



Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSASPB)

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR - PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategy sets out the vision, commitment and approach of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Adults Board to do everything possible to minimise the risk of adults with care and support needs suffering abuse and neglect. The plan will support our fundamental aim to work with local people and with partners to ensure that adults who may be at risk are:

- Able to live independently by being supported to manage risk;
- Able to protect themselves from abuse and neglect;
- Treated with dignity and respect;
- Properly supported by agencies when they need protection in accordance with the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Enquiry Procedures.

The strategy recognises that adults with care and support needs and their carers must be at the heart of what safeguarding partners do. What is still missing, however, is a greater sense of the plan actively embracing what local communities and people who have experiences of using the multi-agency safeguarding services say.

It is important that safeguarding partners not only listen, but that we strengthen our commitment to engage with adults with care and support needs at both a strategic and operational level in all aspects of our safeguarding work. Through this plan the Board will continue to seek assurances that those working with adults with care and support needs know when and how to act when they are concerned about a possible risk.

The main purpose of this Plan is to set out the key outcomes and impact that the Board is aiming to achieve that will make a positive difference. In accordance with Care Act 2014 guidance the focus is on the prevention of abuse and neglect maintaining emphasis on protection of individuals with care and support needs and applying the underpinning principle of “Making Safeguarding Personal”.

These priorities have been developed with the engagement of members of the Board and sub-groups building on the progress made through previous plans. Arising from our learning since the introduction of the Care Act there is an increased emphasis on making the actions within the Plan as specific as possible to ensure that we are clear about the outputs, outcomes and impact that the Board intends to be achieved. This will further strengthen our ability to quality assure and monitor performance against planned and intended actions.

There have been significant challenges for partner organisations for 2 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I take this opportunity to acknowledge that the Safeguarding Adults Board is well supported and commitment from partners is strong not only in terms of individual’s personal and professional commitment to driving ongoing activity but also the ongoing partnership resourcing for the vital work of the Board.

The Board will be publishing an Annual Report next year that will provide the details of how this strategy has been implemented and what has been achieved. I look forward to reporting on the work that has been done to protect the adults at risk in our communities from harm.

John Wood

Independent Chair, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Adults Board

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Care Act 2014 provides the statutory requirements for adult safeguarding. It places a duty on each Local Authority to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board and specifies the responsibilities of the Local Authority, and connected partners with whom they work, to protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

The main objective of a Safeguarding Adults Board (Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in this case) is outlined in Schedule 1 of the Care Act 2014 as being to help and protect adults in its local area by co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of what each of its members does. The Board role is to assure itself that safeguarding partners act to help and protect adults who:

- have needs for care and support; and
- are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

A Board may do anything which appears to it to be necessary or desirable for the purpose of achieving its objective but has three primary functions:

- It must publish a strategic plan that sets out its objectives and how these will be achieved.
- It must publish an annual report detailing what the SAB has done during the year to achieve its objectives and what each member has done to implement the strategy as well as detailing the findings of any Safeguarding Adults Reviews or any on-going reviews.
- It must conduct any Safeguarding Adults Review where the threshold criteria has been met.

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS – A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT IT IS

The Statutory Guidance for the Care Act 2014 describes adult safeguarding as:

“Protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time, making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances”.

Abuse and neglect can take many forms. The various categories as described in the Care Act are shown at Appendix 1 at page 11.

The Board has taken account of the Statutory Guidance and consulted all connected partners in determining the following vision.

VISION FOR SAFEGUARDING IN STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT

Adults with care and support needs are supported to make choices in how they will live their lives in a place where they feel safe, secure and free from abuse and neglect.

