



ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26



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Introductions

The Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) brings together organisations across the city with a shared commitment to protecting adults with care and support needs who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect.

Our work is grounded in the six safeguarding principles of empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.

These principles remind us that effective safeguarding is not simply about responding to harm. It is about listening to people, respecting their rights and choices, acting at the earliest opportunity and ensuring that agencies work together to achieve the outcomes that matter to the individual.

During 2025–26, the Board and its partners made important progress in strengthening person-centred safeguarding. Performance improved in asking adults, or their representatives, about the outcomes they wanted to achieve, and feedback became embedded within Section 42 safeguarding processes. By March 2026, more than 1,000 instances of feedback had been collected, providing valuable evidence about people's experiences and a stronger foundation for practice improvement. The Board also continued to support research into older people's experiences of safeguarding, helping to ensure that the voices of adults inform the development of local services.

The Board strengthened its understanding of the risks facing adults in Newcastle through work on neglect, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol-related harm, student safeguarding and home takeover.

Newcastle contributed to national work on the development of guidance relating to home takeover, with the city's approach highlighted as an example of good practice. Partners also completed an assurance exercise on organisational cultures, demonstrating a shared commitment to transparency, effective reporting pathways and learning.

Prevention, learning and public awareness remained central to our work. A wide-ranging programme was delivered for Safeguarding Adults Week 2025, including community-focused activity and support from organisations across the partnership. Safeguarding Adults Team Talks were launched to help teams discuss and apply learning in day-to-day practice, alongside consistently strong uptake of safeguarding training. The Board also examined barriers that ethnically marginalised communities may experience when accessing safeguarding support, identifying areas for further work around data, cultural competence and inclusive engagement.



Vida Morris, Independent Chair, NSAB

Partnership working continued to be one of Newcastle's greatest strengths. The Adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Steering Group was re-established, with positive engagement from the local authority, police and health partners.

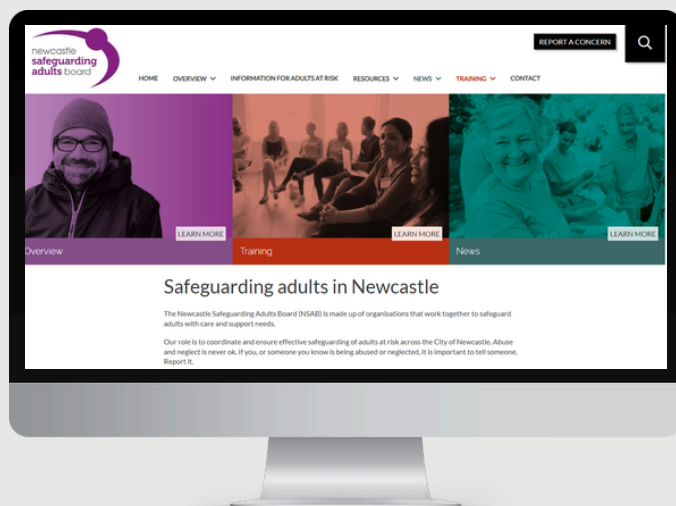
Multi-agency audits, learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and fire-related learning were used to strengthen practice, while the Board contributed to regional and national safeguarding discussions. These achievements reflect the sustained commitment of agencies across Newcastle, as well as the practitioners, volunteers, communities, adults and carers whose knowledge and experience support our shared ambition to make the city safer.

Looking ahead to 2026–27, we will build on this progress by further embedding feedback and Making Safeguarding Personal; improving multi-agency responses to neglect; strengthening our focus on discriminatory abuse and hate crime; and better understanding the factors that increase vulnerability, including serious violence, domestic abuse, modern slavery and home takeover.

We will extend preventative work with communities, improve accessible safeguarding information, complete a review of our Risk Threshold Tool and strengthen the quality of safeguarding adult concerns and feedback to practitioners. We will also continue to seek assurance that learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews is embedded in practice and making a meaningful difference.

Through collective leadership, constructive challenge and a continued focus on people's lived experience, NSAB and its partners remain committed to ensuring that Newcastle is an increasingly safer city for adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

Visit our website to find out more about safeguarding adults in Newcastle, including news, training, policies, procedures and guidance.



www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk

Although this Annual Report covers the period April 2025 to March 2026, before I took up the role of Cabinet Member for Integrated Health and Adult Social Care in May 2026, it provides a valuable opportunity for me to reflect on the strength of safeguarding partnership working across Newcastle.

Having previously served as Chair of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee for a number of years, I have seen first-hand the dedication of partners across health, social care, housing, police, fire and the voluntary sector in working together to prevent abuse and neglect, learn from experience and improve outcomes for adults at risk.

This report demonstrates the significant work undertaken by the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board and its partners during 2025/26 to support adults with care and support needs to live safe, independent and fulfilling lives.

As I begin this new role, I am committed to building on these foundations and supporting the Board's continued focus on prevention, empowerment, partnership working and continuous improvement. Safeguarding is fundamental to strong communities, public safety, tackling inequalities and delivering services that make a tangible difference to residents' lives.

I look forward to working with Board partners to ensure safeguarding remains at the heart of these ambitions, and that together we continue to make Newcastle a city where adults with care and support needs can live free from abuse and neglect.



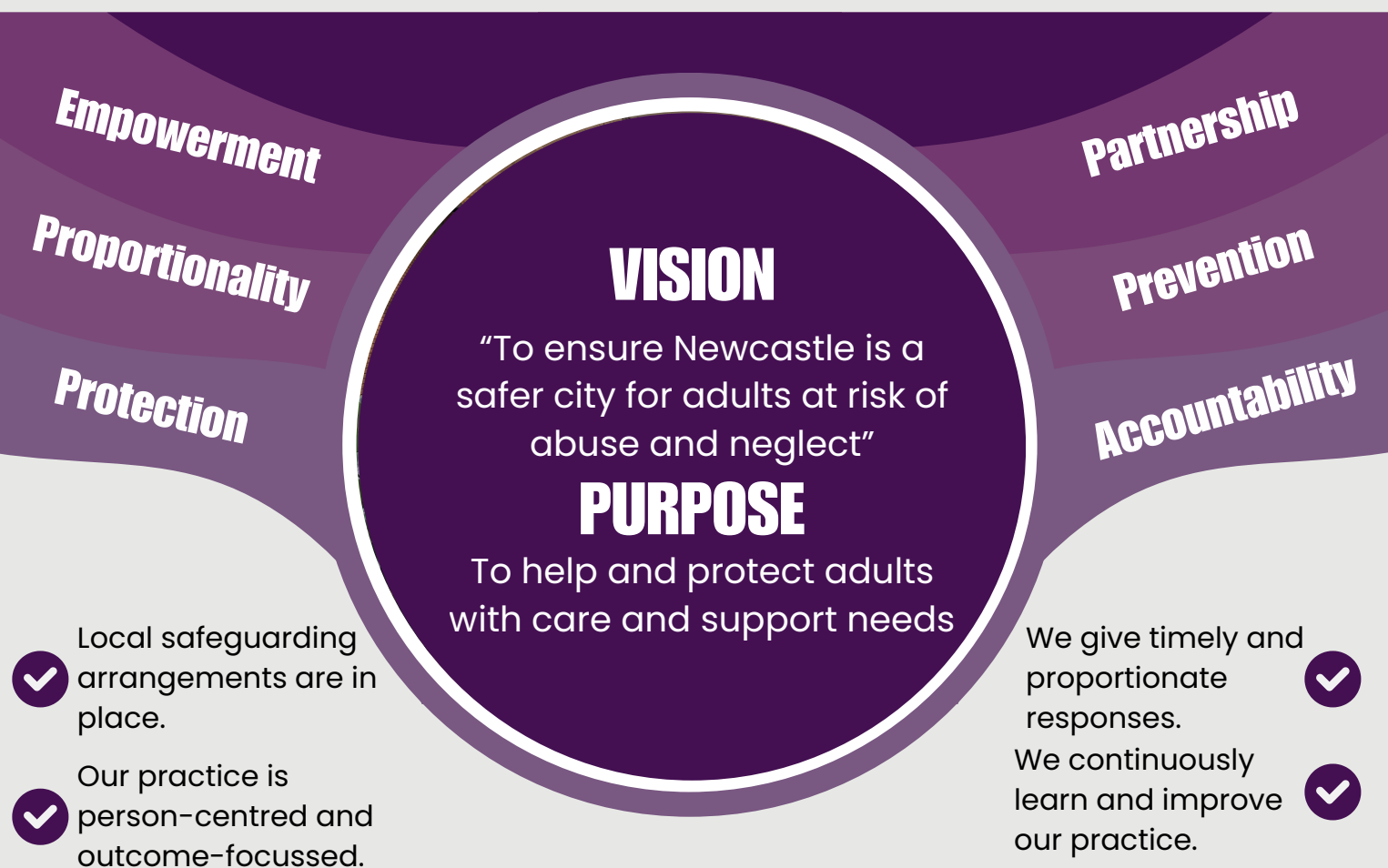
Councillor Wendy Taylor, Cabinet Member for Integrated Health and Adult Social Care



Attendees at the Safeguarding in Sport Conference, June 2025, St James' Park.

Who we are

The NSAB is the statutory partnership responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding adult arrangements in Newcastle. The Care Act 2014 states that the Board must have three core members: Newcastle City Council, Northumbria Police and North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. The Board has three statutory duties, we must: develop and publish a strategic annual plan, produce an annual report and undertake Safeguarding Adults Reviews when the criteria have been met. The NSAB is supported by a number of sub committees, one of which is jointly overseen by the Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP).



