

BLACKPOOL SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD

Annual Report 2025-2026



CONTENTS

Foreword by Independent Chair	1
1. About the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board	2
2. Board Governance	4
3. Blackpool Local Context	7
4. Our Strategic Priorities 2024–2027	8
5. Safeguarding Activity Overview	18
6. Safeguarding Adult Reviews	22
7. Strategic Delivery Group Activity	24
8. Statutory Partner Agency Contributions	42
9. BSAB Priorities for 2026/27	49

Foreword by Independent Chair

It is my privilege to present the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report for 2025–2026. This report reflects a year of significant progress, challenge and learning. It demonstrates the commitment of partner organisations to safeguarding adults with care and support needs while recognising that effective safeguarding depends upon openness, learning and continuous improvement.

The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) assessment of Adult Social Care (ASC) has been the defining strategic event of the year. Whilst it identified important areas requiring improvement, it also provided an opportunity to strengthen governance, improve assurance and accelerate system wide improvement. Throughout the year the Board has sought assurance that improvement activity is resulting in tangible changes to safeguarding practice and better outcomes for adults. We have challenged where appropriate, supported where necessary and maintained our focus on sustainable improvement.

The Board has continued to strengthen its own effectiveness through refreshed governance arrangements, new Strategic Delivery Groups, enhanced Audit and Assurance arrangements and improved scrutiny of performance. These developments matter because they strengthen accountability and provide greater confidence that the partnership is addressing the issues that matter most to adults in Blackpool. I have been encouraged by the willingness of partners to embrace learning, respond constructively to scrutiny and work collaboratively. Progress in self-neglect, trauma-informed practice, co-production, multi-agency audit and Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) demonstrates a partnership increasingly focused on quality and the experiences of those we serve.

Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. Demand continues to increase, and the complexity of safeguarding practice is growing. The Board therefore continues to seek assurance regarding the quality and consistency of safeguarding practice, the effectiveness of multi-agency working and the extent to which learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR's) is embedded into everyday practice. Looking ahead, our priorities remain clear: continuing oversight of CQC improvement activity, strengthening assurance, improving the quality and interpretation of performance information, embedding learning from reviews and audits, amplifying lived experience and maintaining relentless focus on improving outcomes for adults with care and support needs.

Finally, I would like to thank Board members, practitioners, volunteers, community organisations and, most importantly, the adults, families and carers whose experiences continue to shape our work. Whilst there remains much to do, I am confident that the Board has the leadership, commitment and determination to continue improving safeguarding arrangements for the people of Blackpool.



Stephen Chapman
Independent Chair for
Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board

1. About the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board

This Annual Report outlines the work of Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. The Board continues to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, ensuring partners work together effectively to safeguard adults with care and support needs.

The BSAB brings together key agencies to coordinate safeguarding activity across Blackpool. Core partners include Blackpool Council, Lancashire Constabulary, and NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB, alongside a wide range of relevant partner organisations. The BSAB is a strategic multi-agency partnership ensuring local safeguarding arrangements are effective and person-centred.

1.1 Our Vision

"Every adult in Blackpool has the right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect and to know where to go to seek help when in need. Partners across Blackpool will do their best to ensure early intervention and problem solving maximised at every opportunity to reduce the risk of increased care and support needs across the town."

1.2 Our Values

The six safeguarding Principles influence the delivery of our vision:

Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."

Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs. "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help."

Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. "I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed."

Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need. "I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want."

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

Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. "I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they."



1.3 The aim of the Safeguarding Adults Board is to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned
- Raise public awareness so that communities, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise concerns about the safety or well-being of an adult
- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect.
- Ensure partner agencies work together effectively to improve safeguarding arrangements and protect adults with care and support needs across Blackpool

1.4 Board Members

A wide range of organisations are represented on the Safeguarding Adults Board in Blackpool. This includes senior representatives from:

- Blackpool Council
 - Adult Social Care
 - Children Social Care
 - Community Safety/ Public Protection
 - Public Health
- Lancashire Police
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (BTH)
- Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT)
- North West Ambulance Service (NWAS)
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)
- National Probation Service (NPS)
- Empowerment Charity
- Healthwatch Blackpool
- Blackpool Coastal Housing
- Drug and Alcohol Services

At the time of writing this report, a commitment had been made to represent those with lived experience on the Board.



2. Board Governance

Governance arrangements continue to operate through a partnership business unit model with strong links to Community Safety (BSafe) and Children's Safeguarding arrangements (MASA).

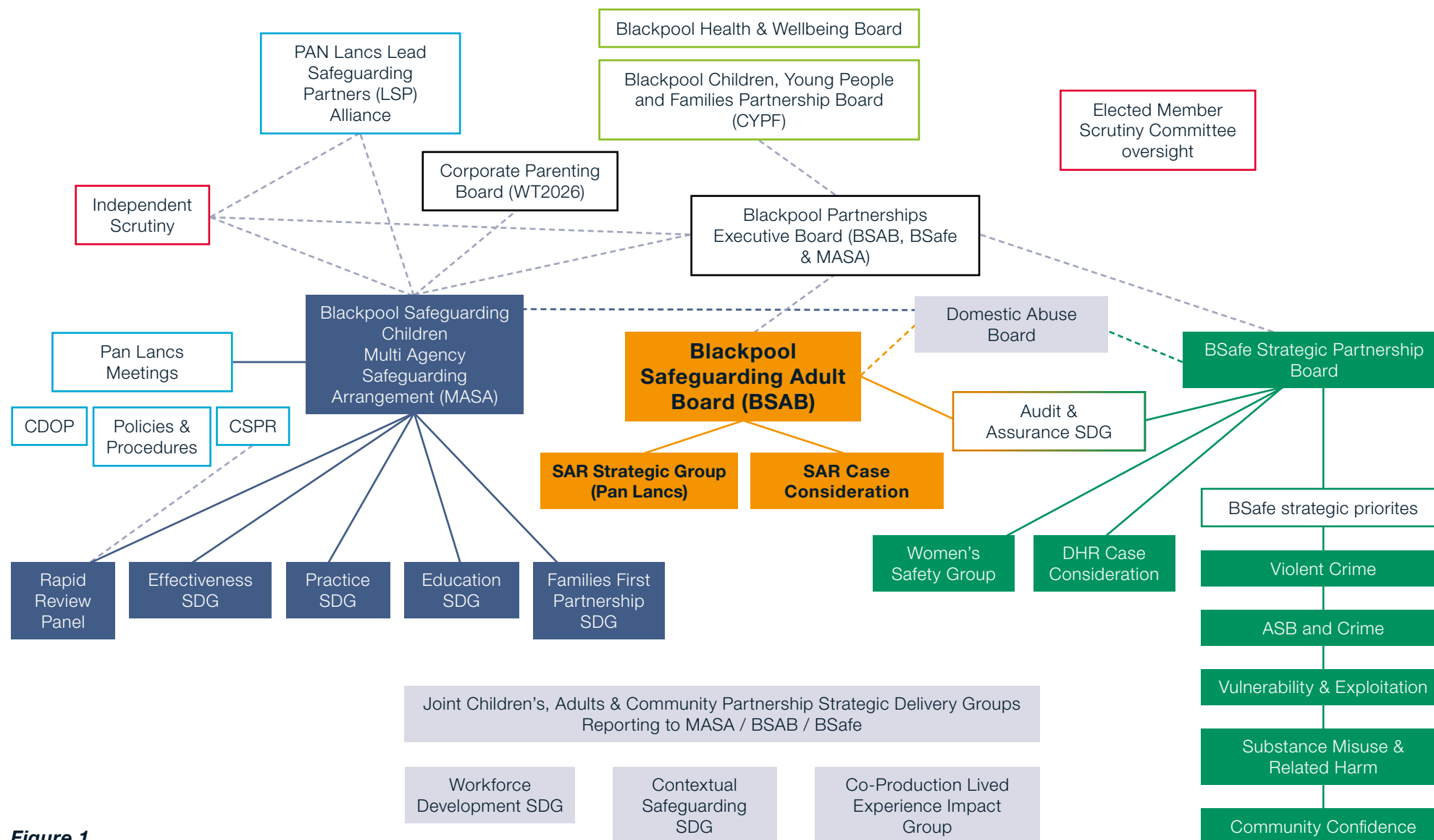


Figure 1.

2.1 Governance, Leadership and Partnership Strengthening

During 2025, the Board undertook a comprehensive review of its governance arrangements to ensure they remained effective, proportionate and capable of providing robust strategic oversight across the safeguarding partnership. The review was driven by the need to strengthen accountability, improve partnership alignment, reduce duplication across related strategic boards and enhance the Board's ability to scrutinise safeguarding performance and emerging risks.

The revised governance arrangements have strengthened collaborative leadership across the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), Blackpool Community Safety Partnership (BSafe), the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) and the Domestic Abuse Board, creating clearer lines of accountability and more integrated approaches to shared safeguarding priorities.

Key developments during the year included:

- Introduction of integrated governance and delivery arrangements to improve coordination between strategic partnerships and ensure safeguarding issues are considered through a whole system approach.
- Establishment of a Contextual Safeguarding Group (April 2025), bringing together partners across adult and children's safeguarding to strengthen oversight of risks occurring beyond the family environment and improve coordinated responses to exploitation and vulnerability.
- Expansion of the Domestic Abuse Board (May 2025) to include representation from BSAB and MASA, improving strategic oversight of domestic abuse across the safeguarding system and strengthening links between adult safeguarding, children's safeguarding and community safety priorities.
- Development of the Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) Group, which subsequently evolved into separate Making Safeguarding Personal (Coproduction and Lived Experience) and Audit & Assurance functions (October–November 2025), strengthening both lived experience and independent scrutiny.
- Establishment of the Audit & Assurance Strategic Delivery Group (November 2025), strengthening oversight of multi-agency audits, performance reporting, safeguarding reviews and partner assurance.
- The Board also refreshed its Strategic Plan during May 2025. Delivery is monitored through an actively maintained Business Plan, enabling the Board to monitor progress against agreed priorities, hold partner agencies to account and respond flexibly to emerging safeguarding challenges throughout the year.
- Recognising that effective safeguarding depends upon strong partner engagement, Board membership was reviewed to ensure appropriate senior representation from all statutory and relevant partner organisations. Attendance arrangements continue to be actively monitored to maintain accountability and ensure agencies contribute effectively to the Board's statutory responsibilities.
- The strengthened governance arrangements have improved partnership working across BSAB, BSafe, MASA and the Domestic Abuse Board by reducing duplication, improving information sharing and creating greater strategic alignment across related safeguarding agendas. Collectively, these developments have enhanced the Board's ability to provide independent assurance, support evidence-informed decision-making and maintain effective oversight of safeguarding performance across Blackpool.
- While significant progress has been achieved during the year, the Board recognises that governance arrangements must continue to evolve. During 2026, the Board will focus on embedding the revised assurance framework, further strengthening performance reporting, evaluating the effectiveness of the new governance structures and ensuring that scrutiny continues to translate into measurable improvements in safeguarding outcomes for adults at risk.