Our vision recognises that safeguarding adults is about the development of a culture that promotes good practice and continuous improvement within services, raises public awareness that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, responds effectively and swiftly when abuse or neglect has been alleged or occurs, seeks to learn when things have gone wrong, is sensitive to the issues of cultural diversity and puts the

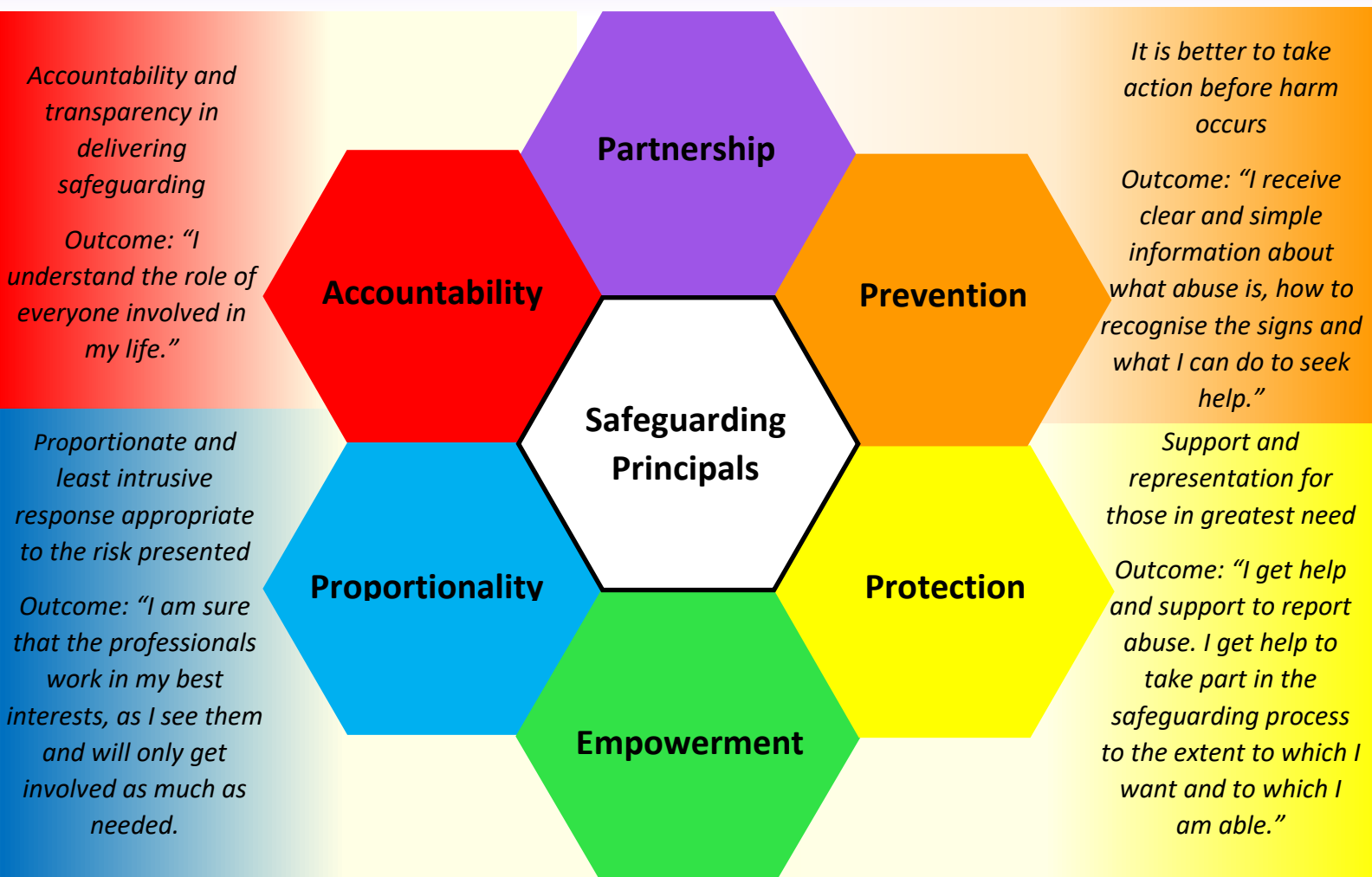
person at the centre of planning to meet support needs to ensure they are safe in their homes and communities.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

The Department of Health set out the Government’s statement of principles for developing and assessing the effectiveness of their local adult safeguarding arrangements and in broad terms, the desired outcomes for adult safeguarding, for both individuals and agencies. These principles will be used by the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Adult Board and partner agencies with safeguarding responsibilities to benchmark their adult safeguarding arrangements:

*Local solutions through services working with their communities.
Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse*

Outcome: “I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together to get the best result for me”



Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent

Outcome: “I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process, and these directly inform what happens.”

