



Welcome	1
Sexual Safety in residential settings	2
Self-neglect	
'I' Statements	3
Learning from Case Studies:	5
Advocacy	6
Safeguarding Adult Week 18-22 November 2024	8
Raising an Adult Safeguarding Concern	9

## Welcome

### Foreword from the Independent Chair of SSASPB

Within adult social care, the importance of advocacy, sexual safety, and safeguarding people cannot be overstated. This newsletter brings together critical insights and case studies that illuminate these vital areas, offering a some guidance for professionals to help enhance the quality of care and protection for vulnerable adults.

As part of making safeguarding personal , advocacy plays a crucial role in ensuring that the voices of those receiving care are heard and respected. Advocacy empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their lives and care, fostering a sense of respect, involvement and dignity. This section delves into the principles and practices of effective advocacy, highlighting its impact on improving outcomes for adults with care and support needs.

Keeping people safe at home or in a residential setting is vital and this includes Sexual safety. This section explores some of the challenges and strategies for maintaining sexual safety, emphasizing the need for clear policies, staff training, appropriate curiosity, and a culture of openness and respect. By exploring real-world examples and best practices, we hope to help equip care providers with the knowledge and tools to safeguard and support the sexual well-being of those in their care.

Learning from real-life examples is invaluable in understanding the complexities of safeguarding. This newsletter presents detailed case studies that illustrate the application of safeguarding principles in various contexts. These examples not only highlight successful interventions but also provide lessons learned and areas for improvement, offering a resource for continuous professional development.

Together, these sections provide information to support the quality of adult social care. By sharing knowledge and experiences, we hope to update and equip care professionals to advocate effectively, ensure sexual safety, and implement robust safeguarding practices. It is our collective responsibility to create environments where every individual feels safe, respected, and valued.

We extend our thanks to the contributors who have shared their expertise and experiences, and to the readers who are committed to making a positive difference in the lives of adults in care.

Adrian Green, Independent Chair

## Sexual Safety in residential settings

One of the statutory responsibilities of a Safeguarding Adult Board is to undertake Safeguarding Adult Reviews known as SARs. These involve reviewing circumstances where an adult with needs for care and support has died (or survived but experienced serious abuse and neglect) and there are lessons to learn to improve multi-agency practice.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board asked an independent author to review circumstances in a nursing home which led to a male with dementia raping a female who also had dementia.

The male was known to present the risk of sexual and physical assault towards female residents and staff and the risk he posed was increasing over time. The final report which is called Frank and Elsie can be found on the SSASPB [Safeguarding Adult Reviews \(SARs\) \(ssaspb.org.uk\)](https://ssaspb.org.uk)

In response to the report's findings a working group was pulled together from people with the relevant knowledge to produce resources aimed at assisting practitioners who work with adults in residential settings. These are also on the SSASPB website [Safeguarding Adult Reviews \(SARs\) \(ssaspb.org.uk\)](https://ssaspb.org.uk)

Some of the terminology used to describe acts of sexual behaviour are often difficult to say, but it is important that practitioners use words to describe what they see both factually and consistently to minimise ambiguity and therefore provide the best opportunity to accurately assess risk. This is important as it seeks to protect others as well as the person responsible for the sexual behaviour.

## Responding to Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs): Self-neglect

Locally and Nationally there has been an increase in the number of SARs involving self-neglect. You will find the two most recently published SSASPB reports using this link to the SSASPB website [Safeguarding Adult Reviews \(SARs\) \(ssaspb.org.uk\)](https://ssaspb.org.uk) (Andrew and Gillian). The podcasts are only 7 or 9 minutes long and are well worth the time to better understand why the reviews were undertaken and the findings. The full reports are there for those who wish to read them.

As a consequence a group of people were tasked with the revision of the guidance provided to those practitioners and volunteers who may come into contact with adults who self-neglect; which can include hoarding.