2.2 Blackpool Partnership Financial Position - MASA, BSAB & BSAFE Boards

Annual Agency Contributions

Agency	Contribution
Children Social Care	£149,611
Adult Social Care	£80,560
ICB	£92,852
Police	£57,510
Total	£389,807

End of Q4 2025/2026

Staffing	£344,094
Training	£13,147
MASA Scrutineer & BSAB Independent Chair	£35,160
CDOP, Marketing, TRIX, Co-Production	£50,225
CSPRs, SARs and DHRs completed (to date)	£34,468
Total Spend	£477,094
Used from reserves 2025/2026	£95,134
Balance of Reserves remaining	£277,332

The annual contributions of £389,807 are received from Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, the ICB and Police to support the three partnership boards. Total expenditure at the end of Quarter 4 was £477,094, reflecting business unit staffing, Independent Chair and Scrutineer costs, training, and additional review activity, including CSPRs and SARs.

When the partnerships returned to Blackpool in January 2024, approximately £400,000 in reserves was available and was profiled over four years at £100,000 per year. At this stage, reserves stand at £277,332, which is above the anticipated level. Future commitments include the appointment of a new Independent Domestic Abuse Chair (£12,000) and the costs associated with ongoing and potential SARs.

The current financial position remains stable and is expected to support partnership activity through to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). However, as future funding arrangements beyond LGR remain uncertain, finance will remain on the Risk Register as a low-level risk.

Our commitment to co-production is evidenced by the investment of £20,000 to co-producing a new Domestic Abuse First Contact model with families, practitioners and people with lived experience, ensuring families lived experiences directly shape our new three year Domestic Abuse Strategy. A further £5,000 supported Blackpool Football Clubs's co production work with children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE), leading to a new EHE Procedure and Action Plan that better reflects children's lived experiences. We have also committed £1,900 to a joint MASA/BSAB Transitional Safeguarding Workshop facilitated by Research in Practice, to strengthen practice across both children's and adults' partnership agencies and support children and adolescents to be happy, healthy and safe when they become adults. Together, these investments are helping us build stronger partnerships, improve safeguarding practice, and deliver better outcomes for children, families, carers and adults in Blackpool.



3. Blackpool Local Context

Blackpool continues to experience significant deprivation, poor health outcomes and increasing complexity of need, including self-neglect, substance use and exploitation.

According to the 2024 mid-year estimates, the usual resident population of Blackpool is approximately 144,200. This is an increase of 1% from the 2023 mid-year estimates; the overall population of England increased by 1.6%

Blackpool is the third most densely populated local authority in the North West, with 4,135 people per square kilometre (compared to 5,099 in Manchester, 4,551 in Liverpool, 516 in neighbouring Fylde, and 421 in Wyre).

Blackpool is the most disadvantaged local authority in the country, with 58% (81,500) of residents living in areas which are in the most deprived 20% of areas in the country.

Estimates indicate that older people (65 years plus) account for a greater proportion of Blackpool's resident population than is observed nationally. Correspondingly, Blackpool's 0-15 and 16-64 population is lower than is seen across England.

Blackpool's 65+ population increased by 1.8% from 2023 while the under 65's saw much small increases.

Life expectancy for men in Blackpool is 73.7 years and for women is 79.1 years (2022-2024), both significantly lower than England. Not only do people in Blackpool live shorter lives, but they also spend a smaller proportion of their lifespan in good health and without disability. Blackpool's male life expectancy is 5.8 years below England and 1.6 years below the North West. Female life expectancy is 4.2 years below England and 1.4 years below the North West (2022-24)

Population projections for Blackpool show the number of residents over-65 will increase considerably over the next 25 years, far in excess of the levels shown in all other age bands. The over-65 population is projected to rise by 24% from 29,700 in 2023 to almost 36,700 in 2047 and will then make up a quarter (25%) of Blackpool's total population.

The 0-19 year-old population shows the greatest decrease over time, falling 14% from 31,100 to 26,600.

This information is produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) <https://www.blackpooljsna.org.uk>



4. Our Strategic Priorities 2024–2027

During 2025, we refreshed our BSAB Strategic Plan to reflect any new areas of focus identified through our data collection and Board Partners.

Priority 1 • Safeguarding Effectiveness

Priority 2 • Making Safeguarding Personal

Priority 3 • Workforce Development

4.1 Key achievements against our Strategic priorities - 2025/26:

4.1.1 Priority 1 • Safeguarding Effectiveness

Governance, Leadership and Partnership Strengthening

As covered in paragraph 3.1 above, the governance structure was reviewed and the expansion of multi-board collaboration, to include Contextual, Domestic Abuse, broadened MSP (lived experience) and Audit & Assurance functions to strengthen scrutiny, performance oversight and assurance.

Policy Development and Safeguarding Frameworks

A key focus during 2025/26 was ensuring that safeguarding policies, procedures and practice frameworks remained responsive to emerging risks, reflected current legislation and best practice, and supported practitioners to deliver consistent, person-centred safeguarding interventions.

The Board supported implementation of the revised Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Policy, providing a strengthened framework for multi-agency safeguarding practice and promoting greater consistency across the local partnership. During the year, work was also undertaken to develop and launch a number of key practice guidance documents designed to address areas of increasing complexity and risk.

In October 2025, the Board launched its new Multi-Agency Self-Neglect Guidance, providing practitioners with a structured framework for responding to individuals experiencing self-neglect while balancing personal autonomy, risk management

and safeguarding responsibilities. The guidance was accompanied by a comprehensive workforce development programme to support implementation and improve practitioner confidence.

The Persons in Positions of Trust (PiPoT) Framework was finalised, strengthening local arrangements for managing concerns relating to individuals who hold positions of trust and authority. This has improved clarity regarding roles, responsibilities, escalation processes and partner agency accountability. Following a successful launch, this will be further built through the partnership.

The Board has also strengthened its approach to learning and continuous improvement. Learning themes and recommendations identified through Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs), local reviews and regional learning events have been systematically reviewed to identify areas requiring policy, practice or workforce development responses. Particular attention has been given to recurring themes relating to self-neglect, trauma, multiple disadvantage, mental capacity and professional curiosity. Assurance was sought from agencies that appropriate SAR referrals were being made. As a result, there was an increase in referrals, and a SAR was commissioned during this reporting period.

To ensure safeguarding arrangements remain current and effective, a formal policy review cycle has been embedded within the workforce development and governance framework. This provides assurance that safeguarding procedures continue to reflect legislation, national guidance, local learning and emerging safeguarding risks.

Impact

These developments have strengthened the safeguarding framework across Blackpool, providing greater clarity for practitioners, improving consistency of multi-agency responses and ensuring that learning from reviews is translated into policy, guidance and practice improvements. Collectively, this supports the Board's objective of delivering more effective, evidence-informed and person-centred safeguarding arrangements.

Performance, Data and Quality Assurance

During 2025/26, the Board strengthened its approach to performance management, quality assurance and organisational learning to improve its understanding of safeguarding activity, identify emerging risks and provide greater assurance regarding the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

A significant development during the year was the creation of a comprehensive multi-agency performance dashboard. Building on existing local authority reporting arrangements, the dashboard has evolved into a partnership-wide dataset incorporating contributions from key agencies including Lancashire Constabulary, the Integrated Care Board, Probation, health providers and substance misuse services. This has provided the Board with a more holistic understanding of safeguarding demand, risk and outcomes across the Blackpool system.

The performance framework was further enhanced during 2025/26 through the inclusion of a wider range of indicators, including national Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures, Adult Improvement Board indicators, and data relating to domestic abuse and contextual safeguarding. The enhanced dataset has strengthened the Board's ability to analyse trends, identify emerging risks, understand areas of increasing demand and assess the effectiveness of safeguarding interventions across partner agencies.

Performance information is now routinely scrutinised by the Board and its delivery groups, supporting evidence-based decision-making and informing the development of priorities and work programmes for 2026/27. The improved use of data has also enhanced the Board's ability to provide challenge, monitor progress against strategic objectives and identify areas where additional partnership focus may be required.

To support continuous improvement and strengthen assurance arrangements, the Board established a Quality Assurance and Learning Improvement Framework (QALIF).

The framework brings together performance information, audit activity, safeguarding reviews, practitioner feedback and lived experience to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements. This approach ensures that learning is systematically identified, shared and translated into service improvement.

As part of this strengthened quality assurance approach, a multi-agency audit programme was introduced, providing a structured programme of thematic audits through to 2028. During 2025, the Board completed a Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) benchmarking audit, providing valuable insight into the extent to which safeguarding practice reflects person-centred principles and desired outcomes for adults with care and support needs. Building on this learning, a thematic self-neglect audit is planned for 2026, alongside future audits focusing on Care Act compliance, domestic abuse and emerging safeguarding risks, including substance misuse.

Impact

These developments have significantly strengthened the Board's ability to understand safeguarding activity and outcomes across the partnership. The improved use of performance information, combined with a robust quality assurance framework and multi-agency audit programme, provides greater assurance that safeguarding practice is effective, person-centred and responsive to emerging risks. The Board is now better positioned to identify areas for improvement, measure the impact of strategic priorities and ensure learning drives continuous improvement in safeguarding outcomes for adults in Blackpool.

Strengthening Assurance and Quality Assurance Arrangements

A significant area of development during 2025–26 has been the continued strengthening of BSAB's assurance and quality assurance arrangements. Following learning arising from the CQC assessment of Adult Social Care, the Board has taken steps to enhance its understanding of safeguarding performance, strengthen scrutiny and improve how partner agencies provide evidence of impact and effectiveness.

Recognising the importance of robust assurance in demonstrating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, the Board has worked with partners to move beyond reporting activity and compliance measures towards a more outcome-focused approach. This has included greater emphasis on understanding the quality of practice, the experiences of adults at risk, and the difference safeguarding interventions make to people's lives.

Key developments have included:

- Strengthening performance and assurance reporting to provide a more comprehensive overview of safeguarding risks, trends and outcomes.

- Increased use of thematic audits and multi-agency quality assurance activity to test the effectiveness of practice and identify areas for improvement.
- Improved triangulation of evidence through the use of performance data, audit findings, SAR learning, practitioner feedback and lived experience information.
- Enhanced scrutiny and challenge within Board and subgroup structures, ensuring partners are able to demonstrate progress against agreed priorities and improvement actions.
- Development of a more intelligence-led approach to identifying emerging safeguarding themes and system-wide risks.