ABOUT THE STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT ADULT SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP BOARD (SSASPB)

The Board has a broad membership of key partners in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and is chaired by an Independent Chair appointed by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council in conjunction with Board members. The Board membership is shown at Appendix 2, at page 12.

The strategic partnerships with which the Board is required to agree responsibilities and reporting relationships to ensure collaborative action are shown in the Governance Structure at Appendix 3, at page 13.

The main focus of the Board is to ensure that safeguarding is consistently understood by anyone engaging with adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect. Whilst there is a common commitment by safeguarding partners to keeping adults at risk of abuse safe, in practice, this means understanding how to spot the signs of abuse and neglect to help support and empower adults at risk of harm and anti-social behaviour to resolve the circumstances which put them at risk.

Safeguarding partners want to encourage and develop practice which puts the person with care and support needs in control and generates a more person-centred set of responses and outcomes. This means the Safeguarding Adults Board seeking assurances and being confident that effective advocacy services are in place for anyone who may need them at any point during a safeguarding episode.

When things go seriously wrong, the SSASPB has a responsibility to look into this thoroughly with a Safeguarding Adults Review and report the findings and learning so that practice will improve. Equally important, is the Board role in promoting good practice and generating confidence within our communities that concerns about abuse and neglect can be expressed openly and are encouraged and will be responded to effectively by safeguarding partners when raised.

All working in adult safeguarding have the difficult task of understanding risk, assessing the level of this for the individual concerned and constructing a plan to manage it which works for the person and is understood by those around them. This requires practitioners to have a sound grasp of the legal basis for their work and to demonstrate effective listening and communication. This often presents a challenge in a society where there can be a tendency to avoid rather than to manage risk.

It is a key task for the Board to seek assurances as to effectiveness of risk management and oversight in safeguarding in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and seek assurances that the right balance is being struck. The Board has a particular interest in sustaining constructive links with connected partnerships including Health and Well-being Boards (particularly in relation to prevention activities) and the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board (in relation to Domestic Abuse and particularly Hidden Harm and Abuse).

APPROACH

The Board works with connected safeguarding partners, to:

- identify the role, responsibility, authority and accountability with regard to the action each agency and professional group should take to ensure the protection of adults
- establish ways of analysing and interrogating data on safeguarding notifications that increase the SAB's understanding of prevalence of abuse and neglect locally that builds up a picture over time

- establish how it will hold partners to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of its arrangements
- determine its arrangements for peer review and self-audit
- establish mechanisms for developing policies and strategies for protecting adults which should be formulated, not only in collaboration and consultation with all relevant agencies but also take account of the views of adults who have needs for care and support, their families, advocates and carer representatives
- develop preventative strategies that aim to reduce instances of abuse and neglect in its area
- identify types of circumstances giving grounds for concern and when they should be considered as a referral to the local authority as an enquiry
- formulate guidance about the arrangements for managing adult safeguarding, and dealing with complaints, grievances and professional and administrative malpractice in relation to safeguarding adults
- develop strategies to deal with the impact of issues of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and gender orientation, sexual orientation, age, disadvantage and disability on abuse and neglect
- balance the requirements of confidentiality with the consideration that, to protect adults, it may be necessary to share information on a 'need-to-know basis'
- identify mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation and impact of policy and training
- carry out safeguarding adult reviews and determine any publication arrangements;
- produce a strategic plan and an annual report
- evidence how SAB members have challenged one another and held other boards to account
- promote multi-agency training and consider any specialist training that may be required. Consider any scope to jointly commission some training with other partnerships, such as the Community Safety Partnership

The Board has established the following sub-groups to facilitate the delivery of its objectives.

- Executive – monitors the progress of all sub-groups as well as its own work-streams
- Safeguarding Adult Reviews – remit also includes overseeing implementation of lessons learned at organisational level
- Audit and Assurance – initiates and co-ordinates audit activity and also oversees the assurance element of the Training Strategy
- Prevention and Engagement – supports the delivery of the Engagement Strategic Priority
- Practitioner Forum - tactical/operational and procedural matters are discussed.
- Policies and Procedures - task to finish groups are formed when the need arises.

