



Title of report: Annual Report of the Herefordshire Adults Safeguarding Board (HSAB) 2024 to 2025

Meeting: Health and Wellbeing board

Meeting date: Monday 15 December 2025

Report by: Independent Chair of the HSAB

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards)

Purpose

For the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) to receive the Annual Report of the Herefordshire Adults Safeguarding Board (HSAB). It is a requirement of the Care Act 2014 that the HSAB annual report is sent to:

- the chief executive and leader of the local authority which established the SAB
- any local policing body that is required to sit on the SAB
- the local Healthwatch organisation
- the chair of the local health and wellbeing board.

Recommendation

That:

- a) The Health and Wellbeing Board considers the HSAB Annual Report 2024/25 and discusses the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding adults in Herefordshire.**

Alternative options

The Chair of HWB could choose not to bring the report to the HWB and circulate it for information.

Key considerations

1. Under the Care Act 2014 each local authority must set up a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB). The main objective of a SAB is to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults in its area who meet the criteria for safeguarding.
2. A Safeguarding Adults Board has three core duties:
 - It must publish a strategic plan for each financial year that sets how it will meet its main objective and what the members will do to achieve this. The plan must be developed with local community involvement, and the SAB must consult the local Healthwatch organisation. The plan should be evidence-based and make use of all available evidence and intelligence from partners to form and develop its plan.
 - It must publish an annual report detailing what the SAB has done during the year to achieve its main objective and implement its strategic plan, and what each member has done to implement the strategy as well as detailing the findings of any safeguarding adults reviews and subsequent action
 - It must conduct any safeguarding adults review in accordance with Section 44 of the Act.
3. The HSAB Annual Report 2024/25 covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It outlines the progress of the partnership in delivering the priorities of the Strategic Plan 2023-2026.
4. The current priorities for the HSAB are:
 - Self-neglect - improving our response to understanding and managing self-neglect needs, making sure all agencies understand and respond to self-neglect.
 - Exploitation - addressing the safeguarding issues and challenges arising from criminal exploitation including 'cuckooing', sexual exploitation, modern slavery, county lines, human trafficking and financial exploitation.
 - Prevention - supporting initiatives and activities which prevent or reduce abuse and neglect and keep people safe.
 - Neglect and omission - understanding the profile of neglect and omission occurrences within the county and identifying approaches and resources to mitigate the impact.
 - Board effectiveness - ensuring the Board fulfils its statutory duties and is effective in its role of assurance of the safeguarding system.
5. The Board has also decided to focus on:
 - Transitions for those moving from a child to an adult service, service to service or service to discharge in a safe and positive way.
 - Following the Thematic Review into adults with multiple and complex needs the Board has also been monitoring provision for those 'rough sleeping' in Herefordshire
6. In 24/25 16 referrals for potential Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) were received, which was a significant increase on five referrals in the previous year:
 - Seven did not meet criteria for review as individuals either did not have Care and Support needs or there was no evidence that multi-agency working was ineffective.

- During the triage meeting for one referral the Joint Case Review Group (JCR) identified extensive domestic abuse in the life of the individual, it was therefore decided that a joint Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) / SAR approach was most appropriate.
- Four referrals for SARs were scoped and then found to not meet criteria, however learning was identified. Examples of learning identified are –
 - Strengthening of the Complex Adults Risk Management (CARM) process
 - Improving multi-agency practitioners' understanding of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and the confidence to carry out MCA assessments
 - Lack of professional curiosity
 - Poor recording

All reviews have an action plan including multi-agency recommendations which are regularly updated.

7. The majority of the key performance data set out in the Annual Report is from the national survey 2023/24. This shows that in the county 74.5% of service users 'felt safe,' which is a small decrease from 77.2% the previous year, but higher than the West Midlands (72.5%) and All England (71.1%) averages. The Board will continue to consider factors that are leading to 25.5% who do not feel safe. The Board does take assurance though from the number who said that services provided made them feel safe.
8. The Annual Report includes an analysis of safeguarding concerns raised with partners. The number of concerns dropped by 35%, following a similar drop of 34% in the previous year. This is attributed to the changes that were introduced into the service whereby all referrals are triaged prior to being sent to the safeguarding team. This ensures that only safeguarding referrals progress, which enables the safeguarding team to deal more effectively with those cases.
9. There is analysis of those subject to abuse. The majority were females (58%) and the most common location was 'own home' (54%). This demonstrates how important it is that communities remain vigilant when it comes to vulnerable adults and acting if they suspect any form of abuse.
10. Progress made by the Board and the subgroups is contained within the Annual Report. In general, the subgroups are delivering against the programme set out in the Business Plan but still face challenges related to the staffing capacity of partners.
11. In summary, whilst the partnership acknowledges there is more to do, it is working well and has reset the Business Plan and the work of the subgroups to continue its progress in 2025/26.
12. The HSAB is also holding a Development Day with partners in December 2025, to review and set priorities for the next Strategy Plan cycle, which will start April 2026.

Community impact

13. The report includes information on the effectiveness of work in the community, and how HSAB engages with communities.

Environmental impact

14. There are no general implications for the environment arising from this report.

Equality duty

15. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
16. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this activity and it has been found to have low impact for equality.
17. Due to the potential impact of this project/decision/activity being low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However the following equality considerations should be taken into account when making a decision about this activity/project:
 - 17.1 The HSAB Annual Report notes that the largest age band of individuals affected by safeguarding concerns in 2024-25 was people over the age of 65, who represented 54% of all concerns.
 - 17.2 In 2024-25, more safeguarding concerns were raised about females (58%), compared with males (42%).
 - 17.3 At its development day on 04/12/2025, HSAB members recognised that there is currently limited information reported on protected characteristics of individuals where there are adult safeguarding concerns. This has been identified as an area to strengthen.
 - 17.4 The HSAB Annual Report has been formatted to meet accessibility standards. It is published on the safeguarding partnerships website and is therefore available publicly to all.

Resource implications

18. There are no resource implications associated with this report. The resource implications of any recommendations made by the HWB will need to be considered by the responsible body or the executive in response to those recommendations or subsequent decisions.

Legal implications

19. By receiving the report the HWB assists the HSAB to meet its statutory requirements.

Risk management

20. There are no risk implications identified emerging from the recommendation in this report.

Consultees

None

Appendices

Appendix A – HSAB Annual Report 2024-25

Background papers

None identified.