

# Safeguarding Strategy 2023- 26

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Somerset NHS Foundation Trust  
Authored by: the Safeguarding Advisory Service and our  
stakeholders

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## Foreword

From April 2023 we moved together into a larger merged community health, mental health and learning disability and acute trust, which constitutes a single, county wide provider. We have a unique opportunity for enhancing the safeguarding offer we provide to our 13,000 colleagues and in turn the Safeguarding Advisory Service they offer to our patients, families, and the public of Somerset. We are an integral part of the safeguarding system alongside our partners in the ICB, Avon & Somerset Police, Adult and Children Social Care and Public Health, as well as the independent and charitable sector.

We know that safeguarding cannot be done in isolation; it is only truly effective when we work collaboratively and restoratively with our partner agencies to 'Think Family' and protect all those at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect. We are focused on developing evidenced based approaches to safeguarding practice that balances the rights and choices of an individual, with the Trust duties to act in their best interest to protect people from harm. We endeavour to nurture professional standards that incorporate reflexivity, innovation, and learning.

The two NHS Trust mergers and the one acquisition in Somerset over the last 12 years, has led to one provider Trust. This has given us the opportunity to reconfigure the Safeguarding Advisory Service to provide a robust integrated service with improved economies of scale and efficiencies and with a clear focus on quality improvement and engagement of Trust staff.

At the core of the Safeguarding Advisory Service is the Safeguarding Duty Team who provide the crucial first point of contact for the 13,000 staff across our Trust.

Also, within the Safeguarding Advisory Service, we have specialists for safeguarding across Maternity Services, safeguarding adults, safeguarding children, domestic abuse, mental health, safeguarding learning and development, transitional safeguarding and exploitation and mental capacity and deprivation of liberty. In addition, the Trust Lead for PREVENT (Counter Terrorism) and the MARAC Coordinator (Multi- Agency Risk



Assessment Conferences) roles are within the service. The Safeguarding Advisory Service also works in close collaboration with the Trust's MAPPA coordinator (multi-agency public protection arrangements).

**The Safeguarding Advisory Service want to thank all our dedicated colleagues, who incorporate safeguarding into their core business and everyday practice, and the Executive Team and Trust Board who continue to support our innovative developments and growth.**

## **Our Aim**

To empower Trust colleagues to deliver effective safeguarding practice, by working collaboratively within and across services to promote better health and social care outcomes.

## **Our Trust Values**

***Kindness, Respect, Teamwork  
Everyone, Everyday***

This Safeguarding Strategy aims to fully embrace these values and we strive to ensure they are reflected in the work of the Safeguarding Advisory Service every day.

## **Our Safeguarding Commitment**

We have engaged with stakeholders to produce this Safeguarding Strategy.

To provide outstanding safeguarding advice, support, supervision, and training, in partnership with others to prevent harm and safeguard our patients and their families.



To ensure Trust colleagues incorporate safeguarding as a core consideration in clinical care and patient safety.

The Safeguarding Advisory Service is made up of several teams of people with a vast array of skills, specialist training and experience in safeguarding. The service covers maternity, safeguarding children, safeguarding adults at risk, domestic abuse including Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), mental capacity, and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (this is planned to become Liberty Protection Safeguards once the Government progress the legislation and associated guidance), PREVENT (safeguarding people from the risk of radicalisation) and a contracted team who provide a safeguarding children service to public health nursing in Somerset Council.

We integrate recommendations from Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews, Rapid Reviews and Children Safeguarding Practice Reviews into our learning and development improvements.

We will take every opportunity to be a trusted, safe organisation where all children, young people and adults at risk of harm, abuse or neglect are safeguarded by our colleagues who feel empowered, valued and supported. We will make safeguarding personal for the individuals who are experiencing harm, abuse or neglect through working collaboratively and innovatively with them and their carers/ families to ensure the best support and outcome is achieved. Safeguarding is a range of activities undertaken by all of us aimed at upholding all adults' and children's fundamental right to be safe.

## Our Safeguarding Vision

We will take a whole organisational approach to safeguard and promote the welfare of unborn babies, children, young people and adults at risk who are using Trust services.

Every colleague will incorporate Safeguarding into our core business, whether providing direct patient care or not and irrespective of seniority. This will require safeguarding



governance and practices to be embedded across all directorates and services provided by the Trust and reflected in all aspects of the Trust's work. There are robust governance arrangements around the safeguarding agenda.