Progress reports and updates from the sub-groups are routinely provided to the Executive sub group.

OUR PRIORITIES

1. ENGAGEMENT

(i) Improve awareness of adult safeguarding

Why it is important

Considerable progress has been made over recent years raising awareness of adult safeguarding. The Board and its connected partners have produced and distributed a wide range of information using a variety of

methods that feedback suggests has been well received. These activities appear to have had the desired effect of contributing to an increase in safeguarding referrals and alerts. There is more to be done on raising awareness and it is important that there continues to be an emphasis on producing good quality and up to date information and publicity materials targeted to meet the needs of the diverse range of recipients.

What we will do

Continue to develop and enhance the Board communication plan to raise awareness of:

- what constitutes abuse and neglect
- when and how to report it
- what happens after a report is made
- concerns that are not abuse or neglect and how these should be reported
- practical things that can be done to prevent or reduce the risk of abuse or neglect occurring

The messages conveyed through the communication plan will be informed and updated by periodic feedback from the following:

- adults (with needs for care and support) and their families
- carers
- advocates
- the public
- safeguarding practitioners
- volunteers

How we will know that we have made a positive difference?

- raised awareness of what constitutes abuse and neglect
- raised awareness about how to prevent abuse and neglect
- raised awareness of how to report concerns about abuse and neglect
- expected initial increase in reports of abuse and neglect
- increased proportion of concerns that go on to require a section 42 enquiry (appropriate referrals)
- increased awareness of how to report concerns that do not amount to abuse and neglect
- raised awareness of what happens after a report is made
- positive feedback on the effectiveness of the communication methods for target audiences

(ii) Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

Why it is important

Making Safeguarding Personal requires engagement with a person at an early stage to establish desired outcomes that are then supported by a person-centred approach to make this happen. There is an emphasis in those conversations about what would improve an individual's quality of life as well as their safety. Unless people's lives are improved, all the safeguarding work, systems, procedures and partnerships have limited value.

What we will do

- For the Safeguarding Adults Board to comply fully with its statutory functions it must continuously seek to develop effective ways of engaging with people and communities, including in the production of this strategic plan
- The Board will be actively advocating for the Making Safeguarding Personal approach to become a 'golden thread' that will run through strategic and operational adult safeguarding work in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and reflected prominently in connected agency work programmes
- Partners are asked to complete the biennial Tier 2 individual organisation audit; section 5 of the audit relates to Making Safeguarding Personal
- Seek assurances that the use of advocacy services are being utilised to support adults engaged in S42 enquiries
- Scope the feasibility of using advocacy services to feed back the views of adults about their experiences of Section 42 enquiries

How we will know that we have made a positive difference

As part of implementing 'Making Safeguarding Personal' the Board will want to see evidence of the following:

- Evaluation of the experiences of people using safeguarding services and how those experiences have been used to improve services. The extent to which service users have a sense of being in control and feeling that they sufficiently influence and determine outcomes
- Effective application of the Mental Capacity Act and appropriate use of advocacy.
- That commissioners are developing procurement and contracting arrangements that ensure the provision of personalised services
- An understanding of emerging trends in relation to safeguarding people with care and support needs and how this awareness informs practice development across connected agencies
- Positive content in the Annual Report relating to Making Safeguarding Personal, typically through Case Studies

(iii) Seek improvements in how frontline practitioners work with those adults often referred to as either non-engaging or difficult to engage.

Why it is important

Safeguarding Adult Reviews, other learning reviews and audits undertaken by the SSASPB have repeatedly shown that adults are often referred to as 'difficult to engage' or 'non-engaging', seen particularly in the review of cases involving self-neglect. Often, the consequence of this is service withdrawal which has been seen to detrimentally impact on the well-being of the adult, sometimes with tragic consequences which may or may not be directly linked to the 'lack of engagement'. The challenges presented to practitioners and volunteers are not under-estimated. Effective engagement can require patience, persistence and professional curiosity to gain the trust and confidence of those who have often been exposed to adverse childhood experiences and other trauma.