Our year in brief



May 2025

- Report received on feedback pilot within Adult Social Care, gathering people's experiences of the safeguarding adults process - endorsed for full roll-out.
- Assurance exercise completed around organisational cultures.



July 2025

- Findings shared from pilot in GP surgeries where perpetrators of domestic abuse were asked about their behaviours in intimate relationships
- Update from Public Health on drug-related deaths and the Suicide Prevention Strategy



September 2025

- NSAB Information Sharing Agreement updated.
- Local guidance finalised to support implementation on National Pressure Ulcer Protocol.
- Safeguarding Adult Team Talks launched.



November 2025

- Safeguarding Adults Week - focus on community awareness and engagement.
- Recognising neglect as Newcastle's most common form of abuse in safeguarding enquiries, the Board launched a major programme of work to better understand and respond to neglect.



January 2026

- The Board considered the impact of major NHS and Integrated Care Board reforms on safeguarding arrangements.
- Safeguarding adults in education - representatives from Newcastle College, Newcastle University, Northumbria University, and Newcastle City Learning presented their safeguarding arrangements, challenges, and partnership working.



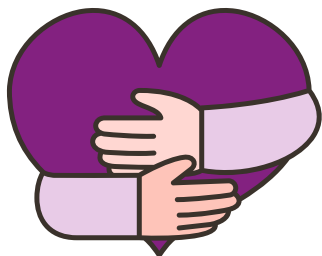
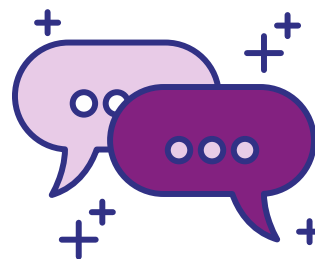
March 2026

- The Board reflected on its progress against its 2025-26 Strategic Annual Plan.
- The Strategic Annual Plan for 2026-27 was approved.

Plans and priorities

EMPOWERMENT

- We will make sure feedback from adults is reported widely
- We will ask if partner agencies can help collect feedback
- We will continue to support research into older people's experiences of safeguarding adults



PROTECTION

- We will update and improve training on neglect
- We make clear what counts as "poor care" and what counts as "neglect" and which reporting pathways should be used
- We will find out why discriminatory abuse reports are low and work with other partnerships to increase awareness of hate crime.

PROPORTIONALITY

- We will continue work to review our Risk Threshold Tool

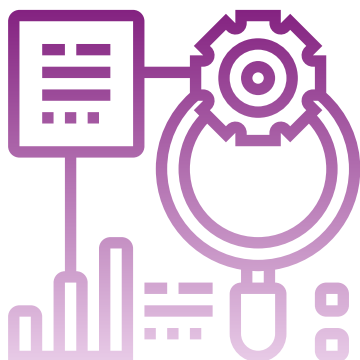
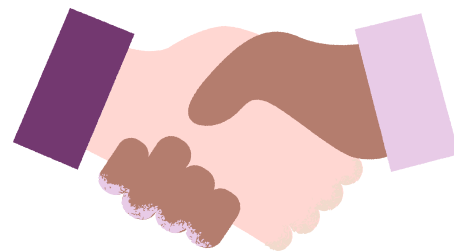


PREVENTION

- We will promote safeguarding adults messages with the public and professionals
- We will co-produce information about safeguarding adults with adults in our communities
- We will find out if there are any barriers to people accessing safeguarding adults support

PARTNERSHIP

- We will carry on work to improve the quality of safeguarding adult referrals
- We will use IT developments to support the MASH dealing with a high volume of referrals
- We will improve the feedback given to referrers



ACCOUNTABILITY

- We will ensure learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews is embedded in practice
- We will carry on doing multi-agency audits

Local data

The infographic below gives a summary of safeguarding adults activity in 2025-26. In Newcastle, we still monitor the volume of referrals that the Local Authority receive, even though this is not reported via the national, statutory data collection. There was a 14% increase in referrals on the previous year. 51% of referrals met the safeguarding adults concern criteria.



21,926

Safeguarding adults referrals

A referral made to Adult Social Care identified as requiring safeguarding intervention



11,247

Safeguarding adults concerns

Safeguarding adults referrals which met the safeguarding adults concern criteria



9,937

Section 42 enquiries

Safeguarding adults concerns which met all three parts of the Section 42 (Care Act) enquiry criteria

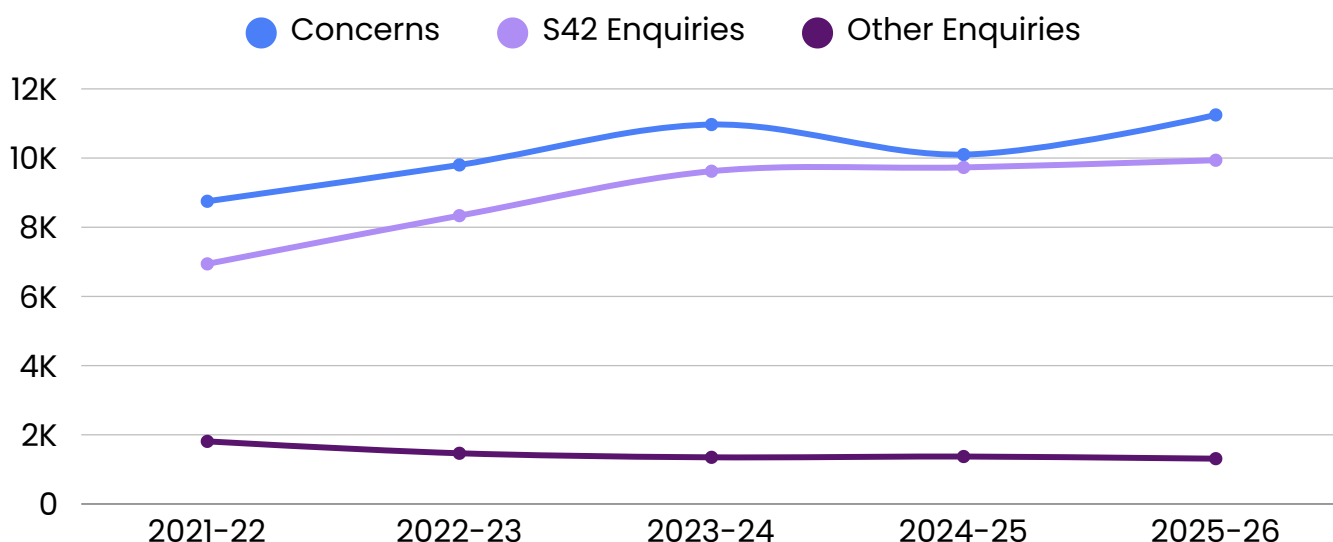


1,310

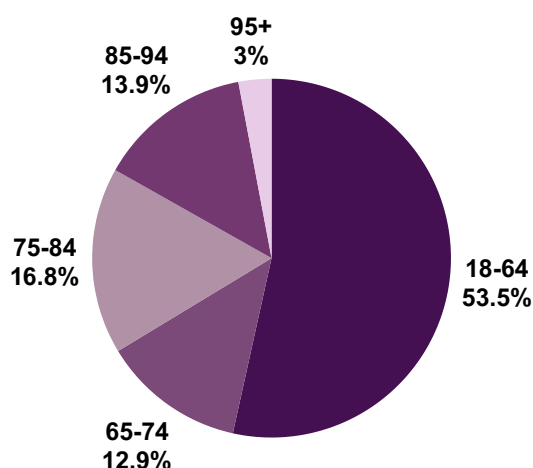
Other enquiries

Safeguarding adults concerns which did not meet all three parts of the Section 42 (Care Act) enquiry criteria but it was deemed necessary to carry out enquiries/take action

The chart below shows the five-year trend across safeguarding adult concerns, Section 42 enquiries and other enquiries. The chart demonstrates a sustained high, and increasing, volume of safeguarding adults activity. Referrals have increased across all partners and demand is a whole-system issue.