This work has resulted in a stronger evidence base for strategic decision-making, enabling the Board to gain greater assurance regarding the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements and identify opportunities for earlier intervention where risks emerge.

Expected impact

As a result of these developments, BSAB is increasingly able to answer not only "what is happening?" but also "why is it happening?" and "what difference are we making?". This represents an important shift towards a more mature assurance framework that focuses on outcomes, impact and continuous improvement.

The strengthened quality assurance approach has helped the Board to:

- Gain a clearer understanding of the experiences and outcomes of adults with care and support needs.
- Identify recurring themes and areas of practice requiring improvement more quickly.
- Better monitor the implementation of learning from audits and Safeguarding Adults Reviews.
- Improve accountability across partner organisations.
- Support evidence-based decision-making and prioritisation of Board activity.
- Provide stronger assurance that safeguarding practice is person-centred, effective and responsive to local need.

The progress made during 2025–26 reflects the Board's commitment to continuous improvement and has established a stronger foundation for future assurance activity, positioning BSAB to deliver increasingly effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements across Blackpool.

Innovation, Collaboration and Continuous Improvement

During 2025/26, the Board continued to promote innovation, partnership working and continuous improvement across safeguarding arrangements.

The Board remained engaged in regional and national safeguarding networks, enabling the sharing of best practice and learning. It also reviewed its Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) arrangements against the SCIE Quality Markers, strengthening the quality and impact of reviews and ensuring learning is translated into practice improvements.

Work continued to develop data-led approaches to identifying emerging risks and vulnerabilities, while greater collaboration between partners supported the alignment of prevention activity, commissioning arrangements and safeguarding priorities. Governance changes introduced during the year also strengthened links between safeguarding adults, safeguarding children, community safety and domestic abuse partnerships.

Impact

These developments have improved partnership working, strengthened organisational learning and enhanced the Board's ability to identify and respond to emerging safeguarding risks, supporting continuous improvement in outcomes for adults at risk.

Risk Management

A BSAB Risk Register is maintained and reviewed regularly to provide oversight of emerging safeguarding risks across the partnership. Where risks cannot be fully mitigated at Board level, or require wider system leadership and assurance, they are escalated to and discussed with the Executive Assurance Board, ensuring shared ownership, effective challenge and coordinated action across partner agencies.

4.1.2 Priority 2 • Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) Coproduction and Lived Experience

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) remains a key principle underpinning the work of Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board and its partners. The Board recognises that effective safeguarding is not only about protection from harm, but also about ensuring that people's wishes, views, experiences and outcomes are central to decision-making. Throughout 2025/26, work has focused on strengthening governance arrangements, increasing opportunities for co-production, and embedding lived experience within strategic and operational activity.

Strengthening MSP Governance and Partnership Involvement

The Board undertook a review of MSP arrangements to ensure that governance structures remained fit for purpose and reflected the increasing emphasis on co-production across safeguarding partnerships. This was driven by recognition that people with lived experience and community representatives can provide unique insights into the effectiveness of safeguarding systems and help shape improvements.

A development session was held in February 2026 involving partners from across the safeguarding system to review the purpose, membership and future direction of the existing group. The review identified opportunities to strengthen alignment between adult safeguarding, domestic abuse and wider community safety agendas whilst creating a more inclusive and representative forum.

As a result, the group was renamed the Co-production, Lived Experience and Impact Group (CLEIG) to better reflect its expanded remit and the inclusion of representatives from BSafe and MASA. The new structure aims to provide a clearer mechanism for ensuring that the voices of people with lived experience influence strategic priorities, service development and quality assurance activity across safeguarding partnerships.

Expected impact:

- Stronger and more consistent application of Making Safeguarding Personal principles.
- Improved understanding across partnerships of what matters most to people who use services.
- Enhanced scrutiny and challenge informed by lived experience.
- Greater confidence that safeguarding arrangements are person-centred and outcomes-focused.

Embedding Co-production Across Safeguarding Partnerships

Recognising that effective safeguarding is strengthened when people are involved in designing services and influencing decision-making, partners continued work to embed co-production approaches across safeguarding activity.

This included a Domestic Abuse Co-production Project (2025–26), which sought to ensure that the experiences of victims and survivors directly informed service development and future commissioning considerations. The project provided valuable insights into barriers to accessing support, service effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.

Alongside this, work progressed towards developing a partnership-wide Co-production Strategy. This aims to establish a shared understanding of co-production across organisations, clarify expectations, and create consistent approaches to involving people with lived experience in planning, delivery and evaluation activities.

This work was prioritised because partnerships recognised that services designed without meaningful involvement from those who use them can fail to address real needs and experiences. By embedding co-production more systematically, the Board seeks to move beyond consultation towards genuine shared influence.

Impact:

- More responsive and accessible services.
- Improved trust and engagement between communities and safeguarding partners.
- Increased service effectiveness through the incorporation of lived experience insights.
- Stronger evidence that people affected by safeguarding issues are influencing strategic decisions.

Capturing and Using Lived Experience

During the year, work also continued to improve how lived experience is captured, understood and used across partnership activity.

The Voices Project remains a key mechanism for gathering feedback and experiences from individuals who have interacted with safeguarding services. A review planned for 2026 will assess the effectiveness of current arrangements and identify opportunities to strengthen participation, representation and impact.

In addition, work has commenced to ensure that case studies, service-user feedback and examples of lived experience are routinely incorporated into Board discussions and reporting processes. Historically, strategic boards can become focused on performance metrics and compliance activity; this development seeks to ensure that the human impact of safeguarding interventions remains visible and central to decision-making.

Expected impact:

- Better understanding of the experiences and outcomes of adults with care and support needs.
- More informed strategic decision-making.
- Increased organisational learning from lived experience.
- Clearer evidence of the difference safeguarding activity makes to individuals and communities.

Communication, Engagement and Public Awareness

Effective safeguarding relies on public awareness, accessible information and strong community engagement. During 2025/26, the partnership continued to develop its communication and engagement activity to increase visibility of safeguarding issues, improve understanding of how to seek help, and encourage professional and public engagement in safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding Adults Week 2025

A significant focus during the year was the delivery of a high-profile Safeguarding Adults Week campaign in November 2025. The campaign brought together partners from across the safeguarding system to promote awareness of safeguarding issues, encourage conversations about prevention and empower individuals to recognise and report concerns.

The campaign included coordinated activity across agencies, social media engagement, awareness events and targeted communications linked to national campaign themes. A particular highlight was the illumination of Blackpool Tower in green, creating a visible public statement of the partnership's commitment to safeguarding adults and helping to generate wider community interest and engagement.

The campaign aimed not only to raise awareness but also to reinforce the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Impact:

- Increased public awareness of adult safeguarding.
- Improved understanding of signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Greater confidence among residents in reporting concerns.
- Increased visibility of safeguarding partnerships and support services.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

The partnership continued implementation and development of its Communications and Engagement Strategy (2025/26) to provide a more structured and coordinated approach to engagement activity.

This work was undertaken in recognition that safeguarding messages can only be effective if they reach the right audiences through accessible and meaningful channels. The strategy seeks to improve consistency of messaging, strengthen collaboration between partner organisations and ensure that communication activity supports strategic priorities.

Alongside this, a Safeguarding Campaigns Calendar has been developed to coordinate key awareness campaigns throughout the year, enabling partners to maximise opportunities to engage communities, professionals and stakeholder groups.

Expected impact:

- More consistent safeguarding messages across partner agencies.
- Increased engagement with priority groups and communities.
- Improved planning and coordination of awareness activity.
- Greater reach and visibility of safeguarding campaigns.

Development of the Blackpool Safeguarding Partnerships Website

The partnership has continued to develop and enhance the Blackpool Safeguarding Partnerships website as a central source of safeguarding information and advice.

The website plays a critical role in supporting public access to safeguarding information, providing clear routes for reporting concerns and ensuring that residents, professionals and partner organisations can easily access guidance, resources and learning materials.

Investment in online information has been driven by the recognition that digital channels are increasingly the first point of contact for people seeking support or information. Improving accessibility and usability helps ensure that safeguarding advice is available when people need it most.

Impact:

- Increased accessibility of safeguarding information and guidance.
- Faster and more straightforward reporting of safeguarding concerns.
- Improved public and professional understanding of safeguarding processes.
- Enhanced confidence in accessing support and advice.
- A stronger digital presence supporting the wider objectives of prevention, awareness and early intervention.

4.1.3 Priority 3 • Workforce Development

Workforce Development and Learning

Developing a skilled, confident and knowledgeable workforce remains central to the Board's commitment to improving safeguarding practice and outcomes for adults at risk. The complexity of safeguarding concerns continues to increase, with practitioners often working across multiple areas of risk, vulnerability and legislation. As a result, the partnership has prioritised workforce development to ensure staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to recognise, respond to and prevent abuse and neglect.

Multi-Agency Workforce Development

During 2025/26, the partnership delivered a coordinated multi-agency workforce development programme aligned across BSAB, BSafe and MASA. This approach was designed to promote a shared understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and encourage consistent practice across organisations and sectors.

Bringing safeguarding partnerships together under a shared learning programme reflects recognition that safeguarding challenges are rarely confined to a single agency. Multi-agency learning opportunities help practitioners understand each other's roles, improve information sharing and strengthen collaborative responses to complex cases.

By aligning workforce development activity across partnerships, the Board has sought to maximise resources, reduce duplication and ensure learning themes are addressed consistently across the safeguarding system.

Impact:

- Increased consistency in safeguarding practice across partner organisations.
- Improved partnership working and professional collaboration.
- Greater practitioner confidence when responding to complex safeguarding concerns.
- Stronger multi-agency decision-making and risk management.

Key Learning and Development Activity

A significant achievement during the year was the launch of the Self-Neglect Framework in October 2025, supported by a large-scale workforce development programme involving more than 150 practitioners. The launch provided guidance on recognising, assessing and responding to self-neglect, whilst promoting a consistent multi-agency approach to intervention.

The framework was introduced in response to local and national learning highlighting the challenges associated with working with individuals who self-neglect and the importance of balancing risk management with choice, control and personal autonomy.

During Safeguarding Adults Week 2025, the partnership delivered a comprehensive programme of learning and awareness events aimed at practitioners, managers and partner agencies. This provided opportunities to reinforce key safeguarding messages, share best practice and promote professional discussion around emerging safeguarding issues.