All colleagues will be able to discharge their statutory responsibilities within their professional boundaries. We will develop a workforce who are competent, confident and enabled to speak up and act when seeing or suspecting safeguarding issues. We will take every opportunity for learning to enhance and shape service provision, as a result of significant learning from serious safeguarding incidents, Domestic Homicide Reviews, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

Safeguarding in Somerset NHS Foundation Trust has as its underpinning ethos the 'Think Family' and 'Think Transitions' approach. We will achieve this through building supportive internal processes and pathways that enable the needs of people using our services to be met in a compassionate and dignified manner. This includes responses to incidents and concerns and allegations against staff that have a safeguarding element. The Safeguarding Advisory Service creates effective partnership working with those we provide a service to and our partner agencies, patients, carers and families.



## Legal Framework for Safeguarding

There are numerous and different legal frameworks that support the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. Below is a summary of that legislation.

Adult Legislation	Child/young person legislation	Legislation applicable to all
Care Act 2014	Children Act 1989	Human Rights Act 1998
Modern Slavery Act 2015	Children Act 2004	Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Health and Social Care Act 2012	Children and Families Act 2014	Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
Sexual Offences Act 2003	Children and Social Work Act 2017	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Bill
Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (regarding wilful neglect)	Working Together 2023	Mental Capacity Act 2005
		Equality Act 2010
		Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (regarding Prevent)

## Safeguarding Assurance Framework

There are robust arrangements and structures for governance and for accountability within the Trust (please see appendix 1) and we also work in accordance with Somerset Safeguarding Adult Board, Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) and the Safer Somerset Partnership.



Those working within the Trust will be supported to be confident and competent in their safeguarding practice through appropriate levels of training, safeguarding consultation and supervision. This is supported by the Safeguarding Children Roles and Competencies: Intercollegiate Document (Children 2019), Safeguarding Adult Roles and Competencies: Intercollegiate Document (2019), and the NHS Prevent training and competencies framework (2021) (See Appendix 1)

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## **Integrated Safeguarding Strategic Priorities for 2023 - 2026**

The Care Act 2014 provides the legal framework for Safeguarding Adults. The overarching objective is for adults to live a life free from abuse or neglect. This can only be achieved with collaborative partnership working between the statutory agencies and other local partnerships. Effective safeguarding of adults at risk, relies upon the multi-agency procedures for protecting adults who are at risk from abuse or neglect. Wherever possible the adult will be involved in decisions about reporting a Safeguarding concern.

The Children Act 1989 established the legal framework for the protection and welfare of children in England and Wales. It sets out the duties and responsibilities of local authorities', health professionals, courts, parents, and other agencies in relation to children. The act includes provisions relating to child protection, adoption and the provision of services for children in need.

The Children Act 2004 built on the framework established by the 1989 Act and introduced several new provisions. These included establishment of the children's commissioner for England and required local authorities to cooperate in the interests of children.





Both Acts emphasise the importance of putting the needs and welfare of children first, in providing a framework for ensuring that children receive the support and protection they need to grow and develop in safe and secure environment. Safeguarding Children includes unborn babies, although they are not recognised in UK law, however child protection procedures can be applied to parents to be if there is reasonable belief the baby will be at significant harm when it is born.

The Trusts Strategic Lead and Named Professional for Safeguarding Adults, Strategic Lead and Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children, Named Midwife and Named Nurse for Public Health Nursing have identified the following key strategic priorities which will be the focus of safeguarding adults at risk and the safeguarding and protecting of children throughout 2023-2026.

These priorities seek to gain assurances that the safeguarding arrangements across the Trust are effective in helping to keep children and adults in its care, safe from abuse and neglect throughout 2023-2026.

### **The overarching key priorities are Prevention and Early Intervention**

For adults in our care this entails placing an emphasis on identifying and responding to concerns relating to adults suffering from, or at risk of abuse or neglect, who have care and support needs, in a timely manner. Ensuring the individual is kept central to decision making and planning by employing a Making Safeguarding Personal approach.

For children and unborn babies there will be an emphasis on identifying and responding to concerns at the earliest possible stage, promoting a collaborative approach that puts children at the centre (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023).

Early Help, Hidden Children, Transition, Domestic Abuse Routine Enquiry and Self-Neglect are key areas of focus that have been identified as requiring increased understanding and a safeguarding response supported through:

- A culture of creativity, sustainable innovation and learning,



- Quality improvement,
- Compassionate Leadership
- Partnership working,
- Evidence-based practice,
- Equality, diversity, and inclusivity to improve care quality, satisfaction and safety.