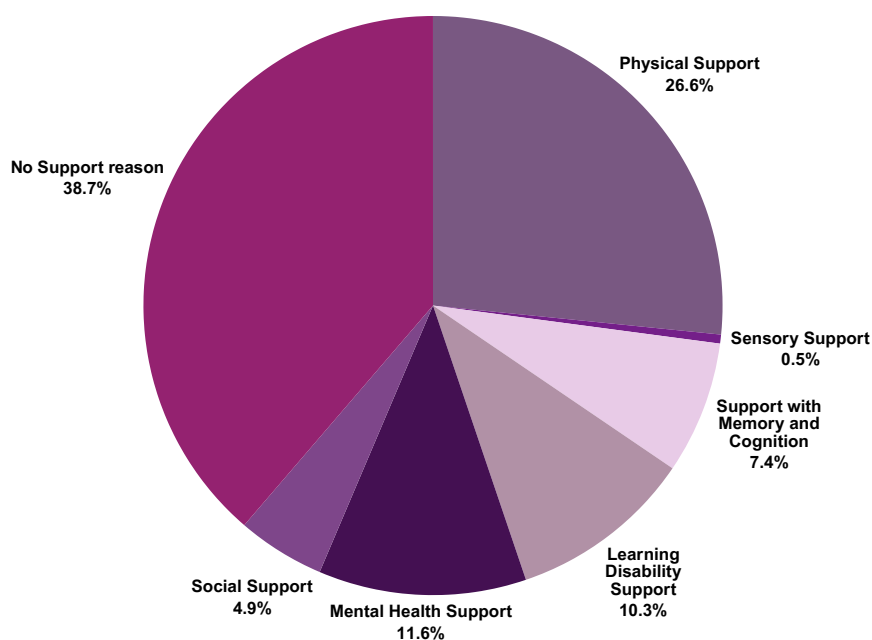


Age



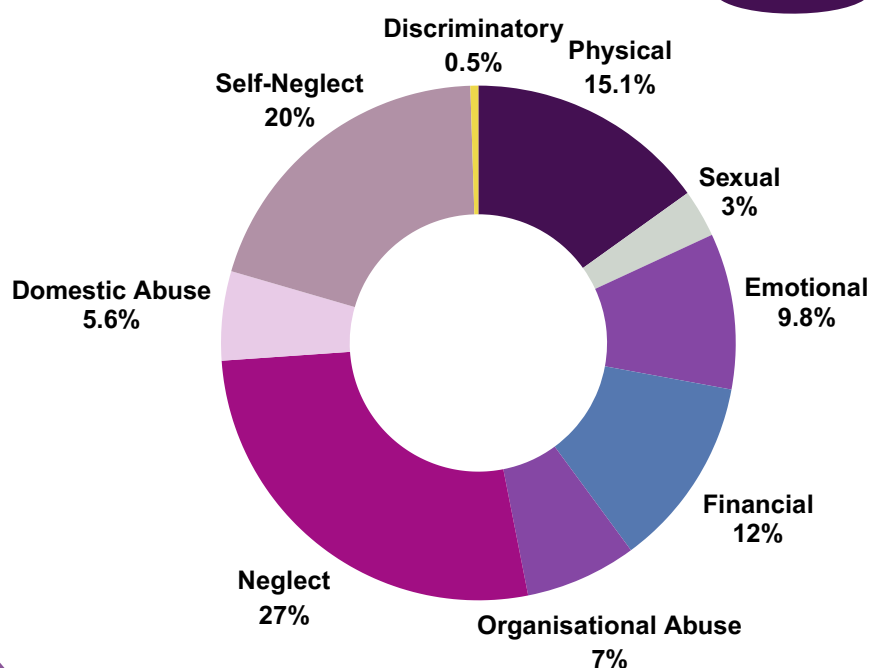
Working age adults continue to account for the highest number of safeguarding adults concerns received. However, when the volume of concerns is compared to overall population totals, the prevalence of abuse and neglect increases with age. 53% of safeguarding adult concerns were about women, 46% were about men and 1% recorded as other.

Primary Support Reason



Where known, the most common primary support reason for adults at risk subject to safeguarding adults concerns was physical support. This was followed by mental health support and learning disability support.

Abuse Type



Neglect continues to be the most reported form of abuse and is the reason the NSAB has prioritised this area for focus in 2026-27. The top three abuse types (neglect, self-neglect and financial) are consistent with 2024-25 trends.

This year, organisational abuse reports have decreased, while domestic abuse concerns have increased.

Location



The most common location for someone to experience abuse and neglect was their own home (56% of all S42 enquiries).

Location

MSP Data

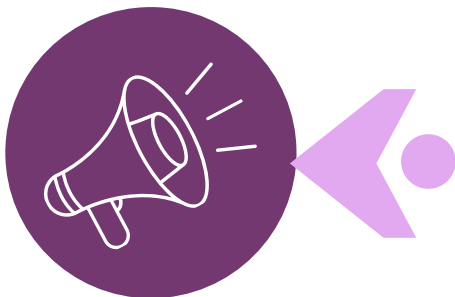
Making Safeguarding Personal



In **82%** of Section 42 enquiries, the adult at risk/representative was asked their desired outcomes. This was a 2% increase compared to last year.

In **94%** of Section 42 enquiries where the adult at risk lacked mental capacity, they were supported by an advocate, family member or friend. This was a 1% increase on the previous year.

There has been sustained improvement in these two key MSP performance measures over the previous five years.



1,328 PEOPLE

**SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCE
OF THE SAFEGUARDING
ADULTS PROCESS**

“Christine said she felt safer and more in control since the safeguarding process began. She said, ‘I felt it’s been really helpful. I felt like you were listening to me. You’re definitely listening to me, and I don’t feel listened to sometimes.

”

92%

**FELT SAFER AS A RESULT OF
THE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS
PROCESS**

89%

**WOULD BE CONFIDENT IN
CONTACTING THE TEAM IN
THE FUTURE**

Some of the key themes arising from people’s feedback:

- People feel supported and reassured, that concerns are taken seriously and are followed up.
- Safeguarding can feel worrying and emotional.
- Face-to-face contact was important.
- There was appreciation of practical support e.g. sign-posting and referrals to other services.

Partnership working to improve feedback and outcomes – a perspective from Healthwatch

Healthwatch Newcastle is the independent champion for people using health and social care services. We gather experiences, particularly from underrepresented communities, and use this insight to help improve services. Through our role on the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB), we ensure the voices of adults at risk and the wider public inform safeguarding discussions and decision-making. By gathering insight into people's experiences of health and social care, it helps identify risks, raise concerns, challenge poor practice and promote person-centred, accountable and transparent safeguarding.

During 2024/25, NSAB worked closely with Healthwatch Newcastle, Your Voice Counts and Adult Social Care to improve how feedback is gathered from adults at risk and their representatives.

Historically, feedback was collected through a survey some time after a safeguarding enquiry had ended. Through discussions within the Partnership Board, Healthwatch Newcastle highlighted that this approach could limit opportunities for people to share their experiences, as views were often influenced by the final outcome of the safeguarding enquiry. In response, partners worked collaboratively to review and redesign the process to ensure that people's voices were heard more effectively and at meaningful points during their safeguarding journey.

As a result, feedback was directly embedded within the safeguarding process. From September 2024, practitioners within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) began routinely seeking feedback from adults at risk and their representatives as part of the safeguarding process itself. The model was developed jointly with Healthwatch Newcastle and Your Voice Counts, who advocated for feedback to become a standard part of safeguarding activity in 2025/26 and going forward, rather than a separate or exceptional exercise.

The success of the pilot has led to the feedback questions being permanently integrated into Adult Social Care's recording system, ensuring that feedback is routinely captured following safeguarding enquiries. This information now contributes to NSAB's performance framework, providing richer insight into people's experiences and helping partners identify opportunities for ongoing improvement.

We look forward to continuing our work together and encourage everyone to stay engaged as we build on this success and create even greater impact for our communities.

Safeguarding Adult Review Committee

The Safeguarding Adults Review Committee supports the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board to understand what can be learned when an adult with care and support needs has experienced serious abuse or neglect. It considers referrals for Safeguarding Adult Reviews, oversees reviews where these are required and makes sure that learning leads to improvements across local services.

During the year, the Committee considered a range of complex referrals involving issues such as self-neglect, domestic abuse, neglect, mental health, homelessness and fire risk. Each referral was carefully considered against the legal criteria for a Safeguarding Adult Review. Where a full review was not required, the Committee still identified relevant learning, recognised examples of effective multi-agency working and shared information with other appropriate review or partnership arrangements.

Significant progress was made with the discretionary Safeguarding Adult Review concerning Adult P, which focuses particularly on engagement, self-neglect, family circumstances and responses to fire risk. An independent reviewer was appointed, the family was involved in the process, and a multi-agency learning event brought together practitioners and safeguarding leads to reflect on what could be improved. By the end of the reporting year, the Committee had reviewed the draft report and was refining its recommendations.

The Committee continued to oversee improvements arising from earlier reviews. All actions from the Adult L and Adult O reviews were agreed as completed, with one action from the Adult N review remaining in progress. This included work relating to alcohol screening and access to memory assessment services for people who are dependent on drugs or alcohol.

The Committee contributed to the development of a regional approach for reviews involving more than one area. It also worked with partners to clarify how Safeguarding Adult Reviews connect with other statutory and local review processes. This helped reduce duplication and reinforced the importance of sharing learning across organisational and geographical boundaries.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026-27

- Complete the Adult P SAR and support implementation of its recommendations.
- Strengthen how learning from reviews is shared and embedded in front-line practice and understanding how learning from SARs is having an impact on the outcomes for adults at risk.
- Contribute to regional analysis of SARs across the North East to identify recurring themes.

Learning and Development Committee

The Learning and Development Committee supports the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board's ambition to help make Newcastle an increasingly safer city for adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

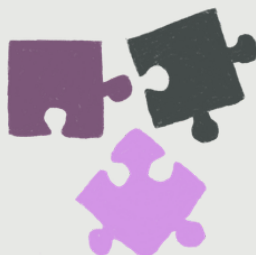
During 2025-26, the Committee focused on making sure that people working with adults in Newcastle could access good quality safeguarding adults training, understand current safeguarding risks, and use learning from reviews, local practice, and partner experience to improve support for adults, families, carers and communities. This work was guided by the Committee's 2025-26 workplan, which set out how it would contribute to the Board's Strategic Annual Plan across the themes of protection, prevention, partnership and accountability.

A key achievement during the year was the continuation and development of Newcastle's multi-agency safeguarding adults training programme. The Committee reviewed training uptake, considered feedback from learners and kept oversight of demand across the programme with additional courses added where possible. The Committee continued to promote a flexible approach to learning. This included face-to-face training, online sessions, e-learning, workbooks, short videos, Team Talks and other resources that can support discussion and reflection in teams.