In addition, the partnership continued to provide ongoing training in a number of priority areas including:

- Domestic Abuse – strengthening practitioner understanding of risk indicators, barriers to disclosure and effective support pathways.
- Trauma-Informed Practice – supporting professionals to recognise the impact of trauma on individuals' experiences, behaviours and engagement with services.
- Professional Curiosity – encouraging practitioners to challenge assumptions, explore concerns in greater depth and maintain a focus on the lived experience of individuals.

These areas were prioritised due to their recurring presence in safeguarding reviews, audits and practice learning, where opportunities for earlier intervention and more effective risk assessment have frequently been identified.

Impact:

- Improved identification of safeguarding risks and vulnerabilities.
- Earlier intervention and prevention of harm.
- Better-quality conversations with adults at risk and their families.
- Enhanced practitioner confidence in dealing with complex and sensitive situations.
- Greater use of professional judgement and evidence-based safeguarding practice.

Specialist Learning and Future Development

The Board remains committed to ensuring that learning from reviews and emerging best practice is translated into frontline improvement. To support this ambition, specialist training has been commissioned for 2026.

Planned sessions include:

- Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Learning Sessions led by Sheila Fish, focusing on themes, practice learning and opportunities for system improvement.
- Mental Capacity Act Legal Literacy Training delivered by Neil Allen, aimed at strengthening practitioner confidence in applying legal frameworks and making lawful, person-centred decisions.

These sessions have been commissioned in recognition of the significant role that legal literacy, professional challenge and reflective practice play in safeguarding decision-making. Learning from SARs consistently highlights the need for professionals to understand legislation, exercise professional curiosity and apply safeguarding principles effectively in practice.

Expected impact:

- Improved application of legal frameworks and statutory duties.
- Stronger decision-making around mental capacity, consent and risk.
- Increased understanding of learning arising from Safeguarding Adults Reviews.
- Enhanced practitioner confidence in managing complex cases.

Embedding Learning into Practice

The Board has continued to ensure that learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews is actively shared and embedded across the partnership through regular briefings, learning events, workshops and practice discussions.

This work reflects the understanding that learning only leads to improvement when organisations can translate findings into meaningful changes in practice. By creating multiple opportunities for reflection and discussion, the partnership aims to strengthen learning culture and support continuous improvement.

Alongside ongoing learning activity, a Training Needs Analysis was completed during the year to identify emerging workforce development requirements and inform future learning priorities. The analysis provides an evidence base for future training programmes and helps ensure that resources are directed towards areas of greatest need and risk.

Impact:

- A learning culture that supports continuous improvement.
- Better alignment of training resources with identified safeguarding risks.
- Increased assurance that learning from reviews is influencing practice.
- Improved outcomes for adults through more effective safeguarding interventions.

Self-Neglect and Priority Thematic Work

Self-neglect has remained a significant strategic priority for the partnership during 2025/26. Evidence from safeguarding activity, case audits and national learning continues to demonstrate that self-neglect presents some of the most complex challenges for practitioners and agencies. Individuals may experience a range of risks including deteriorating health, unsafe living conditions, social isolation, financial difficulties and exploitation, often requiring coordinated and sustained multi-agency responses.

In response, the partnership has undertaken a substantial programme of work to strengthen understanding, improve practice and promote a consistent approach to self-neglect across the safeguarding system.



Adoption of the Pan-Lancashire Self-Neglect Framework

Recognising the need for greater consistency and clarity, partners adopted the Pan-Lancashire Self-Neglect Framework alongside supporting local guidance and implementation arrangements.

The framework was introduced to provide practitioners with a clear structure for assessing risk, coordinating interventions and balancing safeguarding duties with the rights, choices and autonomy of individuals. It also supports a shared understanding of self-neglect across agencies, helping practitioners to work together more effectively when addressing complex and often long-term concerns.

This development was particularly important given the recurring appearance of self-neglect in safeguarding reviews, audits and partnership learning, where difficulties in engagement, information sharing and coordinated intervention are frequently identified.

Impact:

- Greater consistency in responses to self-neglect across agencies.
- Improved understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- More effective multi-agency risk assessment and intervention.
- Better support for individuals experiencing chronic or escalating self-neglect.

Workforce Rollout and Implementation

To support implementation of the framework, the partnership delivered a comprehensive multi-agency launch programme in October 2025, engaging practitioners from across health, social care, housing, community safety, emergency services and voluntary sector organisations.

The rollout sought not only to raise awareness of the framework but also to encourage a cultural shift towards earlier identification, proactive intervention and persistent engagement with individuals who may be reluctant to accept support.

This work recognised that self-neglect cases often require professionals to balance competing considerations including personal choice, mental capacity, safeguarding duties and public risk. As such, building workforce confidence and promoting shared practice principles was an essential aspect of implementation.

Impact:

- Increased practitioner confidence in responding to self-neglect.
- Improved professional challenge and shared decision-making.
- Earlier recognition of escalating risk.
- Greater consistency in safeguarding practice and intervention planning.

Audit, Learning and Continuous Improvement

Alongside implementation activity, the partnership has undertaken audit and learning activity to evaluate practice and identify opportunities for improvement.

Reviewing cases and gathering practitioner feedback has helped assess how the framework is being applied in practice and where additional guidance or training may be required. This approach reflects the Board's commitment to continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making.

Findings from audit activity will be used to inform future learning programmes, workforce development priorities and partnership practice guidance to ensure that improvements are sustained and embedded over time. Following the self-neglect audit, further work is required is being planned over the coming year.

Expected impact:

- Ongoing improvement in the quality of safeguarding practice.
- Greater assurance regarding the effectiveness of multi-agency responses.
- Identification and dissemination of good practice across organisations.
- Improved outcomes and reduced risk for adults experiencing self-neglect.
- Stronger evidence of the partnership's ability to learn, adapt and improve in response to emerging challenges.



Summary

During 2025–26, Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) has continued to strengthen its role as the strategic leader for adult safeguarding across the borough. Building on previous years' development, the Board has made significant progress in enhancing governance arrangements, strengthening accountability, and improving the mechanisms through which partners are assured of the effectiveness of local safeguarding practice.

A key area of focus has been the development of more robust multi-agency assurance arrangements. Through strengthened performance reporting, audit activity, Safeguarding Adults Review learning, and deeper scrutiny of safeguarding data, the Board has improved its ability to identify emerging risks, challenge partner agencies and monitor the impact of safeguarding interventions. This has supported a more comprehensive understanding of local safeguarding pressures and enabled the Board to take a proactive approach to addressing areas of concern.

The Board has also continued to develop a stronger evidence base through enhanced use of performance information and partnership intelligence. By combining quantitative data with qualitative insight from audits, practitioner feedback, safeguarding reviews and lived experience, BSAB is strengthening its understanding of both system performance and the outcomes experienced by adults with care and support needs. This increasingly data-led approach supports more informed decision-making and enables resources and activity to be targeted towards areas of greatest risk and need.

Throughout the year, self-neglect has remained a significant strategic priority. The adoption and implementation of the Pan-Lancashire Self-Neglect Framework, together with associated workforce development and learning activity, has provided a stronger foundation for consistent multi-agency responses to one of the most complex areas of safeguarding practice. This work reflects the Board's commitment to supporting practitioners in balancing individual rights, autonomy and risk management while improving outcomes for adults who may be experiencing chronic or escalating self-neglect.

Workforce development has been another key achievement during the year. Through a coordinated programme of multi-agency learning delivered across BSAB, BSafe and MASA, the partnership has invested in strengthening practitioner knowledge, confidence and professional curiosity. Training and development activity has focused on areas identified through local intelligence, audits and review learning, including domestic abuse, trauma-informed practice, self-

neglect and legal literacy. This approach is helping to create a more skilled workforce that is better equipped to identify risk, intervene earlier and work effectively across organisational boundaries.

The Board has also strengthened its commitment to Making Safeguarding Personal and co-production. Significant progress has been made in embedding lived experience within governance structures, strategic planning and partnership activity. The establishment of the Co-production, Lived Experience and Impact Group (CLEIG) marks an important step towards ensuring that the voices of people with lived experience are not only heard but actively influence decision-making and service improvement. This reflects a wider cultural shift towards person-centred safeguarding, where success is measured not only by processes and outputs but by the experiences and outcomes of individuals.

Partnership collaboration has continued to mature throughout the year, with closer alignment between BSAB, BSafe and MASA creating greater opportunities for shared learning, coordinated priorities and system-wide improvement. This joined-up approach recognises the interconnected nature of safeguarding issues and supports a more holistic response to vulnerability, exploitation, domestic abuse and community safety concerns.

Alongside these developments, the Board has continued to raise public awareness of safeguarding through targeted communications activity, awareness campaigns and improvements to the Blackpool Safeguarding Partnerships website. These efforts support the wider objectives of prevention, early intervention and community engagement by ensuring that residents, professionals and stakeholders can access safeguarding information, advice and reporting pathways more easily.

Taken together, these achievements demonstrate a safeguarding partnership that is increasingly collaborative, evidence-informed and focused on impact. The progress made during 2025–26 has strengthened the foundations for future improvement and positioned BSAB to deliver a more integrated, intelligence-led and person-centred safeguarding system in 2026–27. The Board is therefore well placed to build upon this momentum, respond to emerging challenges and continue driving improvements that enhance the safety, wellbeing and outcomes of adults across Blackpool.

5. Safeguarding Activity Overview

5.1 Safeguarding Activity in 2025/2026

During 2025/2026, 2138 safeguarding concerns were received. This is an increase of 23% compared to 2024/2025, continuing the upward trajectory in activity over a number of years.

The number of safeguarding enquiries started in the year was 719, an increase of 44% compared to 2024/2025.

Of these, 715 were Section 42 enquiries, up from 498 in 2024/2025, and 4 were other enquiries, up from 3 last year.

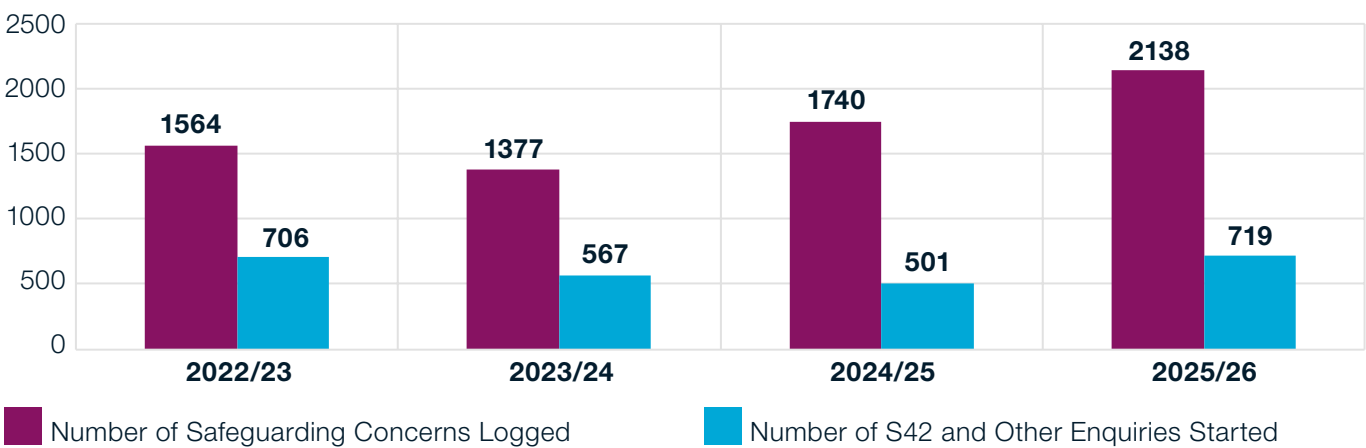


Figure 2.