**Domestic abuse is recognised across the organisation as a shared responsibility for all colleagues to ensure we recognise and respond with the use of Domestic Abuse Routine Enquiry – DARE**

#### Aims:

- For all Trust staff to be able to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and to know what steps to take to address the concerns to ensure the safety of adults, children and young people who have contact with our service.
- For all Trust staff to have an awareness of the importance of recognising the risks of domestic abuse to the safety and wellbeing of adults, children and young people, specifically in relation to suicidal ideation/attempts, risk of homicide and child protection concerns.

#### How we aim to achieve this

2023/24

- To deliver DARE workshops across the Trust – focused effort to roll out DARE workshops to Trusts Mental Health Services, followed by continued offer of workshop to those staff not captured in the first roll-out.
- End of Quarter 4 – review of DARE roll-out across 2023-24. To continue the offer across Mental Health Services and begin roll out across MIU's and ED and planning for future roll-out to community teams. This may include the



development of a DARE e-learning package to enable better accessibility if appropriate.

- End of Quarter 4 2023/24 Consider relaunch of domestic abuse link-workers/champions across the Trust to enable 'train the trainer' type delivery of the DARE workshops.

## 2024/25

- provide a focused roll out to acute and community inpatient wards.
- Continued offer to MIU/ED/MH services.
- Continued roll-out across Trust community services and individual hospital teams.

## 2025-26

- To review efficacy of DARE training and consider additional domestic abuse training offer.
- Build on workstreams identified within audits and feedback from 2024-2025

## How we will measure effectiveness of DARE workshops

Review / collation of domestic abuse contacts to the Trust's Safeguarding single point of contact and number of domestic abuse referrals made. An increase in contacts will provide an indicator that DARE is becoming embedded into everyday practice.

### Process

- Success measure will be the proportion of colleagues trained.
- Assessment of colleague's knowledge in terms of recognition and response
- Colleague awareness/ knowledge assessment of the associated wellbeing impacts of abuse

### Outcome measures:

- Audit of mental health services contacts to duty team single point of contact and level of domestic abuse referrals. An increase could indicate DARE in practice.



- Dip audit case review to ascertain quality of DARE intervention and level of application of domestic abuse processes (as per Domestic Abuse Policy)
- Local Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (previously known as Domestic Homicide Reviews) will provide opportunities to identify whether DARE was enacted, quality of intervention and any learning if signs of abuse were missed.

**Self-neglect incidence represents a high proportion of adults at risk cases identified by the multi- agency partners of the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board. Somerset NHS Foundation Trust Safeguarding Advisory Service want to ensure the Trust response is reflective of the need.**

#### Aims:

- To raise awareness of the issue of self-neglect across the Trust to ensure timely responses to adults with care and support needs who are at risk of, or presenting with self-neglecting behaviours which are impacting on their health and wellbeing.
- For staff to be familiar with the Safeguarding Adult Board Guidance for self-neglect and to know how to seek advice and support and multi-agency collaboration when appropriate.
- To ensure the Trust Safeguarding Advisory Service team undertake specific training regarding self-neglect to enable them to be able to provide informed, competent and up-to-date advice to Trust staff.

#### How we aim to achieve this

- To undertake data review of self-neglect related contacts into the Trust's Safeguarding Advisory Service



- To complete an audit of self-neglect concerns raised with the Safeguarding Advisory Service to ascertain quality of trust's response to patients who self-neglect and determine if SSAB process/guidance is understood/being used.
- To develop a self-neglect workshop
- To consider how best to embed learning from local Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR) and thematic reviews regarding self-neglect.
- To review/update self-neglect element within safeguarding adults' level 3 training.
- In 2024-25 review work undertaken in 2023-24 and begin roll-out of self-neglect workshops to community nursing teams and mental health services. This may be via an e-learning offer.
- Multi-agency collaboration via Somerset Safeguarding Adult Board, Learning and Development Sub-Group regarding review and updates to SSAB self-neglect guidance.
- To ensure Trust self-neglect processes reflect SSAB guidance.
- In 2025/26 review work/progress of work undertaken in previous two years to determine / inform next steps.
- To review efficacy of trust processes and response to self-neglect and to feedback to SSAB where there are apparent gaps in services.

## How we will measure effectiveness of self-neglect targeted work

### Process

- To undertake an audit to determine if patients with care and support needs presenting with self-neglect are receiving a timely and robust response to help prevent further harm to their health and wellbeing.
- Following publication of the SSAB Self Neglect Thematic review, the Trust Safeguarding Advisory Service will undertake a dip audit into contacts relating to self-neglect to determine the implementation of key process elements.
- The Safeguarding Advisory Service will consider if the SSAB guidance is sufficient or whether the Trust needs to develop its own supporting self-neglect standard



operating procedure to maximise the impact how as a Trust we respond to this issue.