2,184

**completions of
multi-agency
training**



16

**different
sectors
accessing
training**



38%

**of learners from
the voluntary and
community
sector**

One of the most positive developments during the year was the launch and expansion of the Safeguarding Adults Team Talk approach. The initial team talk focused on adults with needs related to drug and alcohol use. Following testing, the approach was expanded and shared more widely. The Committee agreed that new topics would include open cultures, language, exploitation and homelessness, and that the resources would be added to a webpage so people could access them when needed. A Team Talk Library has been created with at least 15 different topics covered with new ones being added on a regular basis.

The Committee helped ensure that training remained responsive to local and national safeguarding learning. During the year, the Committee considered how learning from reviews and local priorities should inform future training, including work linked to neglect, safeguarding thresholds, organisational cultures, fire-related risks, ethnicity, recording and the Risk Threshold Tool review.

Learning and Development Committee

This year the Committee has made important progress in strengthening partnership involvement in delivery of the multi-agency training programme. Five staff from Newcastle City Council Housing have been identified to assist with Level 2 safeguarding adults training. Their contribution is most welcome alongside those from CNTW and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. This collaborative approach helps ensure that training reflects real practice experience from across the safeguarding partnership.

Assurance about the quality and reach of safeguarding training was another major area of work. Newcastle City Council's Commissioning Team provided assurance about how safeguarding training requirements are considered through commissioning and contract management arrangements for Adult Social Care providers.

The Committee responded to emerging issues throughout the year. These included use of language, stigma and unconscious bias. The Committee mapped existing resources and agreed to support the roll-out of stigma education being coordinated through Public Health. The Committee also considered the Hate Crime ID App and associated training, with Connected Voice able to provide further training to organisations and a multi-agency webinar.

Online training etiquette guidance was developed due to concerns about participation in online sessions, including people not actively participating. This development shows the Committee's willingness to respond practically to issues affecting the quality and impact of learning.

By the end of the year, the Committee had also strengthened its own arrangements. Two new Vice Chairs were appointed in early 2026, helping to support the future leadership of the Committee. Recruitment to the Learning and Development Officer post was completed, with the new post-holder starting in November 2025.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026-27

- Improve the visibility and accessibility of safeguarding adults learning. Planned activity includes developing a clearer electronic leaflet or similar guide to help people understand what training is available and how to access it.
- Continue to monitor quality and uptake of training across agencies in Newcastle.
- Review of training needs in relation to neglect.
- Strengthen partnership delivery through the Trainers Group, which will bring together those delivering the multi-agency training programme.

A graphic of a black spotlight fixture hanging from above, casting a bright yellow cone of light downwards. The word 'Spotlight' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on a purple rectangular background that is partially illuminated by the spotlight.

Spotlight

Team Talks – Talking about Safeguarding Together

One of the most successful initiatives delivered by the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board during 2025-26 was the introduction of Safeguarding Adult Team Talks.

Team Talks are short, practical learning resources designed to help teams discuss important safeguarding topics during regular team meetings. Rather than requiring staff to attend formal training courses, Team Talks provide an accessible way for people to reflect on real issues, share experiences and consider how safeguarding applies to their everyday work.

During the year, Team Talks were produced on a range of topics, including issues identified through local safeguarding reviews, emerging safeguarding risks and areas where partners wanted to strengthen practice. They have supported discussions on subjects such as self-neglect, discriminatory abuse, hate crime and other areas of safeguarding importance. These topics were also reflected in the Board's wider learning and development programme.

Team Talks are not just about sharing information. They promote discussion, challenge assumptions and encourage reflection. By creating space for teams to learn together, the Board is helping to build a stronger safeguarding culture across Newcastle.

Feedback from organisations has highlighted the value of having concise, easy-to-use resources that can be incorporated into existing meetings and supervision sessions. This helps ensure safeguarding learning reaches more people and can be translated into day-to-day practice.

Through initiatives such as Team Talks, the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board continues to support a culture of continuous learning and improvement, helping professionals and volunteers feel more confident in recognising and responding to abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding is most effective when people have regular opportunities to discuss risks, share learning and reflect on real-life situations. Team Talks make safeguarding learning accessible, practical and relevant for the whole workforce.

Improving Practice Committee

The Improving Practice Committee supports the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board to improve safeguarding practice across the city. Its work during 2025-26 focused on helping agencies learn together, strengthen practice guidance, listen to people's experiences of safeguarding, and make sure learning from reviews and audits leads to practical change.

A key strength of the Committee this year has been its focus on learning from evidence. The Committee received and discussed learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews, lessons learned reviews and multi-agency audits, using these discussions to identify themes for local practice improvement. This included learning about self-neglect, fire risk, neglect, domestic abuse, modern slavery, prison release pathways and the experiences of people from ethnically marginalised communities.

The Committee continued to use multi-agency audits as an important way of understanding how safeguarding works in practice. The audit on self-neglect and health needs found positive examples of collaborative working, good communication between agencies and a generally good understanding of complex health needs. It also identified areas for improvement, including better recognition and support for informal carers and more routine use of carer risk tools. Later in the year, the Committee completed an audit on neglect, which provided reassuring evidence of professional curiosity, consideration of mental capacity and person-centred safeguarding practice. The learning from this audit focused mainly on wider system issues, such as clarity around neglect thresholds, gaps at service interfaces and support for carers and families.

The Committee led work to improve safeguarding guidance for practitioners. A Pressure Ulcer Protocol Task and Finish Group developed local guidance to accompany the national protocol, with provider services testing the decision-making tool before wider roll-out.

Raising awareness of safeguarding adults was another major achievement. The Committee's activities during Safeguarding Adults Week 2025 had a clear focus on community engagement and public-facing messages. Information stalls were held at Byker Morrisons, Throckley Community Centre and the Grainger Market. These events created opportunities to speak with members of the public about issues including carer support, family involvement in safeguarding enquiries, safety at home and concerns about doorstep traders. A regional safeguarding in sport session was also held at Newcastle Eagles Arena and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service hosted a webinar on fire safety and substance misuse. The Committee responded to feedback from community conversations by supporting the development of a myth-busting safeguarding adults video. This was designed to reassure people that safeguarding is a positive action intended to help people stay safe and well, and to address common misunderstandings about what safeguarding means. The Committee recognised that awareness raising should continue beyond one week of activity and that resources developed for Safeguarding Adults Week could be used throughout the year.

Improving Practice Committee



Images from Safeguarding Adults Week 2025 at The Grainger Market, Byker Morrisons and Throckley Community Centre

Discussions about safeguarding adults from ethnically marginalised communities considered local data, barriers to access, the importance of recording ethnicity, cultural competence and learning from national reviews. The Committee heard that barriers may include language, stigma, lack of cultural awareness and underreporting, and considered the importance of direct engagement, use of interpreters and not relying only on family members for communication. This work has highlighted the need for continued focus on cultural competence, better data quality and stronger engagement with communities.

The Committee maintained oversight of safeguarding adults meeting attendance, recognising that good attendance supports effective multi-agency working and decision-making. A further attendance report identified that attendance remained challenging, with lack of resource and capacity in partner agencies appearing to be a main barrier. Partners were asked to provide assurance about actions being taken to improve attendance, and the Committee continued this work through the development of meeting attendance good practice guidance. This encourages practitioners to provide written reports if they are unable to attend meetings. A standardised meeting invite template is also to be introduced.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026–27

- Complete two multi-agency audits on adult exploitation and information sharing, escalation and professional challenge.
- Continuing communication and implementation of the Pressure Ulcer Protocol.
- Progressing the review of the Risk Threshold Tool.
- Improve public and accessible information about safeguarding adults.
- Improve understanding and relevance of learning from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.
- Focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Joint Strategic Exploitation Group

The Joint Strategic Exploitation Group brings together organisations across Newcastle to improve the way partners prevent, identify and respond to exploitation. Its work covers issues including sexual and criminal exploitation, modern slavery, human trafficking, people going missing and “home takeover”, where another person uses someone’s home to exploit them or carry out criminal activity. The Group is jointly accountable to the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board and Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership.

During 2025–26, the Group made positive progress against its Delivery Plan:

- **Improving guidance and professional practice:** The Adult Exploitation Language Guidance and Adult Exploitation Checklist were reviewed, updated and published. These resources help practitioners recognise exploitation, use respectful and non-stigmatising language and make informed decisions about the support and protection a person may need.
- **Strengthening skills and confidence:** The Group reviewed the impact of Newcastle’s multi-agency Exploitation Competency Framework and considered how training could be better coordinated. It also promoted learning opportunities, including lived-experience resources, exploitation awareness programmes and specialist webinars. This supported the NSAB’s aim of ensuring that Newcastle’s workforce can recognise and respond confidently to safeguarding concerns.
- **Contributing to national change:** Newcastle continued to contribute directly to national work on home takeover, including discussions with the Home Office about guidance linked to the proposed cuckooing offence. Newcastle representatives were also invited to share local practice through a national webinar, demonstrating the city’s contribution to learning beyond the local area.
- **Strengthening strategic coordination:** The Group began moving its Delivery Plan to a clearer “4P” structure of Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Prepare. It also explored how Newcastle’s work could connect more effectively with regional exploitation and anti-slavery arrangements while retaining local oversight and accountability.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026–27

- Continuing Newcastle’s contribution to national work on home takeover, supporting the drafting of statutory and non-statutory guidance.
- Agree future local and regional governance arrangements for exploitation work, incorporating responses to the Casey Audit.
- Develop meaningful performance information around missing and exploitation to demonstrate the effectiveness of multi-agency responses.