What we will do

- Research what good practice has been developed in other areas with a view to the adoption of transferable learning
- Produce guidance for use in Stoke -on-Trent and Staffordshire, the guidance will encourage practitioners and volunteers to be curious and creative on a case-by-case basis

- Seek and promote the commitment of senior managers and team leaders to support practitioners to commit time with those at high risk of abuse and neglect and where engagement is key to improving outcomes for the adult
- Seek support from partners to consider the individual's personal circumstances in their respective 'Did Not Attend' policies to allow time for practitioners to better engage with adults at high risk of abuse and neglect and where engagement is key to improving outcomes for the adult

How we will know that we have made a difference

- There will be a culture of creativity, curiosity and tolerance; where practitioners will feel supported to invest time with those adults at high risk of abuse and neglect and where better engagement is key to improving outcomes for them
- Practitioners will voice that they are supported to be creative and patient when encouraging an adult to contribute to reducing the risk of exposure to abuse and neglect
- Audits and reviews will evidence how practitioners have sought to better engage those who are considered to be reluctant to do so

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Why this is important

The Safeguarding Adult Board has a key role to seek assurances as to the effectiveness of the multi-agency relationships and working arrangements relevant to safeguarding adults.

This includes the work of the SSASPB to initiate debate and discussion about emerging issues in the safeguarding of adults with care and support needs at risk of abuse or neglect as well as promoting formal research and encouraging professional curiosity about sources of risk as a means of helping effective multi-agency responses.

What is the SSASPB seeking to achieve

1. That Making Safeguarding Personal is meaningfully implemented and embedded in practice by all partners, (other than in exceptional circumstances when it may be less appropriate) and that its effectiveness is measured to give confidence.
2. The assessment and reviews of mental capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is of a good standard and includes the perspective of service users/carers, with appropriate skilled advocacy in place.
3. Safeguarding partners commit to improve our response to self-neglect, including that we will explore what experiences led, and sustain, a person to live in this way rather than judge self-neglect and substance use to be a lifestyle choice and we will consider wider social, physical and mental health factors rather than rely on substance use to explain a person's circumstances. We will recognise the impact of trauma, substance use, and the coercive and controlling effects of addiction, on a person's mental capacity to make decisions about their self-neglect and substance use.
4. There is awareness and understanding that there can be increased risks in relation to safeguarding when a person moves between services, such as when a person is discharged from hospital to their home or other community settings.

5. That amongst connected partners professionals and leaders are alert to the sources of risk for vulnerable adults in the communities and residential settings particularly the hidden voices and people falling between the eligibility gaps.

How we will know that we have made a difference

All connected safeguarding partners have considered how their organisation can demonstrate a focus and response to the assurance statements and have accordingly made pledges to the SSASPB.

Each of the 5 practice themes will be overseen by a SSASPB sub-group with actions and themed audits initiated where required.

The outcomes from the collective focus on sustaining effective practice will be reported in the SSASPB Annual Report.

Appendix 1

Categories of abuse and neglect

Section 14.17 of The Care Act Statutory Guidance describes the various categories of abuse and neglect:

Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence.

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse - including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse - including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Appendix 2