Of the individuals for whom a concern was logged in 2025/2026 (1609):

- 42% were male, 57% were female and 1% had a not known or other gender identity. This is a 1 percentage point increase in the proportion of both, males and females and a two percentage point decrease in not known / other gender identity.
- 82% were of white ethnic origin, 2% were of another ethnic origin and 16% had an unknown or undeclared ethnic origin. There has been a three percentage points reduction in the proportion of unknown or undeclared ethnic origins. The proportion of people of another ethnic origin has remained static at 2%.
- 48% were aged 18-64 and 52% were aged 65 and over. The age profile is the same as last year and a full breakdown of the cohort by age band is shown on the chart below.

Substantial work has been undertaken in Adult Social Care over the course of this year to improve identification of safeguarding concerns and to ensure robust information gathering and decision making regarding the need for S42 enquiries is in place. The Board will continue to monitor whether the increase reflects improved recognition and threshold application, changing levels of need and risk, or a combination of factors.

This work has been undertaken by the team of Practice Development Leads for Safeguarding and further formalised by the refresh of the Adult Social Care Safeguarding recording processes, which provide a structured approach to documenting evidence based and defensible decision making.

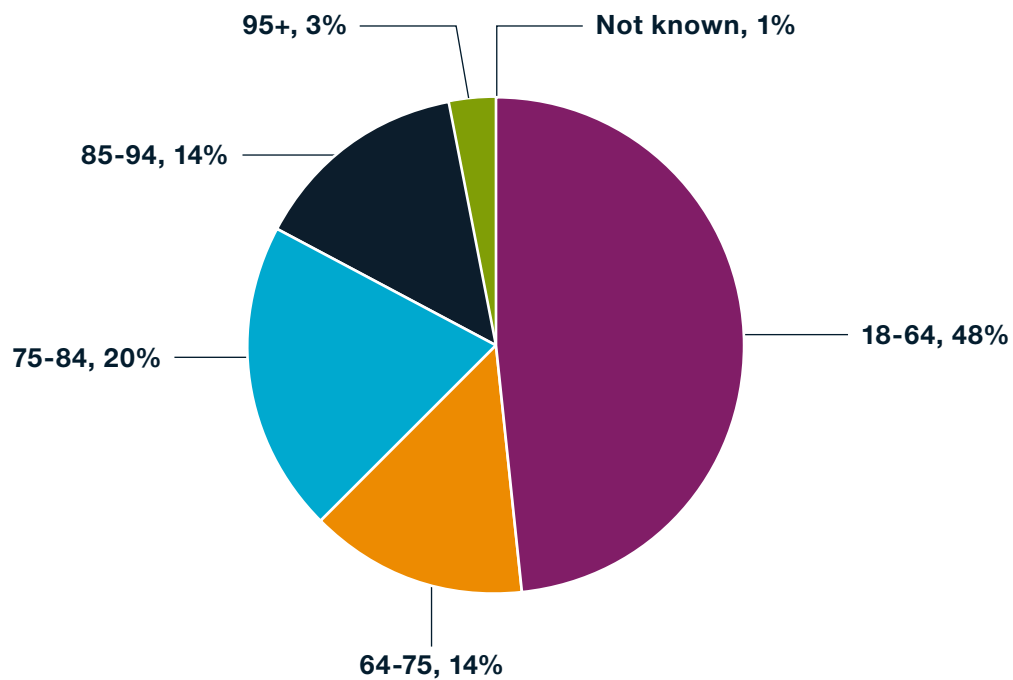


Figure 3.

During 2025/2026, a total of 729 safeguarding enquiries were concluded.

There has been a slight increase in the proportion of concluded enquiries where the person was judged to be lacking capacity to make decisions in relation to the safeguarding enquiry. The figure in 2025/2026 was 30% compared to 28% in 2024/2025. The Board will continue to monitor rates going forward.

Where someone was judged to be lacking capacity, the proportion of people supported by family, friends or an advocate during the safeguarding enquiry has increased by 3 percentage points to 86% in 2025/2026.

This information suggests that when people at the centre of concerns are identified as having substantial difficulty in participating in the process, they are for the most part being appropriately represented.

The charts on the next page show a breakdown of the types and locations of abuse identified during concluded enquiries, comparing 2024/2025 and 2025/2026.

There has been a reduction in the proportion of enquiries involving physical abuse (-6 percentage points) and sexual abuse (-1) compared to 2024/2025. However, there was an increase in the proportion of cases where risks relating to domestic abuse (+3), neglect / acts of omission (+2), psychological abuse

(+1), discriminatory abuse (+1) and organizational abuse (+1) were identified. The proportion of financial or material abuse, sexual exploitation, modern slavery and self-neglect enquiries have remained the same.

The increases in identification of Domestic, discriminatory and organizational abuse, although slight, should be viewed positively. These types of abuse are often not as readily identified as they are recognized by viewing the “bigger picture” from multiple concerns which initially may be viewed as not related. Any increase in identification is likely to mean that patterns in incidents and concerns are becoming more visible to practitioners.

The trend seen last year for a higher proportion of completed enquiries where the location of abuse was someone’s own home has continued, with a 2 percentage point increase between 2024/2025 and 2025/2026. There has also been a slight reduction in the proportion of completed enquiries where the location of abuse was a hospital setting (-2 percentage points). Overall, the proportion of enquiries where the location of abuse was a care home has also reduced (-1 percentage points).

This is likely to reflect a wider focus in adult social care on strengths based practice and keeping people in their own homes over placing them into residential care. Since October 2025, Residential care placements commissioned by adult social care have fallen in number by around 11%.

Figure 4.

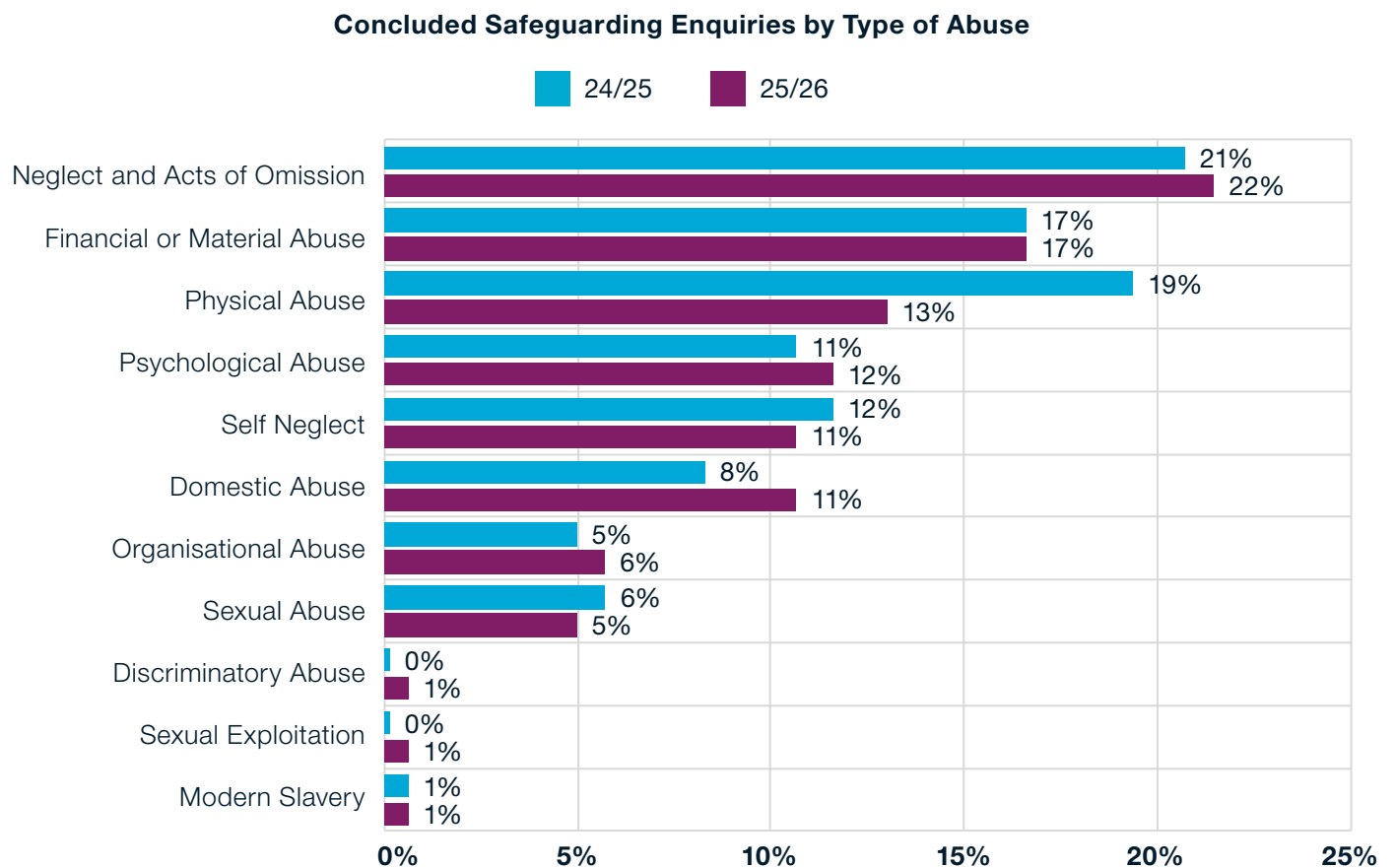
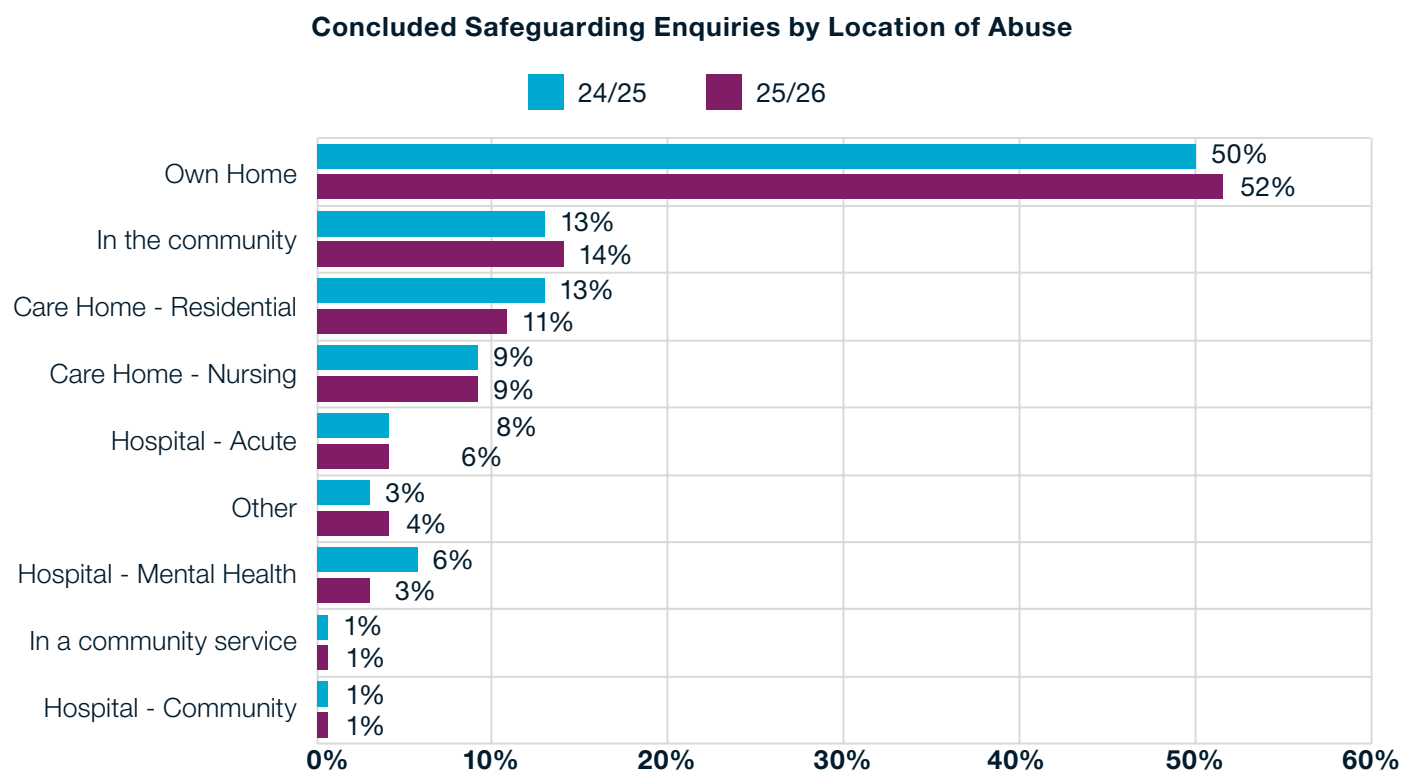