A graphic of a black spotlight hanging from above, casting a bright yellow cone of light onto the word 'Spotlight' which is written in white on a purple rectangular background.

Spotlight

Newcastle research highlights the complexity of safeguarding adults at risk of exploitation

The publication of important new research by Kerry Cooke, Safeguarding Adults Manager and Adult Exploitation Lead at Newcastle City Council, in collaboration with Professor Monique Lhussier of Northumbria University explores the complexity of safeguarding adults who experience exploitation.

The research, entitled **“Like having 16,000 tabs open in my head: Unravelling the complexity of safeguarding adults at risk of exploitation”**, draws on interviews with 60 individuals, including adults with lived experience, practitioners, managers and policy makers. Using a realist research approach, the study examined what helps, and what hinders, efforts to protect adults who are experiencing exploitation.

The findings highlight that exploitation of adults often remains hidden within systems and services, particularly where people have multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities. The research found that adults who experience exploitation frequently face barriers to accessing support and that perpetrators often target existing vulnerabilities. The study also identified challenges for professionals, including high workloads, victim-blaming attitudes, and a lack of understanding of the impact that coercion and control can have on a person's ability to protect themselves.

Importantly, the research emphasises that effective safeguarding requires more than awareness of exploitation. Adults subjected to multiple forms of exploitation need coordinated, multi-agency responses that draw upon a broad range of legal powers and safeguarding approaches. The study concludes that safeguarding adult processes can be a powerful tool for protection, but only when supported by the right knowledge, skills, professional curiosity, organisational culture and partnership working arrangements.

The publication is particularly significant as it provides new evidence about the role of adult safeguarding systems in responding to exploitation and offers valuable insights for practitioners, managers and strategic leaders seeking to strengthen their local responses. The findings align closely with NSAB's ongoing work to improve recognition of adult exploitation, promote trauma-informed and person-centred practice, and strengthen partnership approaches to prevention, early intervention and protection.

The paper has been published in the European Journal of Social Work and was supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North East North Cumbria (NENC)

A large, stylized black arrow pointing from the bottom left towards the 'Read the research' link.

[**Read the research**](#)

Partner agency perspectives



The Force continues to maintain its established thresholds for PPN (Public Protection Notifications) adult concerns, with all adult safeguarding concerns being referred to the Police MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) team through the PPN process. Over recent years, referral volumes have increased because organisational awareness and understanding of mental health vulnerabilities and self-harm have improved. However, demand has stabilised over the past two years, with referral levels remaining broadly consistent.

Police MASH staff review and assess every adult concern received, working closely with Adult Social Care. This collaborative approach helps ensure vulnerable adults receive timely and proportionate interventions.

In February 2026, the Force implemented the NICHE Records Management System, representing the most significant organisational change programme undertaken in the last decade. The introduction of NICHE is expected to further strengthen the quality and consistency of PPN adult concerns, while providing enhanced information and intelligence to support effective decision-making and safeguarding outcomes.

The Force continues to coordinate, administer and chair the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). During 2025/26, particular emphasis was placed on ensuring that the voice of the victim is central to MARAC processes. As a result, discussions and resulting actions are now more clearly aligned with the wishes, needs, and expectations of victims, contributing to a more person-centred and outcome-focused approach to safeguarding.



CHANGING LIVES

Over the reporting period, our organisation has continued to strengthen its contribution to safeguarding adults across Newcastle through partnership working, service development, and a continued focus on supporting vulnerable people with complex needs.

Changing Lives has continued to work collaboratively with statutory and voluntary sector partners to improve safeguarding outcomes, information sharing, and multi-agency risk management.

Staff have engaged with safeguarding training with reflective practice to strengthen professional confidence in recognising and responding to abuse, neglect and self-neglect.

Contributions during the year have included:

- Supporting vulnerable adults to access safe accommodation, health services, receive support and community resources.
- Strengthening safeguarding policies and internal procedures to align with current legislation and best practice.
- Promoting early intervention and prevention to reduce escalation of risk and crisis presentations.
- Increasing awareness of exploitation, home invasion, domestic abuse, and barriers faced by socially excluded individuals.
- Embedding lived experience and service user voice with support planning and service delivery where possible.

Our services have supported the NSAB's priorities by promoting prevention, reducing risk and improving safeguarding outcomes for vulnerable adults. Particular focus has been placed on individuals affected by homelessness, substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse, exploitation, self-neglect and involvement with the criminal justice system.

Changing Lives contributes to accountability and continuous improvement within the safeguarding system. The organisation participates in Serious Untoward Incident Reviews where appropriate, supports the sharing of learning, and contributes examples of good practice from frontline work. It promotes reflective practice and continuous professional development, helping to embed learning.

Changing Lives plays a vital role in protection activity across the city. Its services work closely with people at heightened risk. Through direct engagement and intelligence sharing, the organisation contributes to identifying emerging risks such as "home takeover," violence, exploitation and safeguarding concerns linked to drug and alcohol use. This supports earlier intervention and strengthens multi-agency responses to risk.

Changing Lives remains committed to working in partnership with the Safeguarding Adults Board and partner agencies to promote dignity, safety, independence, and positive outcomes for adults at risk across Newcastle.

Changing Lives Case Study – “Emma”

Emma is a woman in her late twenties with complex mental health needs, a history of trauma, substance misuse, and experiences of financial and sexual exploitation.

Following concerns about exploitation and increasing vulnerability, Emma moved into supported accommodation where staff worked closely with a range of agencies to address significant risks to her safety and wellbeing.

Over the following year, her circumstances became increasingly complex. She experienced deteriorating physical health, repeated hospital admissions, substance misuse, and ongoing concerns about exploitation within the community.

Throughout this period, support staff continued to raise safeguarding concerns, share information with partner agencies, and advocate for a coordinated multi-agency response.

Safeguarding adult processes were strengthened, specialist exploitation services became involved, and work was undertaken with police, health and social care partners to reduce risk and improve support.

After a hospital admission in 2026, a comprehensive review of Emma's needs resulted in a move to a specialist nursing placement better suited to her physical, mental health and care requirements. Staff reported that she settled well, engaged positively with support, improved her health outcomes, and benefited from consistent clinical oversight and one-to-one support.

This case highlights the importance of persistent multi-agency safeguarding, partnership working, and ensuring that people with complex needs can access the right support at the right time.

Adult Social Care and Prevention

Adult Social Care and Prevention (ASCP) continued to explore innovative approaches to improving safeguarding practice through the use of AI-supported recording technology, including commencing a pilot of Beam Notes (formerly known as Magic Notes). The technology is used to support practitioners in accurately recording safeguarding conversations, meetings and multi-agency discussions, reducing administrative burden and increasing the time available for direct engagement with people experiencing safeguarding concerns. Early learning highlighted improvements in consistency, timeliness and the capture of key information from complex discussions.

Social Workers have been pivotal in supporting the collection of feedback from people about their experience of the safeguarding adults process. Through their direct relationships with people, families and carers, they have helped to create opportunities for individuals to share their views in a way that feels meaningful, proportionate and person-centred. The feedback gathered has provided valuable insight into what is working well and where improvements can be made, and has positively reflected the quality of Social Work practice in Newcastle. In particular, people's comments have highlighted the importance of clear communication, respectful engagement, listening to what matters to the person, and supporting individuals to feel involved and informed throughout the safeguarding process.

ASCP has strengthened oversight of timescales within safeguarding adults procedures through more routine use of timely performance information, regular management review and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team. This has enabled emerging delays to be identified earlier, supported more focused conversations with operational teams, and reinforced accountability for progressing safeguarding adult concerns in a timely and proportionate way.

Key messages and practice themes from local and national SARs have been shared through Directorate Briefings, staff newsletters, safeguarding training, team discussions and targeted reading tasks. This has supported practitioners and managers to reflect on learning in a practical way, consider how findings apply to day-to-day safeguarding practice, and strengthen awareness of recurring themes.

A range of actions have been taken to raise awareness of fire-related risks and strengthen practitioner responses where concerns are identified. This has included a mandatory reading task for staff on the Preventing Fire Deaths 7-minute briefing, alongside a practitioner survey to understand confidence, awareness and any barriers to recognising and responding to fire risk.

Training delivered by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service has further supported practitioners to identify fire-related risks, understand referral pathways and promote preventative action. In addition, recording documentation has been updated to prompt practitioners to consider fire risk more explicitly as part of safeguarding and assessment activity, including whether an onward referral to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is required for a Safe and Well Visit.

ASCP has been actively participating in CQC's Local Authority Assessment process since July 2024. The assessment is part of a new process to 'baseline' how LA's are delivering their ASC duties after over a decade without a regulatory regime. An initial assessment of Newcastle was undertaken between July 2024 and July 2025. CQC confirmed the process would be re-run due to issues in CQC's conduct of the process. A revised assessment commenced in July 2025, with the on-site visit taking place in Nov 2025.

Public Health

Led the coordination and development of key Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) products and population health intelligence, including:

- An Ethnic Minorities Health Needs Assessment.
- A Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, which informed understanding of pharmacy provision across Newcastle and supported the successful case for appropriate pharmacy placement within the city.
- A Poverty Needs Assessment.
- Updated drug and alcohol intelligence and data resources.

Food security remained a significant priority during the year. Key achievements included publication of the Director of Public Health's Annual Report, Food for Thought: Food Security in 2026; providing FareShare membership funding to support more than 40 organisations; establishing a cross-council Food Security Working Group; and maintaining investment in Food Newcastle, the city's food partnership.

The Local Drug Information System was further developed to strengthen Newcastle's response to emerging threats from synthetic opioids, particularly nitazenes, and novel benzodiazepines in the drug supply. While the city has seen a reduction in drug-related deaths, national concerns remain regarding the increasing prevalence of synthetic drugs across wider drug markets.

To reduce the risk of overdose, the naloxone programme continued to expand, providing training and access to a wider range of services and frontline staff likely to encounter people who use drugs. This now includes organisations such as Northumbria Police, Newcastle City Council and other partner agencies.

Public Health have worked in partnership with local universities and colleges to strengthen approaches to student wellbeing, with a particular focus on substance use, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Following an appreciative inquiry, Drug and Alcohol Services and Adult Social Care implemented a range of joint working arrangements to improve the support available to individuals accessing both services.

This has included co-location of staff, shadowing opportunities, shared induction processes and joint training, helping to strengthen relationships between teams and improve case management and outcomes for people receiving support.

Drug and alcohol grant funding continued to support a range of targeted initiatives designed to reduce harm and improve outcomes for vulnerable residents. This included a dedicated Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Team, the High Intensity Users programme, a specialist Safeguarding Practitioner post, and additional capacity within Changing Lives to support individuals experiencing exploitation.

Investment also supported workforce development, including implementation of the Anti-Stigma Framework and associated development programme. A key priority during the year was reducing caseload pressures within treatment services, enabling more intensive support for individuals and their families and improving recovery outcomes.

Newcastle City Council is now midway through its two-year partnership with the Institute of Health Equity (IHE), led by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, as part of the city's ambition to become a Marmot City. Significant progress has been made in establishing the governance arrangements needed to drive this work, including the creation of a Strategic Advisory Panel, chaired by Professor Marmot, a multi-agency Steering Group, and the city's new health equity network, Fairer Healthier Newcastle. The network provides opportunities for partners across the city to contribute to and influence the programme's development and priorities. [Find out more about the network and how to join here.](#)

The first Marmot "deep dive", focusing on employment and health equity, is currently underway.

The Warm Homes Healthy Futures programme provided support to more than 400 households experiencing financial hardship due to rising energy costs. During the year, the programme distributed over £52,000 in fuel vouchers and secured more than £39,000 in additional financial gains for council tenants. Building on its success, the programme will continue in 2026/27 as Warm and Well at Home.

A range of safeguarding resources were developed and widely promoted to increase awareness of exploitation, "home takeover" (cuckooing), and the impact of stigma. To improve accessibility, the animations have been translated into the five most commonly spoken community languages in Newcastle, extending their reach to a wider range of residents and communities.

In January, partners came together for the Substance Health Investment for Transformation Conference, showcasing innovation and good practice across Newcastle's drug and alcohol system. The event highlighted developments in service delivery, including the growing contribution of Lived Experience Recovery Organisations in supporting visible, inclusive and recovery-focused communities.

The conference also provided an opportunity for partners to identify and agree key priorities for the city's substance misuse programme for 2026/27, helping to shape future investment and service development.

Newcastle City Council Case Study – “Jane”

Safeguarding involvement with Jane, who has a history of drug and alcohol misuse, highlighted significant challenges in her family relationships, with her children living in the care of their father. Jane had also experienced domestic abuse, which contributed to her vulnerability and complexity of need.

At the start of safeguarding involvement, there was very limited agency support in place. Previous involvement from another service had ended following the completion of a court order, and although referrals to additional services were repeatedly offered, these were declined as Jane did not feel ready to engage. Throughout the intervention, Jane was provided with choice and control over the support options available to her, enabling her to engage at a pace that felt right for her circumstances.

A safeguarding practitioner remained involved over a sustained period, maintaining regular contact and using a relationship-based approach to support engagement. This long-term involvement helped build trust and ensured support remained available, even during periods when Jane was unable or unwilling, due to varying factors, to access formal services.

Over time, Jane felt able to accept a referral to a specialist drug and alcohol service. This demonstrated the value of consistency, patience, and ongoing engagement in supporting people with complex needs. Following a domestic abuse incident, Jane was able to access the drug and alcohol service building, where the service responded quickly through its on-site staffing arrangements. Jane was also supported to attend recovery groups, enabling her to build positive peer support networks, and was introduced to new workers to help strengthen her engagement with services and widen her support network.

As engagement with support services increased, additional agencies became involved, including specialist domestic abuse support. A multi-agency approach was established to address Jane's needs more holistically. Jane was subsequently supported to move to alternative accommodation to promote her safety, and ongoing housing support was put in place.

Throughout the safeguarding intervention, contact was maintained during periods of reduced engagement, and increased alcohol use. This proved particularly beneficial, as support was available when Jane was ready to engage rather than when services were ready to offer it. The trusting relationship that developed enabled opportunities for support to be accepted at critical moments and highlighted the importance of repeatedly offering support, even when Jane had previously declined.

One of the Named GPs continue to work closely with 'Make A Change' (MAC), a model which is a community-wide, early response approach to people who are concerned that they are using harmful behaviours in their intimate, or previously intimate, relationships. It was developed by Respect in partnership with Women's Aid Federation England. Training has been delivered and primary care has been supported by the Named GP in identifying and referring patients to this programme. To date 295 staff have been trained, 5 referrals have been made by GPs and 3 self-referrals. The promotion of the MAC model in GP surgeries across Newcastle is available via the screens in waiting areas.

"The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy 2025" is to roll out 'steps to safety' a referral pathway from general practice into independent specialist services for domestic abuse and sexual violence. One of our ICB Named GPs is supporting an expression of interest application to secure some funding across the Northeast and North Cumbria (NENC) footprint".

NENC Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) is committed to improving services that reduce health inequalities and promote better health and wellbeing for all. This includes meeting statutory safeguarding responsibilities and working collaboratively with multi-agency partners to ensure that policies and processes reflect the increasing complexity of need among vulnerable people.

The ICB plays a key role in Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs), contributing to the development of robust action plans and supporting the dissemination of learning across the system. Assurance is sought from commissioned services and partner agencies to ensure that this learning is embedded into practice and leads to meaningful improvements in care.

NENC ICB delivers evidence-based safeguarding training and provides expert advice to multi-agency partners, while maintaining oversight and assurance of safeguarding standards within commissioned services. The safeguarding team fulfils its duty to collaborate by actively supporting and contributing to multi-agency working across the Integrated Care System.

Named GPs for safeguarding have delivered targeted training to GP practices, using learning from case reviews to strengthen the recognition of safeguarding concerns and improve escalation processes. This has supported increased confidence and consistency in primary care responses to safeguarding. Ongoing support is also provided to individual GPs and primary care services as required, ensuring timely access to safeguarding expertise. One named GP is specifically contributing to the "Domestic Abuse" agenda.

Data and intelligence continue to play a critical role in informing safeguarding priorities and driving improvement. The ICB is strengthening its approach to data collection, sharing, and analysis to support earlier identification of risk and enhance system-wide oversight of safeguarding activity.

Improved use of data has supported:

- Better identification of emerging themes and trends in safeguarding
- Enhanced monitoring of safeguarding activity across commissioned services
- More targeted interventions to support vulnerable populations

Work is ongoing to further develop data-sharing processes with partner agencies, ensuring a more coordinated and proactive approach to safeguarding across the system.

Following the ICB restructure, there has been a transition towards a more strategic commissioning role, with an increased focus on prevention and early intervention. This aligns with the NHS England long-term direction of reducing reliance on reactive care and improving population health outcomes.

The Safeguarding Team continues to support the ICB's strategic priorities:

- Longer and healthier lives
- Fairer outcomes for all
- Better health and care services
- Giving children and young people the best start in life

Safeguarding remains central to these priorities, ensuring that vulnerable individuals are protected from harm and that risks are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

The NENC ICB safeguarding team fulfils its Duty to Collaborate by actively supporting and contributing to multi-agency working. The team works closely with partners across the system to drive continuous quality improvement and ensure that safeguarding approaches remain person-centred and aligned with Making Safeguarding Personal.



During 2025/26, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) has strengthened its safeguarding arrangements across Newcastle through enhanced governance, workforce development and partnership engagement, including the appointment of the new Deputy Chief Fire Officer as Strategic Safeguarding Lead to provide clear executive oversight and accountability.

The Service has improved its approach to identifying vulnerability and exploitation through the introduction of Modern Day Slavery awareness training, supporting staff to recognise indicators of hidden harm and respond appropriately, alongside embedding consistent safeguarding referral pathways and strengthening learning from audits and partnership activity.

In recognition of this work, TWFRS was shortlisted as a finalist for the Safeguarding Award at the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Prevention Conference, and has further strengthened practice through engagement with national learning, including attendance at the NFCC Safeguarding Conference to apply emerging good practice locally. TWFRS continues to support delivery of the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) Strategic Annual Plan through operational activity, prevention work and partnership engagement.

The Service promotes a person-centred approach, ensuring individuals are involved in decisions through consideration of consent, capacity and Making Safeguarding Personal, while contributing to protection through early identification of vulnerability, including risks linked to self-neglect, substance use and exploitation.

Safeguarding responses are proportionate and evidence-based, supported by clear referral pathways, defined thresholds and Flexi Duty Officer triage, ensuring appropriate escalation to partners where required.

Prevention is embedded within Safe and Well visits, education and operational engagement, supporting early intervention and raising safeguarding awareness across Newcastle communities.

TWFRS remains an active partner within NSAB arrangements, contributing to multi-agency forums, and safeguarding reviews, supporting improvements in referral quality, information sharing and system coordination, while safeguarding governance is underpinned by clear leadership and assurance processes, with learning from reviews and audits embedded into policy, training and practice to support accountability and continuous improvement.



Our contributions to the NSAB's Strategic Annual Plan:

Empowerment

- Person led support to identify risk and create safety plans
- Raising safeguarding alerts when necessary
- Supporting people to know their rights
- Challenging unlawful deprivations

- Referrals for Section 42 enquiries
- Awareness raising with care staff about need for DoLS authorisations
- Creating a bespoke function on our advocacy database to better record and track safeguarding information and concerns raised to Local Authority
- Reporting data to Safeguarding team on a quarterly basis to include demographics of people supported.

Accountability and Partnership

- Delivering training to frontline workers and volunteers in the Newcastle Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector
- Delivering free online sessions called Advocacy and Safeguarding to educate on role of advocate and how to refer.
- Educating referrers and potential referrers when to involve an Independent Advocate under the Care Act
- In person safeguarding training to VCSE
- Capacity building VCSE to write robust safeguarding policies
- Dedicated webpage to safeguarding for the VCSE sector

Protection

- Preliminary work with people to identify risk and mitigation
- Circulated HATE ID app to better inform frontline staff on categories of hate crime, abuse and mate crime to better support victims
- Regular attendance at the Newcastle Community Cohesion meetings and Joint Engagement Groups to share intelligence and signpost to support around racial tension and civil unrest.

Prevention

- Attending events e.g. Safeguarding Adults Week
- Social media campaigns and case studies to share people's safeguarding experience



The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The Newcastle Hospitals workforce continue to be fundamental in identifying and responding to increasingly complex safeguarding activity in both acute and community settings.

During 2025 -2026, we expanded our education offer for staff in readiness for the launch of the revised training needs analysis. We were privileged, through the support of the Newcastle Hospitals Charities, to have Professor Jane Monkton Smith deliver two sessions underlining the significant impact of domestic abuse. We have capitalised on the momentum of these sessions to rebuild our domestic abuse advocates' network. We were also fortunate to have Professor Nick Neave present on Hoarding and Severe Self-Neglect, (Similarities and Differences).

We have fundamentally changed the approach to level 3 learning and developed a suite of sessions that staff can enrol on, ensuring a mix of learning and recognising the wide-ranging concerns and complexities visible within safeguarding practice. We have also recognised the importance of not only sharing knowledge and considered how this is integrated into practice and the principles of adult learning. We continue to build exposure to adult safeguarding, to ensure that staff are aware of the impact of their referrals and interventions and have added to the mantra to practice "safeguarding adults saves lives".

We will maintain a Single Point of Contact model for the adult safeguarding team, which promotes a point of contact for Safeguarding procedures across the region. We have established safeguarding flags within clinical records (within the acute setting) and visibility of safeguarding notes. We are also working to ensure visibility for all clinical colleagues and are working to create a safeguarding module more accessible to community practitioners.

In response to Local Safeguarding Adult Reviews, we have created targeted sessions that have included learning from fire related deaths, responding to self-neglect and expanded organisational confidence and competence in the application of the Mental Capacity Act.

We have strengthened links with our unplanned care settings and continue bespoke sessions to many areas to support translation of safeguarding within specific clinical areas. We have also explored the impact of trauma and are running subject matter expert sessions in 2026-2027.



Newcastle Hospitals Case Study – “Peter”

Self-neglect remains an ever-present concern within safeguarding. In the Trust we continue to see recognition and response of self-neglect concerns for individuals who can have complex needs from a mental and physical health perspective.

Peter (name has been changed to protect identity) was accessing a number of health providers not only regionally but also nationally.

He acknowledged he had spent no time in his home for many months and stated that he was afraid of violence from others. Peter had significant health needs, he was alcohol dependant and had a chronic health condition. Community services struggled to engage with Peter, as when discharged from hospital, he rapidly sought alcohol and was often found by members of the public intoxicated and at that point unable to keep himself safe.

Professional curiosity was critical from front line staff, in establishing Peter’s concerns and voice, whilst building chronologies and a broader understanding of the situation, to avoid professional optimism or start again syndrome.

Multi-agency working was key and being confident with information sharing and escalation was vital. There was strong evidence of the use of the Mental Capacity Act and seeking advice where there were concerns that assessments could not further explore executive functioning. There was outreach to multi-agency partners and advocacy to ensure all agencies were represented at discussion.

Peter was a high intensity service user for many health agencies, being non-judgemental to his presentations, being persistent and tenacious were all reflected within practice.



Search has refreshed the literature which it shares with people who use their services, such as our community prevention service, so our welcome pack has a clearer explanation of Safeguarding and how we support Making Safeguarding Personal.

We have updated our staff and volunteer induction to have a stronger focus on Making Safeguarding Personal. Staff Team meetings now focus on using and sharing resources such as the NSAB 7 minute briefings to keep Safeguarding at the forefront of staff development.

Search has focussed on the prevention priority this year ensuring we use feedback from the people we support to co-produce resources and improvement in our safeguarding practices.

We have improved staff knowledge of safeguarding ensuring that our support staff have all achieved a qualification in Safeguarding and Dignity through Middlesbrough College to reinforce their mandatory safeguarding adults training.

Our staff and volunteers raise awareness of safeguarding adults as part of their role ensuring that prevention is first and foremost, and that people we come in contact with and support feel empowered to raise concerns.



CNTW have launched their 'Delivering tomorrow, With You in Mind', service change plan for 2026/27. This sets out the changes we want to make over the next three years, with a particular focus on delivery in 2026/2027.

CNTW is undertaking a series of service developments across community, inpatient, crisis, learning disability, neurodevelopmental and specialist pathways. Although each scheme focuses on different services, they are driven by the same challenges: rising demand, increasing complexity, workforce pressures. Addressing these issues together, rather than in isolation, will create a more joined up and sustainable approach to the services we provide across the North East and North Cumbria.

Across the Trust, several core areas are being taken forward including but not limited to:

- Improving access to community mental health care, with neighbourhood mental health centres, better triage, and more personalised support.
- Strengthening urgent care, including mental health emergency departments, access to crisis assessment and treatment services
- Improving ADHD and Autism pathways, including a region wide re triage to reduce waits.
- Reviewing children and young people's inpatient capacity, aligning beds to need and strengthening community alternatives.

Viewing these developments together allows us to coordinate decisions, avoid duplication, share resources, and ensure each change supports the wider system. People will experience more coordinated care, more support closer to home, fewer unnecessary hospital stays, and clearer, more consistent pathways across the region. Changes will be phased, with full engagement and support. Some teams may work differently or in new locations, but the focus is on building sustainable, safer and more resilient services.

CNTW continue to embed learning from statutory learning reviews such as Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Learning is shared via organisational meetings such as care group safety meetings, Trust Safety Group. Additionally, our Safeguarding Level 3 and Domestic Abuse training contains contemporary learning from statutory reviews, ensuring that learning is embedded to improve practice.

Further learning from internal and external audits remains a significant part of improving quality practice within CNTW. We have recently completed an internal audit of our response to Domestic Abuse; within these areas of good practice were identified and improvement were recognised. A robust action plan has been formulated to address the areas of improvement with the aim of all actions being completed by summer 2026.

One of the core functions within CNTW is the Safeguarding and Public Protection Team. The team is responsible for providing advice, support and supervision relating to Safeguarding and Public Protection matters to all Trust staff with one of the key functions of the team being that of reviewing Safeguarding Triage incident reports.

To date (excluding Q3 data), the Safeguarding and Public Protection team has reviewed almost 3400 incidents, providing advice and support to staff.

A recent letter has been sent to the ICB and Boards by Sarah Glacken, Executive Director of Nursing, Therapies & Quality Assurance, Nursing and Therapies. The letter noted that CNTW will continue to attend all Board and Partnership meetings and attend and contribute to subgroup / panel meetings and practitioner events related to statutory review activity. We will no longer attend other subgroups due to limited capacity to meet all demands from the 9 local authorities within our footprint. CNTW remain committed to working in partnership to improve outcomes, promote safety and learn from incidents and reviews.



Your Voice Counts (YVC) brings independent advocacy, co-production, self-advocacy and lived experience leadership to safeguarding adults in Newcastle. Safeguarding is embedded across our services: advocates, central support and volunteers listen carefully, notice changes, remain professionally curious and challenge when responses do not reflect the potential harm. Our volunteer advocates, coordinated and supported by Ann, our Volunteer Coordinator, extend opportunities for people to understand their rights and express their views.

Lived experience informs YVC from delivery to governance. Our Board is made up of Trustees with lived experience, while our dedicated, funded and supported Co-Production Team works alongside self-advocacy groups to help people identify barriers and influence information, services and practice.

YVC maintains a dedicated website page providing accessible safeguarding information and signposting for people, families, carers and professionals. We deliver training and awareness, including an MCA and IMCA Masterclass for clinical teams at Newcastle Hospitals. In partnership with Healthwatch Newcastle and Adult Social Care, YVC also helped develop a more person-centred approach to gathering feedback during safeguarding processes, enabling people's experiences to inform learning and improvement.

YVC contributes across the six safeguarding principles through:

- **Empowerment:** helping people understand concerns, define desired outcomes, participate in decisions and influence services through advocacy, co-production and self-advocacy. Our new Co-Production team became established this year, setting up new processes and channels for people to influence how the services they receive are designed and delivered. A key piece of work for the team this year has been identifying and removing barriers to co-production in advocacy, setting up a closed Facebook group for online conversations and running in person and online focus groups.
- **Protection:** supporting people to disclose and report abuse or neglect, escalating concerns and continuing advocacy after a referral.