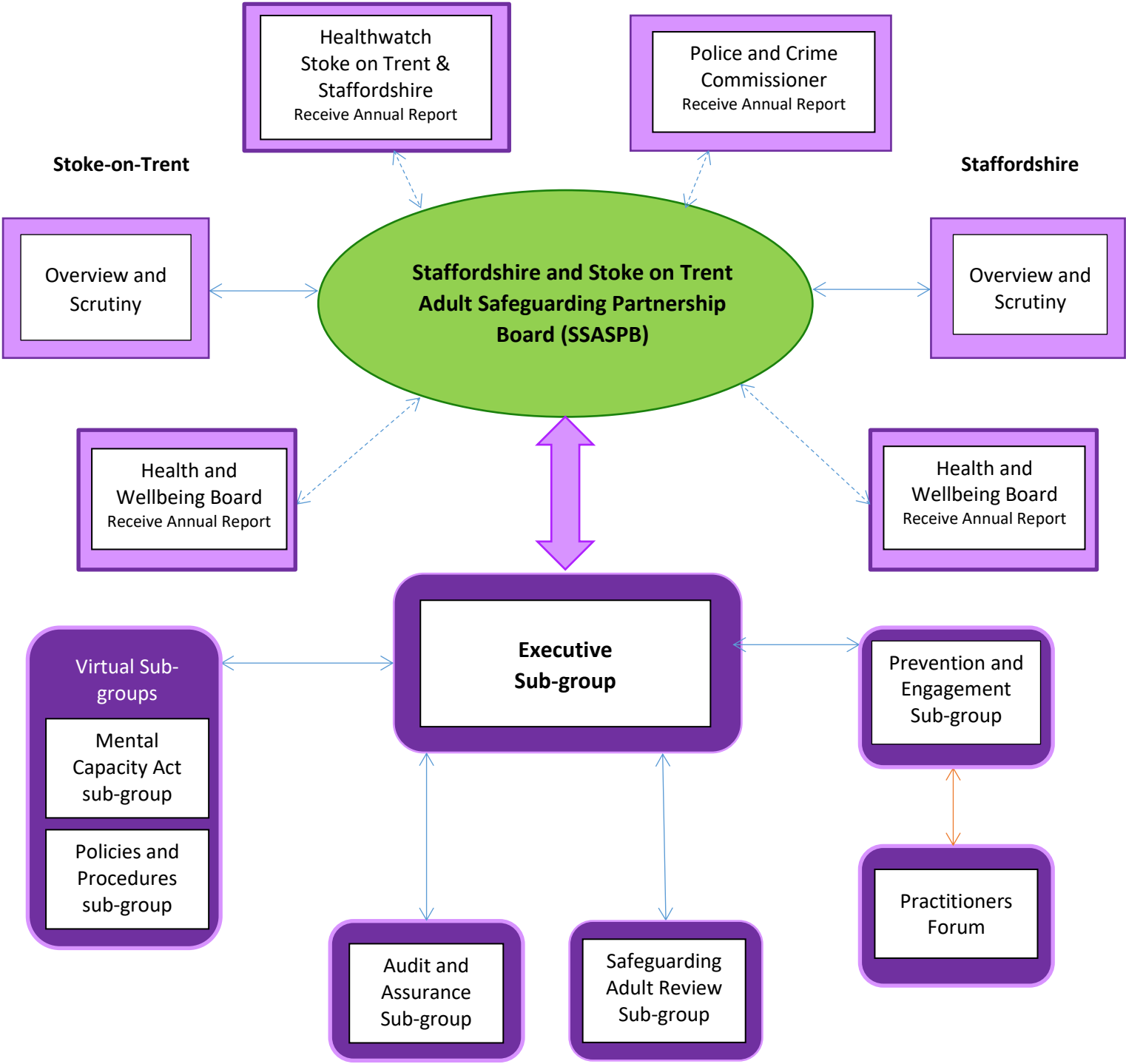
Membership

Through the requirements of the Care Act 2014 Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire Police and the six Clinical Commissioning Groups in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire are statutory partners of the SSASPB.

As part of its inclusive approach that recognises that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility the statutory partners have agreed to invite the following organisations or departments to become members of the SSASPB.

- Asist Advocacy
- Brighter Futures
- Community Rehabilitation Company; Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (CRCs)
- Domestic Abuse Fora
- Healthwatch; Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
- Her Majesty’s Prison Service; West Midlands (HMPS)
- Housing; Stoke on Trent
- Local Authority Lead members
- Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT)
- Middleport Matters Community Trust
- National Probation Service; Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (NPS)
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust (NSCHT)
- Representatives from the voluntary sector
- Rockspur
- Staffordshire Association of Registered Care Providers (SARCP)
- Staffordshire Commissioners Office
- Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service (SFARS)
- Support Staffordshire
- Trading Standards; Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
- University Hospitals of North Midlands including County Hospital in Stafford (UHNM)
- University Hospitals of Derby and Burton (UHDB)
- Voiceability
- Your Housing Group
- West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS)

Governance and Structure



Key:

