
Minutes of the meeting of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held at 10am on Thursday, 08 September 2022 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Chelmsford.

Present:

County Councillors:

R Gooding (Chairman)

S Barker

M Durham

J Fleming

M Goldman

A McGurran

L Shaw

W Stamp

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Gemma Bint, Democratic Services Officer and Sharon Westfield de Cortez from Healthwatch Essex were also present.

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report on Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations was received.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Guglielmi, Grundy, May and Playle.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Questions from the public

There were none.

4 Essex Safeguarding Adults Board – Annual Report

The Committee considered report PAF/15/22. The following joined the meeting to introduce the item and respond to questions:

- Michala Jury, ESAB Safeguarding Board Manager
- Linda Moncur, NHS Representative
- Elaine Oxley, Director of ASC Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
- DCI Michael Samuel, Essex Police
- Deborah Stuart – Angus, Independent Panel Chair - ESAB

Contributors provided the Committee with a presentation on the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report, the presentation included:

- The governance structure and membership of the ESAB
- Statutory duties
- Functions and purpose
- The ESAB Strategic Plan 2021-24 and the Annual Report 2021-22
- Impact and challenges
- Safeguarding data
- Future priorities
- Expenditure and income

During the discussion, the following was highlighted, raised and/or noted:

- (i) Members discussed Safeguarding Referrals Raised and Risk Reduced and reference to 29% as the converted figure for referrals. It was outlined that the Care Act set out clear thresholds and criteria as to what constituted the highest safeguarding concerns. There would be other concerns raised that did not meet those thresholds but they would still be signposted to other support services. It was clarified that the conversion rate was the proportion that went on to receive the statutory support. It was suggested that the Essex conversion figure of 29% was thought to be comparable to other local authorities. Members requested that this disclosure in future should be expanded to provide more explanation and clarity on this and it was agreed that this would be taken back to the Board for further consideration.
- (ii) Partnership work had started with the three NHS Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), and there would be a representative from each of the ICSs attending the Board in relation to safeguarding assurance. The three ICS leads had been invited to the next Board meeting in October 2022 to expand on how their work would support and dovetail with the Essex safeguarding strategy.
- (iii) The data currently collected was defined by, and submitted to, national Government and that was the data also considered by the ESAB. It was acknowledged that re-referrals could be a sign that measures put in place were not working. However, further training may also be required for some settings to ensure the appropriateness of all referrals being made. Re-referral data was not currently in the annual report and it was agreed that it would be considered further for future reporting.
- (iv) Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) data was not part of the statutory basis of the annual report and it sat largely with the local authority from an operational perspective and would

only be considered by the Board if it was flagging up safeguarding concerns. There was a process in place that accelerated priority cases for DoLs assessment. Further information on DoLs was offered to Members – the introduction of Liberty Protection Safeguards to replace DoLs had been delayed.

- (v) A national concern was the highly complex nature of the current DoLs assessments, which were highly staff and resource intensive. Most local authorities across the country had a backlog for DoLs assessments. The perception by many people of these assessments were that they were custodial but they were about making people safer.
- (vi) Members discussed the governance on monitoring suicides in Essex. It was outlined that there would be a more enhanced role for the Board and a Public Health briefing and discussion was planned in the near future for ESAB.
- (vii) Some members queried the extent of safeguarding connections with the Levelling Up agenda and the inclusion of reference to the County Council's Everyone's Essex strategy and why they had been particularly highlighted in the report to the Committee.
- (viii) Data collected for the Board informed decision making, with monthly meetings held involving senior leaders and commissioners to analyse the data including feedback from diagnostics from audits and direct feedback from local residents.
- (ix) It was stressed that ESAB was a multi-agency Board but also a strategic Board and that sometimes it was better to have wider representation elsewhere in the governance structure such as in supporting groups and sub-committees. It was agreed that further expanding disclosure on membership for future annual reports would be considered.
- (x) As care, nursing and residential homes had their residents with them 24 hours a day it meant that they were under far more professional oversight than other settings and therefore it was more likely that safeguarding issues would be seen and reported. The ESAB always saw higher levels of reporting and referrals for these settings.
- (xi) The areas reporting increased abuse could be for a number of reasons - greater reporting or an increased abuse in that setting, the home had got more staff and they were able to report more frequently or higher levels of reporting from raised awareness after staff had received safeguarding

training. The types of abuse reported could vary between settings and the type of things care homes were reporting could differ significantly from the type of abuse happening in the community.

- (xii) Members asked for more information and breakdown on the age bands used for certain disclosures, particularly for the younger cohort of adults. Whilst the age bands used were to meet national reporting requirements it was agreed to look further at this to see if a further breakdown could be provided.

Conclusion:

It was **agreed** that:

- An operational briefing would be arranged.
- Further information on DoLs would be provided.
- Further information and breakdown on the age bands use for some disclosures.
- A breakdown of the contributions made by the three statutory partners would be provided.
- More information would be provided on the continued upskilling of the care sector in safeguarding and awareness.

[Clerks note: In a discussion after the formal meeting closed, members were keen to receive more information on governance and monitoring of suicides in Essex and it was agreed that, in due course, the Chairman and VCs would discuss with the Independent Chairman an appropriate time for a formal follow-up on the work of the ESAB to incorporate the Board's and partners proposed work on suicide prevention –Public Health representation may be required at any follow-up session.]

Contributors were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.

5 Work Programme

The Committee considered and discussed report PAF/16/22 comprising the work programme for the committee.

6 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 13 October 2022.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.53am.

Chairman