- **Proportionality:** promoting consent, appropriate information-sharing, correct application of the Mental Capacity Act and the least restrictive response.
- **Prevention:** providing accessible resources, training, awareness, volunteer advocacy and opportunities for people to recognise concerns and seek help earlier.
- **Partnership:** actively attending and participating in NSAB and its Improving Practice Committee, sharing anonymised practice themes and bringing independent advocacy, voluntary-sector and lived experience perspectives to learning, scrutiny and constructive challenge.
- **Accountability:** questioning delays or gaps, clarifying responsibilities and bringing learning from safeguarding reviews and multi-agency work back into advocacy, volunteer development, training, co-production and governance.

Your Voice Counts Case Study – “Steve”

One of our advocates, Yvonne, visited Steve to discuss the final arrangements for his planned move to another service. During the conversation, Steve told Yvonne that a care worker had handled him roughly during personal care and continued after he had asked the worker to stop. Steve also said that water had been spilt over him and the bedding and that the wet bedding had not been changed.

Yvonne listened carefully and checked back with Steve to make sure she had understood what he was telling her. She explained that a safeguarding concern would need to be raised. Yvonne asked Steve what he wanted to happen and how he wished to be involved, ensuring that the response remained person-centred. Steve was clear that he wanted the local authority to know and that he wanted to speak to the manager.

When the manager joined them, Yvonne gave Steve the choice of describing what had happened himself or asking her to explain it on his behalf. Steve chose to speak for himself. Yvonne supported him to ask questions and understand how the incident would be investigated, what would happen next and what immediate steps would be taken to keep him safe. Yvonne confirmed that she would also alert the local authority, ensuring that the concern was not addressed solely as an internal care home matter.

This example demonstrates why safeguarding must be embedded in every advocacy role. Yvonne was visiting for an unrelated purpose but created the conditions in which Steve felt able to disclose what had happened. She listened, checked her understanding, sought Steve’s consent, supported him to report the concern in his own words and ensured that it reached those responsible for responding. Throughout, Steve remained in control of how his concern was communicated and what he wanted to happen.

Spotlight



Understanding neglect in Newcastle

Neglect happens when someone responsible for supporting an adult does not provide the care they need. This may include failing to meet medical, emotional or physical care needs, withholding essentials such as medication, food or heating, or not helping someone access appropriate services. It can be intentional or unintentional.

Neglect has been the most frequently recorded type of abuse in safeguarding enquiries in Newcastle since 2021-22, reflecting wider regional and national trends. To better understand this issue, the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board examined 1,770 safeguarding enquiries recorded during 2024-25.

The analysis found that half of enquiries involving neglect related to care homes, while 39% concerned incidents in the adult's own home. In 55% of enquiries, a service provider was identified as the source of risk, and in 42% it was someone known to the adult, such as a family member or friend.

Older adults were particularly represented. Adults aged 75 and over accounted for 63% of neglect enquiries. The analysis also found that 57% of adults involved were recorded as lacking mental capacity, compared with 34% across all safeguarding enquiries.

There was also evidence that safeguarding intervention made a positive difference. Where a risk was identified, it was reduced in 82% of enquiries and removed in a further 13%. Actions included reviewing care plans, increasing monitoring, providing advice and guidance, and supporting changes in accommodation.

The findings are helping the Board and its partners consider how neglect can be prevented, identified earlier and addressed consistently. They also highlight the importance of distinguishing isolated poor care from repeated or serious neglect, while ensuring that concerns are acted upon before further harm occurs.



Board Members

In 2025–26, the NSAB was chaired by Vida Morris. The NSAB would like to offer thanks to Bill Kay, Helen Neal and Nicola Seymour for their contributions to safeguarding adults and who all stepped down as NSAB members during 2025–26.

Changing Lives (VCS Representative)
Connected Voice Advocacy (VCS Representative)
Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS
Foundation Trust
Healthwatch Newcastle
Newcastle City Council

North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care
Board
Northumbria Police
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation
Trust
Search (VCS representative)

The Probation Service
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Your Voice Counts (VCS Representative)
Chair of Learning and Development Committee
Legal Adviser to NSAB
NSAB Coordinator

Neil Baird
Jane Kingston
Anna English

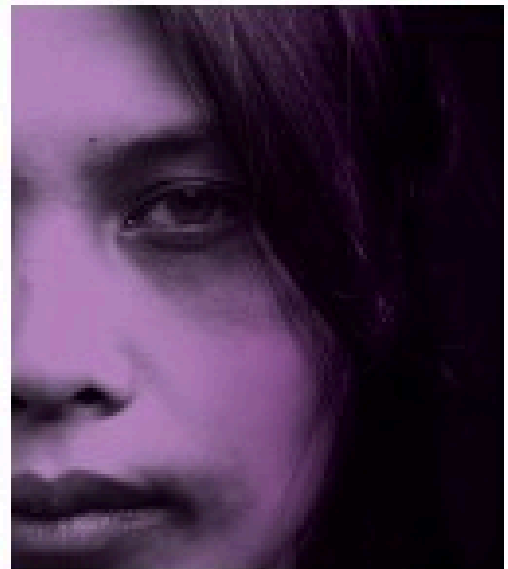
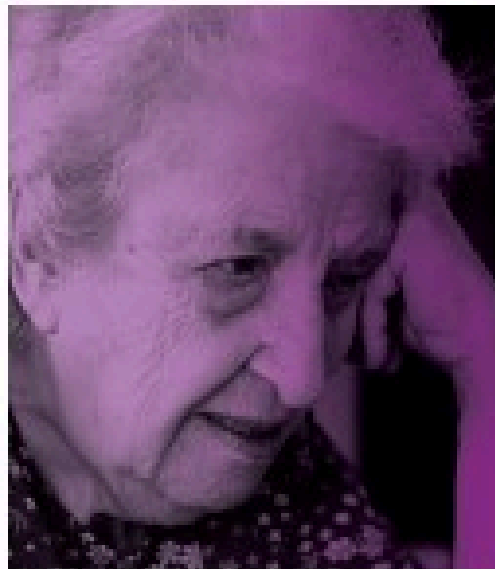
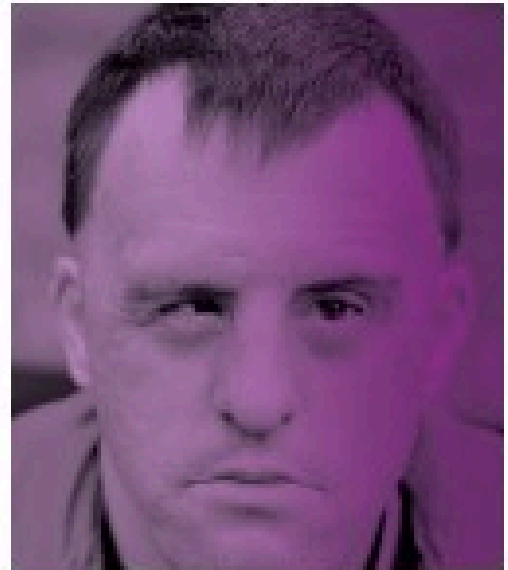
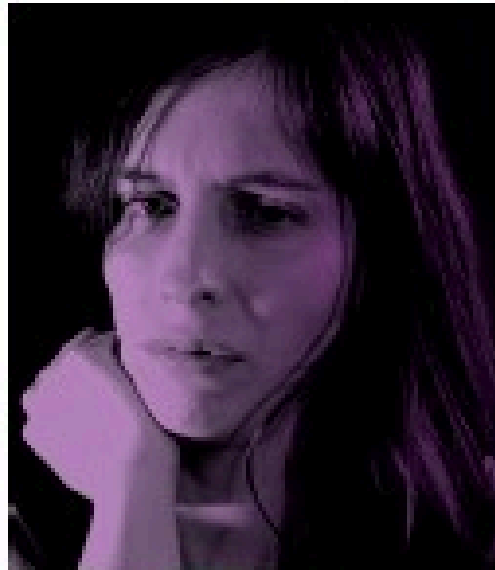
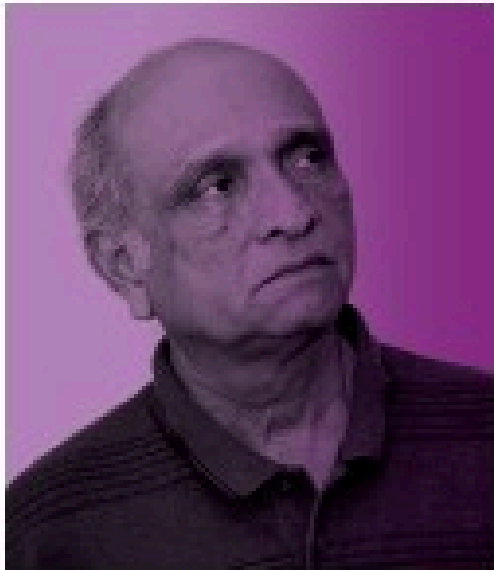
Yvonne Probert
Laura Choake
Jonathan Jamison
Samantha Keith
Rachael Hope
Stacey Urwin
Councillor Adam Walker
Amanda Hall
Jill Lax (*also chairs the SAR*
Committee)
Louise McClennan
Ian Joy

Simon Luddington (*also*
chairs the IPC Committee)
Paul Weatherstone
Alan D'Arcy
Sharon De Jesus
Dr Carole Southall
Peter Larkham
Claire Nixon



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