for the DWP to provide further updates and raise areas of concern across the SW.

The regional group has also established new working arrangements with the South West Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST). NHS Dorset is the commissioning body for the SWAST across the whole SW region. SWAST has recently undertaken a review of their safeguarding arrangements and resources across the region; all SW Safeguarding Adults Boards have been consulted and updates have been provided at our SW chairs meetings. The new Head of Safeguarding for the Trust will now be attending our quarterly SW meetings to give regional SAB chairs the opportunity to raise any specific issues that are impacting in their area. The Head of Safeguarding for the Trust will also be attending all the Dorset/BCP SAB quarterly meetings.

Over the past year, Individual SW SAB chairs have raised a number of areas of concern that are impacting in their board areas. A number of these issues are to be standing agenda items for the forthcoming year: these includes CQC Local Authority Assurance Inspections and LA Peer Reviews and Right Person, Right Person. Other subjects discussed include Adult Exploitation, Inclusion and Diversity, Police Safeguarding Data, Mental Health, SAB Governance and Quality Assurance, SAB Annual Assurance Audit, NHS commissioning changes and SARs.

**West Midlands** regional SAB Chairs meet quarterly, with two of the meetings having a joint session with the regional business managers and safeguarding leads. The region agrees an annual workplan which includes a review of the regional safeguarding procedures and benefits from experienced Chairs from a range of professional backgrounds and the support of Mark Godfrey who is a regular attendee in his capacity as the regional ADASS representative. John Wood, a member for several years, has recently retired and the West Midlands regional network would like to thank him for his commitment and support throughout that time and to wish him well for the future.

The region provides updates to members from national network and its convenors; to the SAR Reviewers Network, SCIE, ADASS and the LGA. In addition, the region has been involved in two LGA/ADASS led workshops on the forthcoming CQC inspection framework.

During the reporting year the region has considered the following matters:

* Domestic abuse perpetrated by adults on parents
* Right Care Right Person and sharing experiences of SABs of the 4 police forces interpretation of this policy across the region
* Modern Slavery in the Care Sector
* The National Suicide Prevention Strategy
* Gangmasters and Labour Authority – ‘Operation Narial’
* National Police Chiefs Council ‘Missing Adult’s Framework (including Herbert and Elim protocols) and Northumbria ‘Missing Adult’s Framework’ (including Herbert and Winne protocols)
* Presentation from Professor Michael Preston Shoot on the most recent national SAR analysis.

The region has invoked the SAR escalation procedure in respect of the Staffordshire SAR ‘CT’.

**Yorkshire & Humberside** SABchairs met every 6 to 8 weeks throughout 2023, with on average of 7 chairs attending out of 12. Meetings had a focus on what has been discussed at the national network, with key topics highlighted for discussion with a section on the agenda for 'sharing good practice'. Trauma informed practice and modern slavery have been two areas the chairs have been keen to learn about from each other. Local Safeguarding Adults Reviews have been a key discussion area with the discussion including some areas feeling over run by SAR's, others just building up their knowledge and approaches. One SAR (Learning disability) was raised at the regional meeting with some of its recommendations being highlighted to the SAB Chairs Executive via the SAR national escalation policy and then shared with national policy makers. A non- SAR (asylum seeker) was also discussed with key messages being shared with the Home Office.

**Section Seven: New Priorities for 2024/2025**

Recommendations from the survey of SABs will be discussed at the June Network meeting. At this stage, therefore, they are indications of likely priorities for the Network.

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

**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 following the recently implemented MoU with DWP, how local DWP can be better represented

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

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)

CQC engagement, with similar consideration be given to CQC which covers wide regional areas; to be supported by regular CQC attendance at the Regional SAB Chairs’ Network.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Recommendation Six:** the Network should continue to engage in discussions with DHSC on policy and practice regarding section 42. Safeguarding adult concerns and enquiries.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Recommendation Ten:** The Network has recognised the need to update the “rough guide” for independent chairs, and to contribute to the development of a “rough guide” for SAR authors with SAB Business Managers and the SAR author peer support group.

**Recommendation Eleven:** The purpose of the Network is to act as a support group for members. To further facilitate this, Network members will be invited to identify areas of specialism and expertise that they would be prepared to offer both to newly appointed and more established chairs. A proforma template will be circulated and the completed resource list will be posted in the member area of the Network’s website.

**Section Eight: Financial Statement**

As a fully established community benefit society we have to submit an annual financial return to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The Network’s first submission covers the period from its establishment as a legal entity (September 2022) to the end of March 2024. The statement of accounts submitted to the FCA is below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Income | Credits | Expenditure | Debits |
| Member subscriptions 2022-2023 | £ 5,987.50 | Joint convenor fees 22/23 (6 months only) | £3000.00 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Member subscriptions 2023-2024 | £14,325.00 | Annual Joint convenor fees 23/24 | £6000.00 |
|  |  | Co-operative Society renewal | £ 138.00 |
|  |  | Refund of overpaid subscription | £ 150.00 |
| Total membership income | £20,312.50 | Total expenditure | £9,288.00 |
| Balance at the end of the financial year 2023-2024 - £11,024.50 | | | |

The Network is in a secure financial position and will be able in future to support the work of regional groupings and of task and finish groups that have been established or will be created to deliver on agreed improvement priorities. 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) and to increase the fee payable to the convenor from its current level (£6000) to £8000 per year (pro rata when there are joint convenors).

As foregrounded in the last annual report, the network has fully revised and updated its constitution and terms of reference, which have been published. An appendix to this annual report contains the Network’s current terms of reference.

**Appendix 1: National SAB Chairs’ Executive Membership during 23/24**

|  |
| --- |
| East Midlands (Jane Geraghty) |
| East (Deborah Stuart-Angus and Heather Roach) |
| London (Fiona Bateman) |
| North East (Darren Best and Vida Morris) |
| North-West (Shirley Williams) |
| West Midlands (Ivan Powell) |
| South East (Andy Rabey) |
| South West (Paul Yeatman) |
| Yorkshire & Humberside (Diane Hampshire) |
| Past Network Chair (Fran Pearson [in memoriam]) |
| LGA ADASS PCH Programme (Dr Adi Cooper) |

**Appendix 2**: **National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs Network – Terms of Reference**

**Purpose & Role of the Network**

The National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs’ Network (‘the Network’) will provide 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, as are Safeguarding Chairs in other national organisations e.g., Faith Groups or VCS/ Charitable organisations.

The Network will promote good practice standards and collaborative working across the regions and with Independent Chairs in other jurisdictions. The Network will provide learning, support and peer mentoring opportunities for SAB Chairs and aims to offer a learning event at every quarterly meeting. 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.

Membership of the Network is confirmed with each SAB Chair making a financial contribution or membership fee (at 2023/24 the fee is £150 per annum). The fee is payable per Chair, regardless of how many Boards each has responsibility for.

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 July 2023 and continue until March 2025.

**Membership**

The Core Members of the Group 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

Representatives will be invited to the Network from partner organisations from time to time as the agenda dictates.

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.

Co-opted Membership is subject to the agreement of core members.

**Executive**

The Executive is the lead governance group for the Network and generally meets every 8 weeks

The Executive is drawn from those Independent SAB Chairs who coordinate meetings in each of the regions. The Executive will also include the LGA PCH Advisor and the outgoing Convenor for the most recent period.

The Executive will determine the agenda of quarterly 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 an Hon. Secretary every year and also an Hon. Treasurer

**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.
* 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.

**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.