## 'I' Statements

We're excited to share a new way to understand our strategic priorities. In the past, we have tried making easy-to-read versions of our annual reports, but we wanted to do something different this time. We've reviewed our current strategic priorities and rewritten them in simple, clear language to reduce the professional jargon that can create a barrier between ourselves as professionals and the people we are supporting.

These priorities have guided our work as a board from 2022 to 2025. By making them easier to read, we hope you'll feel more connected to what we're trying to achieve. Here are our simplified strategic priorities:

### **Effective Priority 1:**

I am at the centre of any activity to keep me safe, with everyone involved taking the time to understand my needs and preferences. I appreciate there may be times when this isn't possible, for example in a crisis.

### **Effective Priority 2:**

I am confident that when my mental capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) are completed, they're done well, and they consider what I and my carers have to say. Plus, there is someone independent like a skilled advocate available when needed.

### **Effective Priority 3:**

If I am seen to be self-neglecting, I want everyone involved to understand the reasons behind it instead of just labelling it as a lifestyle choice. I want everyone involved to be curious about the experiences that have led me to live this way and to consider broader factors like my social, physical, and mental health. Recognising the effects of trauma and/or addiction on my decision-making capacity too

## 'I' Statements

### **Effective Priority 4:**

When I move between services, settings or areas, there is a shared plan for what happens next and who will do what, and all the practical arrangements are in place. If there are any changes, a new **risk assessment** will be carried out to make sure I am still safe.

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### **Effective Priority 5:**

I expect you to be aware of the people that may abuse or neglect me in community and residential settings, and to be committed to listening to voices like mine that may not ordinarily be seen or heard.

To read our current strategic plan, [SSASPB strategic plan](#)

## Safeguarding Procedures

The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Adult Safeguarding Procedures have been updated and will be live on the website from November.

Key changes include: a new section on self-neglect and updates to the sections on safeguarding plans, closure of the safeguarding procedures, Appeals & Complaints and People in a Position Trust.

A forum will be arranged to talk through the changes in more detail — date to be confirmed.

The procedures can be found on the SSASPB website:

<https://www.ssaspb.org.uk/Guidance/Section-42-Adult-Safeguarding-Enquiry-Procedures.aspx>

## Learning from Case Studies

### Learning from Case Studies: 'Sophie'

A Safeguarding referral was received by SAST from another Local Authority (X) about a young lady who has a Learning Disability, 'Sophie'. She was found by Ambulance and Police in poor conditions at a property owned by a family member. Sophie was on holiday with that family member, however she ordinarily lived in Staffordshire with her Mum and siblings.

Sophie was supported by the Police, Ambulance and Adult Social Care, and was taken to Hospital as a place of safety whilst further enquiries were made. At this time Sophie was assessed as lacking capacity to make decisions in this area.

Positively X Local authority had made a timely referral to Staffordshire which allowed SAST to review records and complete necessary check with agencies including Staffordshire Police.

Once lateral checks had been completed, a Best Interests discussion took place about Sophie and if it was safe for her to return home to Staffordshire considering the risks identified in X Local Authority where she was found.

The discussion was informed by the quick response of partner agencies within Staffordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub as well as the Adult Learning Disability Team and this assisted informing all the agencies, from both local authorities involved about potential risk in Staffordshire.

A decision was made for Sophie to return home. Both Staffordshire Police and the Learning Disability Team were proactive in mitigating any imminent risk of harm as soon as she returned home, and an assessment was completed to help us to understand the young woman's needs. The situation was progressed to Section 42 enquiry which was also led by the Adult Learning Disability Team to offer a consistent approach to Sophie and her family.

Through the working together and quick response of partner agencies, we were able to effectively understand the risks to Sophie returning to Staffordshire as well as enabling discussion about what intervention should be offered once she was home. This enabled a streamlined and proportionate approach which was beneficial to Sophie and keeping disruption to a minimum for her.

# Advocacy



## What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is a partnership between two people:

- the Advocacy Partner who is at risk of not being heard and having their rights ignored, and;
- the Advocate—someone who represents their advocacy partner's interests as if they were their own.

Advocates are independent from other services, they are instructed by their advocacy partner who they keep informed about developments with their advocacy issue. An Advocate offers support and understanding, enabling their advocacy partner to speak up for themselves or acting on their behalf if they are unable to do so. Advocates will gather information, adapting communication to meet their partners needs and supporting them to make informed choices.



## ASIST.

ASIST stands for Advocacy Services In Staffordshire. ASIST has been providing advocacy across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent for 30 years and has a very good reputation both locally and nationally. ASIST pioneered the 'Watching Brief', a way to provide non-instructed advocacy for people who have limited communication. The Watching Brief has been used nationally and ASIST have refreshed their training to offer to other advocacy providers.

## TYPES OF ADVOCACY.

### Stoke:

- **People from ethnic minority backgrounds** —Supporting people from hard-to-reach groups to access GP's/healthcare and/or raise concerns about health provision.
- **Children and Young People**—Supporting inclusion in decision making and sharing wishes/feelings in decisions which affect them.
- **Parental**—Supporting engagement and understanding of child protection processes, parents need to have needs leading to a substantial difficulty in understanding and communicating.

### Stoke and Staffordshire:

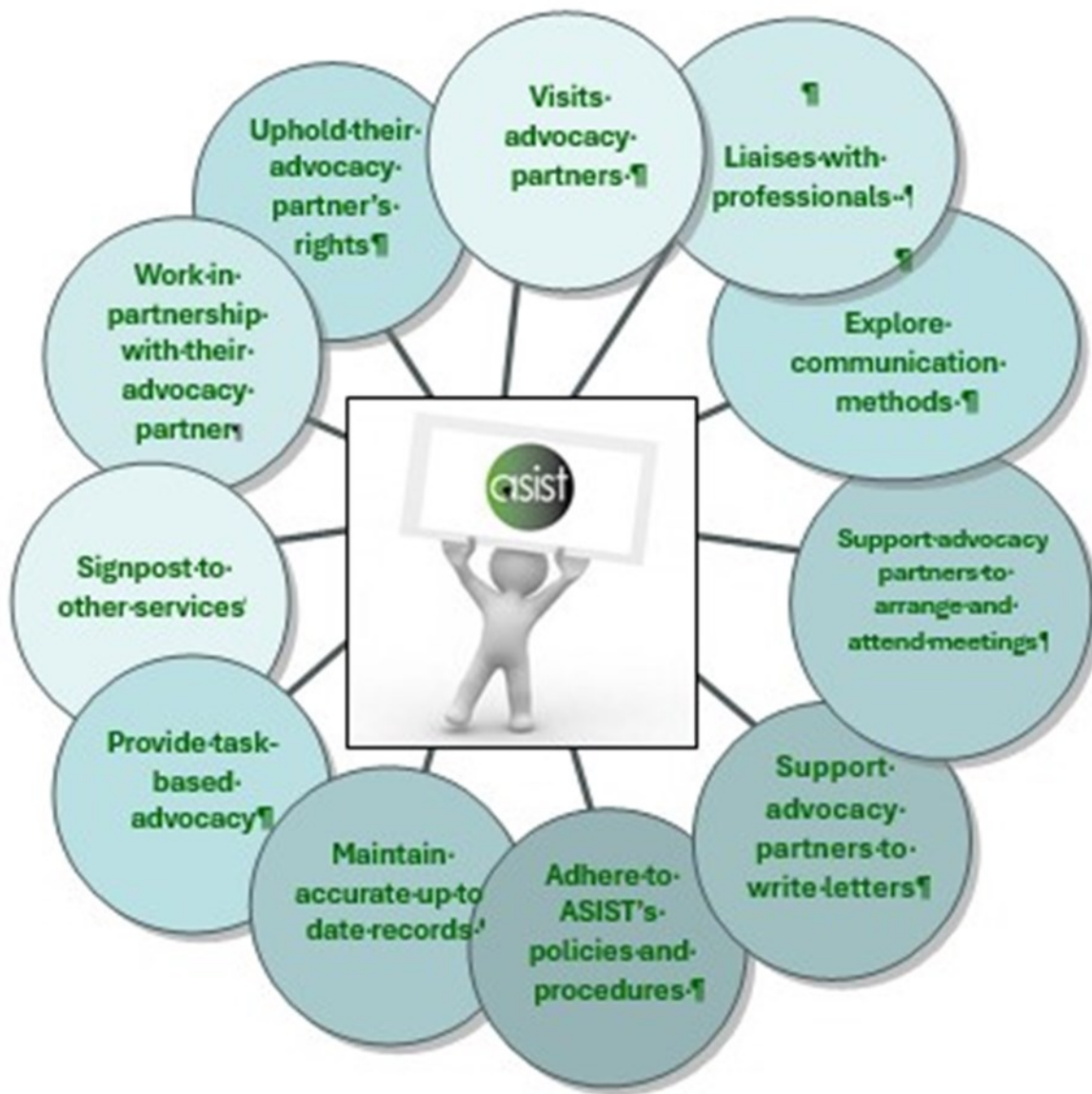
- **Care Act**—The local authority has a duty to provide access to independent advocacy for individuals with substantial difficulties so they can be involved in care and support processes as long as they have no-one else suitable to support them.
- **Community Advocacy**—Supporting the Local Authority to develop and enhance co-production and self-advocacy with experts by experience in a range of forums.
- **DoLS/RPR/Community DoLS**—Supporting people who have been assessed to lack capacity and are subject to deprivations of their liberty in a care setting or their own home.

**IMHA**—Supporting individuals sectioned under the Mental Health Act to obtain information and understand conditions, restrictions, medical treatments, their rights and how to make challenges.

**IMCA**—Supporting people who have no consultable friends or family and who lack capacity when there is a decision to be made about a serious medical treatment and a change of accommodation, or who may be going through safeguarding proceedings.

**IHCAS**—Support individuals to write a complaint letter about an NHS service, offering guidance and help to understand responses.

**WHAT AN ADVOCATE DOES.**



**SAFEGUARDING ADULTS WEEK**

# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

**18TH TO 22ND NOVEMBER 2024**

## WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING ADULTS WEEK?

Safeguarding Adults Week is a time for organisations to come together to raise awareness of important safeguarding issues.



### A FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIPS

For the 2024 week, we're focusing on how effective partnerships in the safeguarding community can help create safer cultures in organisations.



### WHY PARTNERSHIPS MATTER

Working in partnerships allows us to share our knowledge of safeguarding, learn from others and ultimately create safer communities.



### PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY

Curiosity means taking the time to understand what's happening, rather than making assumptions or relying on single sources of information.



### PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

However, professional curiosity should never come at the expense of healthy professional boundaries. It's all about striking the right balance.

## GET UPDATES & FREE RESOURCES

Visit [tinyurl.com/ACTSAW24](https://tinyurl.com/ACTSAW24) or scan here →



# #SafeguardingAdultsWeek



# Raising an Adult Safeguarding Concern

If you think that an adult with care and support needs is being abused or neglected:

## If the abuse took place in Stoke:

Telephone: **0800 561 0015** at any time

Minicom: 01782 236037

## If the abuse took place in Staffordshire:

Telephone: **0345 604 2719**

Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5pm,  
Fridays 8:30am to 4:30pm, excluding Bank  
Holidays

0345 604 2886 at any other time

## Contact SSASPB

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SSASPB Team  
Staffordshire Place 1  
Tipping Street  
Stafford  
ST16 2LP

Email: [SSASPB.admin@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SSASPB.admin@staffordshire.gov.uk)



**stop adult abuse**