Figure 5.



Of the enquiries completed during 2025/2026, risks were identified in 92% of cases. This is a decrease of 2 percentage points compared to 2024/2025. Where risks were identified, risks were removed or reduced in 91% of cases. This year, there has been a 3 percentage point increase in the proportion of enquiries where risks were removed entirely (37%).

A significant development in this area for Adult Social Care came in January 2026, when the existing "Safeguarding Protection Plan" Templates were added to the MOSAIC recording system. This was accompanied by a full rollout including learning circles for safeguarding leads, and has led to a formal opportunity for action plans to be recorded which will monitor and reduce risks related to safeguarding concerns.

The positive trend continues with an increased proportion of enquiries where the person or their representative expressed the outcomes they wanted to achieve, at 82% from 78% (+4 percentage points).

Where people told us what outcomes they wanted, 94% of outcomes were fully or partly achieved. This has remained static from 2024/2025.

This is an encouraging scenario that demonstrates that, whenever feasible, the individual at the heart of a safeguarding issue is being properly engaged in the procedure and is clearly expressing the desired outcome they want to achieve through the process.



6. Safeguarding Adult Reviews

Safeguarding Adults Review Activity

Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) remain an important mechanism for identifying learning, improving practice and strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The Board has continued to promote a culture of openness and learning, ensuring that cases are considered carefully and that opportunities for improvement are identified regardless of whether the statutory threshold for a SAR is met.

During 2025–26, three new SAR referrals were received for consideration by the Board. Whilst no SARs were completed or published during the reporting period, the Board maintained oversight of referrals and continued to progress learning and review activity where appropriate. This included preparation for a new review scheduled to commence during 2026.

Review Activity and Case Consideration

In January 2026, a notification was received concerning an adult male with complex needs and vulnerabilities. Following multi-agency information gathering, a SAR consideration meeting was held in March 2026 to assess the circumstances of the case and determine whether the statutory criteria for a review had been met.

The Board also considered a case involving a female with a history of multiple disadvantage, including complex needs and engagement across a range of services. Following review of the available information, statutory partners agreed that the circumstances met the criteria for a SAR and that learning opportunities existed. However, after careful consideration, it was agreed that a full review would not be commissioned as the learning identified closely reflected themes already explored through previous reviews. Instead, partners focused on ensuring that existing learning continued to be embedded within local practice.

During the year, a further case involving an adult male progressed towards formal review. Whilst there were differing professional views regarding the circumstances of the case, partners ultimately agreed that the statutory criteria had been met. An independent reviewer was appointed and arrangements were put in place to commence the review process in 2026.

The Board also reviewed a case involving an adult female that did not meet the threshold for a Safeguarding Adults Review. Although no significant multi-agency failings were identified, the review process highlighted valuable practice learning. This was captured through a Learning Brief and shared with partners to support ongoing service improvement and professional reflection.

Emerging Themes and Learning

The cases considered during the reporting period continue to reflect the complexity of safeguarding adults who experience multiple, interconnected vulnerabilities. Many individuals had extensive involvement with a range of health, social care, housing, community safety and criminal justice services, often over prolonged periods.

Recurring themes identified across referrals included:

- Multiple exclusion homelessness and social exclusion.
- Substance misuse and alcohol dependency.
- Mental ill health, including suicidal ideation and self-harm risks.
- Domestic abuse, adverse childhood experiences and lifelong trauma.
- Complex physical health conditions and deteriorating living environments.
- Challenges associated with engaging and supporting people with multiple and overlapping needs.

These themes mirror both local and national safeguarding concerns and reinforce the importance of coordinated, trauma-informed and person-centred approaches to practice. They also highlight the significant challenges faced by professionals when working with individuals whose circumstances cut across organisational and service boundaries.

Learning and Practice Development

Learning from SAR referrals and review activity continues to inform workforce development, policy and practice across the partnership. Several cases highlighted opportunities for earlier intervention and more coordinated responses, particularly in relation to:

- Access to appropriate mental health assessment, treatment and provision.
- The application of trauma-informed approaches when working with vulnerable adults.
- Effective multi-agency support for individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage and complex needs.
- Early recognition and escalation of emerging risks.

Importantly, the Board remains committed to ensuring that learning is captured and shared even where cases do not progress to a formal SAR. This approach supports continuous improvement and reflects a culture that prioritises organisational learning over process alone.

Overall Position

The reporting period reflects a steady level of SAR referral activity and demonstrates the increasingly complex nature of safeguarding cases presenting within Blackpool. Many referrals involved individuals experiencing a combination of housing instability, poor physical and mental health, substance misuse, trauma and social exclusion, requiring coordinated responses from multiple agencies.

The year has also demonstrated strong engagement from partners in reviewing cases, identifying learning and challenging practice where appropriate. Whether or not cases progressed to a formal review, agencies have remained committed to understanding what happened, why it happened and how services can continue to improve outcomes for adults at risk.

Through this ongoing focus on learning and improvement, the Board continues to strengthen its ability to identify systemic issues, support professional development and improve safeguarding practice across the partnership.



7. Strategic Delivery Group Activity

7.1 Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)/ Co-production, Lived Experience and Impact Group (CLEIG) Annual Summary 2025/26

During 2025–26, the MSP and Assurance Group played a pivotal role in supporting Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board's commitment to person-centred safeguarding, continuous improvement and partnership assurance. The year has seen significant progress in strengthening the governance arrangements that underpin Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP), improving how the voices of adults with lived experience influence strategic decision-making, and ensuring that safeguarding activity remains focused on outcomes that matter to individuals.

The work of the group has reflected both local priorities and wider national developments, including increasing expectations around co-production, person-centred practice, quality assurance and evidence of impact. Through closer alignment with Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), Blackpool Community Safety Partnership (BSafe) and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA), the partnership has sought to create a more integrated approach to safeguarding, recognising that many individuals experiencing harm face multiple and interconnected vulnerabilities.

The year also represented an important period of development following the CQC assessment of Adult Social Care, with increased focus on strengthening assurance arrangements, understanding outcomes, and gathering evidence of the effectiveness of safeguarding interventions across the partnership.

7.1.1 Strategic Priorities and Direction

During the year, the group undertook a review of its purpose, priorities and governance arrangements to ensure that its work remained focused on areas of greatest strategic importance and delivered meaningful impact. Through this review, partners recognised the need to streamline activity, strengthen accountability and ensure that safeguarding partnerships were working collectively towards shared outcomes.

As a result, priorities were refined and aligned around three key themes:

- Workforce Development
- Communication and Engagement
- Co-production and Lived Experience

A conscious decision was taken to reduce the number of priorities in order to provide greater focus, improve delivery and enable more effective monitoring of outcomes. Underpinning all areas of activity was a strengthened emphasis on data, intelligence and assurance, ensuring that decision-making is informed by evidence and that improvement activity can be measured effectively.

The review also resulted in a significant restructuring of governance arrangements. The former MSP and Assurance Group evolved into two distinct forums:

- The Co-production, Lived Experience and Impact Group (CLEIG), focused on ensuring the voice of individuals, families and communities influences safeguarding policy, practice and service delivery.
- A dedicated Audit and Assurance Group, responsible for oversight of performance, audit activity, quality assurance and learning.

Importantly, governance arrangements were expanded to include representation and oversight across BSAB, BSafe and MASA, reflecting the commitment to a more joined-up approach to safeguarding and community safety.

This revised structure has improved clarity of purpose, strengthened accountability and created stronger links between lived experience, performance information and strategic decision-making.