## Outcomes

- The number of contacts to the Trust Safeguarding Advisory Service single point of contact and the subsequent conversion rate of referrals to Somerset Council Safeguarding Team for self-neglect related cases will be reviewed. This will track any increases that will be attributed to the impact of the training and awareness raising provided to Trust colleagues.
- The Somerset Safeguarding Adult Board will be undertaking Safeguarding Adult Thematic Reviews. The Safeguarding Advisory Service provides representation to the Reviews, which provides an opportunity for a more system wide, inter-agency approach to reviewing cases that will be utilised to inform future development of Trust safeguarding policies and process.

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**Early Help a way of working, not a service which means supporting families as soon as the problem emerges, which can prevent escalation.**

## Aims

- For all trust staff to be able to understand early help, deliver early help support and signpost children and families to appropriate services.
- Focus on key areas such as health promotion, improving health outcomes, increasing efficiency and productivity, and delivering high quality coordinated care in partnership with families and patients, as outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan (2019) and Children Social Care: stable homes, build on love.



- To promote community involvement and engagement, inclusive of families to create a responsive supportive network, this includes working in partnership with community groups and volunteers to support, as well as involving families in the design and delivery of services.

## How we aim to achieve this

### 2023-24

- To contribute to and signpost trust staff to resources from the Somerset Connect programme which collates early help local resources across the lifespan inclusive of community involvement.
- To create of a 7-minute briefing informing trust staff of their early help responsibilities with clear signposting to early help resources.
- Training delivery and safeguarding supervision facilitation to prioritise early help and prevention. (Q1)
- By supporting consistent and safe information sharing across recording systems, capitalising on of multi-agency information sharing arrangements e.g., SIDER and TRANSFORM. (Q 1&2)
- Child Exploitation and Transition Safeguarding Lead to offer support and develop innovations to empower trust staff in the identification and delivery of care when children transition into adulthood. (Q1- 4)
- To undertake trust wide audit and analysis of children not brought to appointments, as an opportunity where early help needs may be recognised and/or met. (Q1-3).

### 2024-25

- Somerset FT Safeguarding Advisory Service Duty Team to develop generic responses to queries considering wider themes/opportunities (akin to the CNB process) to ensure a robust and timely response to request to staff around early help, capitalising on sustainable digital technology. (Q1-2)
- Somerset FT Safeguarding Advisory Service to be integral to development of a decisive multi-agency child protection system.





- Somerset FT Safeguarding Advisory Service to implement findings and actions identified from the 'Child not Brought' audit. Inclusive of a pilot in respect of transport for our most vulnerable families to appointments.

## 2025-2026

- Somerset FT Safeguarding Advisory Service to continue to support and increase capacity for sustainable digital innovations, across a broad range of topics/themes that impact the early help agenda as we learn and develop greater confidence in digital safety and capacity. Somerset FT Safeguarding Advisory Service to be integral to a decisive multi-agency child protection system in practice.

## How will we measure the effectiveness of this?

### Process

- Audit and thematic analysis of the effectiveness of local project deliveries including NHSE funded Early Help Project. Measuring the effectiveness of early help interventions requires a positivist methodology of quantitative statistical analysis of Safeguarding contacts through the Duty team SPOC.
- An interpretivist qualitative approach will be utilised, using a survey questionnaire to understand the broader themes and context of interventions delivered and the impact identified by trust staff and service users.
- Repeat Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Early Help Practitioner survey to assess impact, supplemented by focus groups and interviews with families who have received early Help to further inform quality-of-service delivery. (Q4) (2023-2024)

### Outcome

- The Trust will be maximising the opportunities to intervene effectively to improve the early help offer across the Somerset system.





**Hidden children** refer to 0 –18-year-olds who are not visible to professionals, therefore, are vulnerable as their needs cannot be assessed for example, children whose birth is not registered, children who are not enrolled in school or are living in isolated or hard to reach areas or off grid, i.e., not connected to any services or support networks (this does not include missing or absent children).

### Aims

- All members of the Trust Safeguarding Advisory Service will be proficient in responding to concerns in relation to hidden children and be able to support wider trust staff to identify and act on concerns when children are hidden.
- For all Trust staff to be aware of the risks to ‘Hidden Children’ and to be confident in how to respond should a child with no means of identification present for care or where care needs are identified through a Think Family approach and families do not engage.

### How we aim to achieve this 2023-2024

- In partnership with the SSCP the Safeguarding Advisory Service will develop a Hidden Children Briefing and update the Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset Guidance reflecting hidden children needs to support risk and decision making to standardise the response from all services and agencies to Hidden Children (Q4)
- In partnership with the SSCP the Safeguarding Advisory Service will develop system wide guidance on what constitutes as a Welfare Check, integral to the standards set out in the Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset Guidance (Q4)



- To highlight practice improvements set out in the Effective support for Children and Families in Somerset Guidance across the trust and outline the responsibility of trust staff in relation to identifying and responding to hidden children through safeguarding training and safeguarding supervision (Q4)
- To embed the Hidden Child agenda throughout all safeguarding children practice and workstreams, such as neglect, exploitation, and trafficking (Q4)

## 2024-25

- Considering standardisation and effectiveness, the Safeguarding Advisory Service will consider if the SSCP protocol is sufficient or whether a specific Trust Hidden Child Standard Operating Protocol is required.

## How will we measure effectiveness of this?

- Undertake audit and evaluation of professional practice in relation to the SSCP Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset Guidance in respect of Hidden Child by reviewing Safeguarding contacts through the Duty team SPOC. This will include understanding the nature and prevalence of hidden children and ensure that the Safeguarding Advisory Service is equipped to respond to emerging issues and challenges. (Q3-4) (2023-2024.)
- Thematic analysis of Practitioners articulating their awareness and response to hidden children within safeguarding supervision sessions. (Q3) (2023-2024)
- Feedback from Level 3 safeguarding training, with participants reflecting on the learning in respect of Hidden children (Q4) (2023-2024.)
- Evaluate use of the Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset Guidance in respect of concerns around Hidden Children via data collection of Safeguarding activity (quantitative data) and survey on-line tool of staff understanding and outcome in respect of guidance and practice (further quantitative data-Q3-2024-2025.)



**Transitional Safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages, which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children's and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives. It focuses on safeguarding young people from adolescence into adulthood, recognising transition is a journey not an event, and every young person will experience this journey differently.**

#### Aim

- For all trust staff to understand the importance of Transitional Safeguarding and early planning, inclusive of person-centred care. Through effective communication, continuity of care and support for young people and their families trust staff are enabled to support a coordinated and collaborative approach that places the needs of the young person at centre of the process.

#### How we aim to achieve this 2023-2024

- Safeguarding Lead for Transition and Exploitation in post to ensure that Transitional Safeguarding is always considered by colleagues across the Trust when required, creating an inclusive culture in Somerset (Q1)
- Safeguarding Lead for Transition and Exploitation to develop a Trust Safeguarding Transition Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) based on NICE guidance, Implementation: getting started, Transition from children's' to adults' services for young people using health and social care services (Q2)
- Safeguarding Lead for Transition and Exploitation to develop a 7-minute briefing for Transition into adulthood focusing on safeguarding.



- Transition to be the focus of Safeguarding Supervision (Q2-4)
- Transition to be embedded in Safeguarding Training across the life course (Q2)

## 2024-2025

- Trust colleague's confident when supporting young people during transition when there are Safeguarding concerns (Q1)

## 2025-2026

- Build on workstreams identified within audits undertaken in (2024-2025)

## How will we measure effectiveness of this?

- Identify and understand Trust staff activity in relation to transitional safeguarding and any emerging themes via scrutiny of activity and cases reviewed and supported by the Safeguarding Duty team (2023-2024- Q3)
- Undertake an audit and evaluation of Safeguarding professional practice aligned to the Trust Safeguarding Transition Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Methodology co-designed and produced by young people and their families in collaboration with the Safeguarding Lead for Transition and Exploitation.
- Audit impact of the Transition across the partnership (Section 11 Audit topic-Q2)

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## Appendix 1

### Safeguarding Assurance Framework

#### Governance Structure

Trust Board - annual

Quality & Governance Assurance Committee - annual (on behalf of the board)

Quality Assurance Group - annual

#### Key Specific Committee

Integrated Safeguarding Committee - quarterly  
 (includes ICB membership )

#### Operational Oversight

Safeguarding Senior Leadership Team - fortnightly

Named Professionals Meeting - weekly

Whole Service Meetings - monthly

Daily triage of Safeguarding SPOC

The assurance workstreams identified on page two provide the detail of the practical application of assurance workstreams that support the governance structure.



## Appendix 2