7.1.2 Embedding Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal remains the cornerstone of safeguarding practice across Blackpool. The partnership continues to promote an approach that focuses not only on keeping people safe but also on understanding what matters to individuals and supporting them to achieve the outcomes they want from safeguarding intervention.

Throughout 2025–26, MSP principles have been further embedded as a "golden thread" running through workforce development, policy development, audit activity and strategic planning. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure practitioners understand that safeguarding is most effective when individuals are actively involved in decisions affecting their lives.

To support this ambition, the partnership developed and refreshed a range of resources, including:

- Updated safeguarding training materials
- Seven-minute briefings
- Bite-size learning sessions
- Online resources and guidance accessible across partner organisations

These resources have sought to improve consistency of understanding and application across a diverse workforce while offering flexible learning opportunities to support different professional roles and organisational contexts.

Despite this progress, partners recognise that challenges remain. Audit activity and practitioner feedback suggest that, whilst MSP principles are generally well understood, there continues to be variation in how consistently they are applied in practice. Similarly, the capture and reporting of service-user outcomes remains an area requiring further development.

Addressing these challenges will remain a key focus moving forward as the Board seeks to strengthen evidence of the difference safeguarding interventions make to people's lives.

7.1.3 Workforce Development

Developing a confident, skilled and knowledgeable workforce remains essential to delivering effective person-centred safeguarding. During the year, significant work was undertaken to refresh and strengthen the multi-agency training offer to ensure learning remains relevant to emerging safeguarding risks, practice challenges and partnership priorities.

The revised programme incorporates key safeguarding themes including:

- Care Act responsibilities
- Making Safeguarding Personal
- Advocacy
- Mental Capacity Act responsibilities
- Self-neglect
- Learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews

A particular focus has been placed on helping practitioners move beyond theoretical understanding towards practical application. Training has increasingly emphasised how professionals can have meaningful conversations about risk, choice, control and outcomes while maintaining a person-centred approach.

Partners have also sought to increase accessibility by providing learning opportunities through a combination of face-to-face delivery, online learning, webinars, briefings and targeted workshops.

The group has worked closely with operational services, including health partners, police and social care teams, to identify specific learning needs and tailor support accordingly. A comprehensive training needs analysis has further informed future workforce priorities and highlighted areas where additional investment and development may be required.

7.1.4 Co-production and Lived Experience

One of the most significant developments during the year has been the strengthening of co-production and lived experience within safeguarding arrangements.

Partners increasingly recognise that individuals with lived experience possess unique insight into how services are experienced and where improvements are needed. As such, co-production has moved from being an aspiration to becoming a central principle underpinning improvement activity across safeguarding partnerships.

A key development has been the launch of a co-production project examining experiences of domestic abuse and individuals' first contact with support services. The project aims to improve understanding of barriers to engagement, identify opportunities for improvement and ensure future service development reflects the experiences of those directly affected.

Alongside this, lived experience and stakeholder groups have been established to support wider engagement activity and create opportunities for people to influence strategic developments.

Work has also commenced to increase the use of:

- Case studies
- Storytelling approaches
- Lived experience narratives
- Video-based learning
- Service-user feedback mechanisms

The intention is to ensure that safeguarding discussions remain grounded in the experiences of real people and that strategic decision-making is informed by evidence of impact rather than process measures alone.

The group has also identified opportunities to strengthen engagement with underrepresented communities and improve the accessibility of safeguarding communications, ensuring that language and approaches are inclusive, understandable and meaningful.

7.1.5 Advocacy and Empowerment

Advocacy continues to play a crucial role in supporting the delivery of Making Safeguarding Personal by ensuring that individuals are able to express their views, exercise their rights and participate fully in decisions affecting them.

Throughout 2025–26, partners continued to promote the work of the Blackpool Advocacy Hub, which provides independent support for people navigating safeguarding processes, social care systems and wider support services.

Advocacy remains strongly embedded within safeguarding policies, procedures and workforce development activity. The partnership continues to emphasise the importance of early identification of advocacy needs and ensuring that individuals have access to appropriate support where required.

Work has also focused on increasing awareness of the Advocacy Hub across partner organisations, improving understanding of referral routes and addressing any confusion around eligibility criteria or access arrangements.

This work supports the wider ambition of empowering individuals, reducing barriers to participation and ensuring safeguarding responses remain focused on the person's desired outcomes.

7.1.6 Self-Neglect as a Key Priority

Self-neglect has continued to be a significant safeguarding priority throughout the year, reflecting both local demand and recurring themes identified through Safeguarding Adults Reviews, audits and national learning.

Recognising the complexity of self-neglect and the challenges faced by professionals in balancing risk, autonomy and individual choice, the partnership has invested considerable effort into strengthening local responses.

A major milestone was the development and implementation of a new multi-agency Self-Neglect Framework. The framework provides practitioners with a consistent approach to identifying, assessing and responding to self-neglect whilst promoting coordinated multi-agency working.

Supporting implementation has included workforce development activity, awareness raising and the establishment of evaluation arrangements to assess impact over time.

Planned pre- and post-implementation audits will allow the partnership to measure changes in practice, identify areas for improvement and assess whether the framework is leading to improved outcomes for individuals.

Particular emphasis has been placed on:

- Effective multi-agency risk management
- Use of wellbeing meetings and collaborative planning
- Persistent engagement approaches
- Capturing and understanding the individual's voice
- Balancing empowerment with safeguarding responsibilities

This work supports a more coordinated and person-centred response to one of the most challenging areas of safeguarding practice.

7.1.7 Communications and Engagement

Effective communication and engagement are critical to raising awareness of safeguarding, improving access to support and ensuring communities understand how to seek help when concerns arise.

During the year, work progressed on the development of a shared Communications and Engagement Strategy spanning BSAB, BSafe and MASA. The strategy aims to create a more coordinated and consistent approach to public awareness, professional engagement and safeguarding communications.

A range of activities have supported this objective, including:

- Quarterly safeguarding newsletters
- Safeguarding Adults Week campaigns
- Targeted awareness activity
- Digital communications
- Increased use of lived experience stories and safeguarding journeys

A key area of development has been the growing use of real-life experiences to help professionals and members of the public better understand safeguarding processes and outcomes.

The partnership recognises that safeguarding messages are often most effective when people can relate them to real experiences and understand the practical difference support can make.

Communication activity has therefore focused not only on raising awareness of abuse and neglect but also on promoting prevention, empowerment and access to support services.

7.1.8 Governance, Improvement and Future Focus

A key achievement during 2025–26 has been the strengthening of governance and assurance arrangements across safeguarding partnerships.

The separation of MSP and Assurance functions has enabled greater scrutiny of safeguarding performance while creating dedicated capacity to focus on co-production, lived experience and impact. This aligns with broader improvement activity across the partnership and supports a more mature approach to assurance.

The revised governance structure complements wider improvements introduced following the CQC assessment process, helping ensure that safeguarding arrangements are increasingly outcomes-focused, evidence-based and supported by robust quality assurance mechanisms.

The expansion of oversight across BSAB, BSafe and MASA has also strengthened opportunities for joint learning, shared intelligence and coordinated responses to emerging risks.

7.1.9 Key Areas for 2026–27

Building on progress made during the year, priorities for 2026–27 will focus on:

- Further embedding MSP principles across all partner agencies and operational practice.
- Strengthening co-production arrangements and increasing opportunities for lived experience to shape decision-making.
- Improving the quality, consistency and use of outcome-focused data.
- Delivering an enhanced audit and assurance programme and strengthening evidence of impact.
- Developing more effective measures of service-user outcomes and experiences.
- Supporting system-wide improvement activity linked to CQC findings and partnership priorities.
- Increasing engagement with seldom-heard and underrepresented communities.
- Strengthening the use of lived experience evidence within performance and assurance processes.

7.1.10 Conclusion

The partnership has made significant progress during 2025–26 in strengthening Making Safeguarding Personal, developing co-production approaches and enhancing the role of lived experience within safeguarding governance and improvement activity. The establishment of CLEIG, alongside strengthened assurance arrangements, represents an important milestone in ensuring that safeguarding partnerships remain focused on both performance and the experiences of the people they serve.

While important progress has been made, the Board recognises that further work is required to ensure MSP is consistently translated into everyday practice and that there is stronger evidence of the outcomes achieved for individuals. By continuing to strengthen co-production, workforce development, communication and assurance arrangements, the partnership is well placed to build on these foundations and deliver increasingly person-centred, outcome-focused safeguarding arrangements across Blackpool.

7.2 Audit and Assurance – Annual Summary 2025/26

The Audit and Assurance Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) was established during 2025 as part of the Board's wider commitment to strengthening governance, increasing accountability and improving its ability to evidence the impact of safeguarding activity across the partnership. The establishment of the group reflects a significant step forward in the maturity of the Board's assurance arrangements and aligns with wider improvement activity across BSAB, BSafe and MASA.

The creation of a dedicated Audit and Assurance function followed recognition that effective safeguarding partnerships require more than performance reporting alone. Partners need robust mechanisms to understand the quality of practice, assess whether interventions are making a difference to people's lives, identify emerging risks, and ensure that learning translates into measurable improvement.

Throughout 2025–26, the group has worked to develop a more coordinated and intelligence-led approach to assurance by bringing together performance data, audit findings, review learning, practitioner insight and strategic intelligence from across the safeguarding system. This approach has strengthened the Board's ability to scrutinise practice, challenge partners where appropriate and provide assurance that safeguarding arrangements remain effective and responsive to local need.

Importantly, the work of the group has supported wider improvements following the Adult Social Care CQC assessment by strengthening the evidence base available to the Board and enhancing its ability to demonstrate how safeguarding partners understand risk, monitor performance and drive improvement.

7.2.1 Stronger Multi-Agency Assurance Framework

One of the group's first priorities was to establish a clear and robust framework for multi-agency assurance. During the year, revised Terms of Reference were agreed, providing greater clarity regarding the role, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the group within the wider safeguarding governance structure.

This work has strengthened understanding across partner agencies of how assurance is gathered, analysed and reported, whilst ensuring there are clear mechanisms for challenge, accountability and continuous improvement.

The group has established a number of core functions, including:

- Monitoring safeguarding performance, outcomes and impact.
- Challenging and supporting partner agencies to drive improvement.
- Identifying emerging risks through shared intelligence and data analysis.
- Ensuring local activity reflects learning arising from regional and national reviews, inspections and best practice.
- Providing assurance to BSAB and BSafe regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

A key development has been the shift from focusing solely on activity and compliance measures towards a greater emphasis on outcomes, effectiveness and impact. This reflects the Board's ambition to understand not only what services are doing, but whether those interventions are improving outcomes for individuals and communities.

Impact

The strengthened assurance framework has created a more robust and transparent system of governance, enabling the Board to gain greater confidence in the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and strengthening accountability across all partner organisations.

7.2.2 Development of an Integrated Data Dashboard

A significant achievement during the year has been the development of a new multi-agency safeguarding dashboard. This work has been driven by recognition that safeguarding risks are often complex and cross organisational boundaries, requiring partners to develop a shared understanding of local vulnerabilities and emerging issues.

For the first time, data from key organisations including Adult Social Care, Lancashire Constabulary, Health partners, Probation and substance misuse services has been brought together within a single framework to support strategic oversight and analysis.

Rather than organising information by individual agency, the dashboard has been structured around thematic priorities. This represents an important shift towards understanding safeguarding issues through a whole-system lens and enables partners to identify patterns, opportunities and risks that may not be visible through individual agency reporting.

Current priority themes include:

- Domestic abuse
- Violent crime
- Exploitation and vulnerability
- Substance use and dependency
- Safeguarding activity and outcomes

The development of the dashboard is an important element of the Board's move towards a more intelligence-led approach to safeguarding. Work continues to further enhance the quality and usefulness of the data available, including:

- Improving consistency and completeness of partner datasets.
- Incorporating qualitative information and lived experience insights.
- Developing multi-year trend analysis and benchmarking.
- Exploring secure information-sharing solutions to support partnership working.

The evolving dashboard is strengthening the Board's ability to identify trends earlier, understand emerging risks and make informed decisions about future priorities and resources.

Impact

The introduction of a shared dataset has significantly enhanced the partnership's ability to understand safeguarding risks, identify emerging themes and monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding activity

across the system. It provides a stronger evidence base for strategic planning and supports more proactive responses to local need.

7.2.3 Delivery of a Two-Year Multi-Agency Audit Plan

Recognising the importance of quality assurance in understanding the effectiveness of safeguarding practice, the group developed a coordinated two-year audit programme spanning BSAB, BSafe and MASA.

The audit programme has been designed to support both proactive learning and responsive assurance. Planned audits provide opportunities to examine key areas of practice in depth, while maintaining flexibility to respond quickly when new risks or concerns emerge.

This represents a significant step forward in aligning assurance activity across safeguarding partnerships and ensuring that learning is shared consistently across agencies.

Self-Neglect Audit

One of the most significant pieces of audit activity undertaken during the year focused on self-neglect, reflecting its status as a key local safeguarding priority.

The audit identified four principal learning themes:

- Multi-agency working and coordination.
- Understanding and capturing lived experience.
- Consideration of mental capacity and exploitation risks.
- The importance of whole-family approaches where appropriate.

The findings have directly informed implementation of the new Self-Neglect Framework and future workforce development activity.

Making Safeguarding Personal Benchmarking

Benchmarking activity was undertaken to assess the extent to which Making Safeguarding Personal principles are embedded across local safeguarding arrangements.

The exercise identified a number of strengths, including a clear commitment to person-centred safeguarding, alongside opportunities for improvement in evidencing outcomes and capturing the experiences of individuals involved in safeguarding processes.

Learning from the benchmarking exercise has been incorporated into the work programme of the Co-production, Lived Experience and Impact Group (CLEIG) to support continued development.

Planned Audit Activity for 2026–27

The audit programme for the forthcoming year includes several significant areas of work.

A multi-board Domestic Abuse Audit will review cases involving adults, children, victims and perpetrators to better understand the effectiveness of the whole-system response and identify opportunities for improvement across safeguarding partnerships.

A Care Act Compliance Audit has also been agreed to provide assurance that statutory responsibilities are being discharged effectively and consistently across partner organisations.

In addition, a Ketamine Audit has been commissioned in response to emerging intelligence regarding local substance use trends. Notably, this issue was identified through practitioner concerns and partnership intelligence before becoming visible in routine performance datasets, demonstrating the increasing maturity of the partnership's intelligence and assurance processes.

Impact

The audit programme has improved understanding of how safeguarding practice is experienced across organisations and provided clearer evidence regarding strengths, gaps and future improvement priorities.

7.2.4 Improved Oversight of Safeguarding Reviews and Learning

The Board has continued to strengthen its oversight of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs), Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and wider learning activity.

During the year, systems and processes have been enhanced to provide greater oversight of review activity, monitor progress against recommendations and improve assurance that learning is being translated into practice improvements.

Regular reporting arrangements and close alignment with Pan-Lancashire safeguarding arrangements have supported greater consistency in approach and enabled opportunities for shared learning across the wider region.

Particular emphasis has been placed on:

- Monitoring implementation of recommendations.
- Tracking actions to completion.
- Linking review findings to workforce development activity.
- Using audit activity to test whether learning has become embedded in practice.

The Board has increasingly focused on understanding the impact of learning rather than simply recording completion of actions.

Impact

These developments have strengthened assurance that learning is not lost once reviews are completed and that recommendations are contributing to meaningful and measurable improvements across the safeguarding system.

7.2.5 Increased Focus on Single-Agency Assurance and Learning

Alongside multi-agency assurance activity, the group has sought to improve its understanding of quality assurance activity taking place within individual partner organisations.

Routine reporting of single-agency audit activity has been introduced to create greater transparency, support shared learning and identify common themes across the partnership.

This approach allows the Board to gain a more comprehensive understanding of local safeguarding practice and avoid duplication of assurance activity.

Examples reported during the year include:

- Police audit findings demonstrating improvements in recording and responding to stalking and harassment.
- Health audits identifying opportunities to strengthen routine enquiry processes and safeguarding flagging arrangements.
- Adult Social Care quality assurance activity supporting improvements in case recording, supervision and practice oversight.

Sharing learning from these activities has helped develop a stronger culture of collective ownership and continuous improvement across the partnership.

Impact

Greater visibility of single-agency assurance activity has strengthened transparency, improved understanding of organisational risks and promoted greater consistency in learning and improvement activity.

7.2.6 Alignment with Strategic Priorities

Throughout the year, audit and assurance activity has been closely aligned with the strategic priorities of BSAB, BSafe and wider safeguarding partnerships.

This has ensured that resources and scrutiny are focused on areas presenting the greatest level of risk, vulnerability and potential harm to local communities.

BSafe Priority areas have included:

- Violent crime.
- Anti-social behaviour and priority crime.
- Exploitation and vulnerability.
- Substance misuse and dependency.
- Community confidence and public reassurance.

This alignment has strengthened the relevance and impact of assurance activity and ensured that findings contribute directly to partnership priorities and improvement programmes.

7.2.7 Emerging Themes and Risks

Analysis of data, audit findings and partnership intelligence has identified a number of emerging themes requiring ongoing focus and oversight.

These include:

- Increasing concerns around exploitation and vulnerability and the need for improved data capture and analysis.
- Emerging patterns of substance use, particularly ketamine, which are not yet fully reflected within traditional datasets.
- Variations in data quality, completeness and consistency across some partner organisations.
- The need to incorporate more qualitative information, lived experience and outcome-focused measures alongside quantitative performance data.

These themes reflect the increasingly complex safeguarding landscape and reinforce the importance of maintaining a responsive and intelligence-led assurance framework.

In response, the group has adapted both its audit programme and data development work to ensure these issues are explored in greater detail and reflected in future priorities.

7.2.8 Priorities for 2026–27

The next phase of development will focus on embedding the foundations established during the group's first year and further strengthening the Board's ability to evidence safeguarding effectiveness.

Priority areas for 2026–27 include:

- Embedding full use of the multi-agency dashboard and introducing a streamlined highlights reporting model.
- Delivering and evaluating the two-year audit programme.
- Improving data quality, consistency and partner contributions.

- Strengthening oversight of SAR and DHR learning and evidencing impact.
- Expanding the use of qualitative information, lived experience and outcome measures.
- Supporting continued improvement following the CQC assessment process.
- Further aligning assurance arrangements across BSAB, BSafe and MASA governance structures.

7.2.9 Conclusion

The Audit and Assurance Strategic Delivery Group has made substantial progress during its first year of operation and has established a strong foundation for future assurance activity across Blackpool's safeguarding partnerships.

Through the development of a coordinated audit programme, the introduction of a shared multi-agency dataset, enhanced oversight of safeguarding reviews and stronger governance arrangements, the partnership has significantly improved its ability to understand risk, scrutinise practice and evidence impact.

Importantly, these developments have helped move the Board towards a more mature assurance model—one that combines performance data, audit findings, review learning and lived experience to provide a richer understanding of safeguarding effectiveness. This work has strengthened accountability, improved strategic oversight and supported the partnership's wider commitment to continuous improvement.

The focus for the coming year will be on embedding these arrangements further, strengthening data quality and demonstrating more clearly the impact that safeguarding activity is having on the lives of adults, families and communities across Blackpool.

7.3 Workforce Development Group – Annual Summary 2025/26

During 2025/26, the Workforce Development Strategic Delivery Group continued to play a central role in supporting the safeguarding priorities of Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) and the Community Safety Partnership (BSafe). The partnership recognises that effective safeguarding relies upon a skilled, knowledgeable and confident workforce capable of identifying risk, responding appropriately to complex situations and working collaboratively across organisational boundaries.

Throughout the year, significant progress has been made in developing a coordinated multi-agency learning and development programme that responds to local need, reflects learning from reviews and audits, and supports a more consistent approach to safeguarding practice across adults, children and communities. A particular focus has been placed on strengthening understanding of domestic abuse, self-neglect, exploitation, advocacy and trauma-informed practice, while ensuring that learning is translated into improved outcomes for individuals.

The group's work has aligned closely with wider partnership priorities, contributing to a shared vision of a safeguarding system that is prevention-focused, person-centred and informed by both evidence and lived experience.

7.3.2 Multi-Agency Workforce Development Offer

7.3.2.1 Training

A key priority throughout the year has been the continued development and delivery of a comprehensive multi-agency safeguarding training programme. The programme has been designed to equip professionals with the skills, knowledge and confidence required to respond effectively to a wide range of safeguarding concerns while promoting consistent practice across the partnership.

A particular area of focus has been the continued implementation and embedding of the partnership's domestic abuse training offer. Domestic abuse remains a significant safeguarding issue both locally and nationally, and investment in workforce development reflects the partnership's commitment to improving the identification of abuse, strengthening responses to victims and families, and promoting trauma-informed practice.

More than 300 practitioners accessed domestic abuse training during the reporting period through a range of learning opportunities, including:

- A Better Response to Domestic Abuse – a one-day multi-agency programme supporting practitioners to recognise and respond to domestic abuse across adult, children's and community settings.
- DASH Risk Assessment Training – designed to improve understanding and use of the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Abuse Risk Identification Checklist.
- Non-Fatal Strangulation Awareness Briefings – increasing awareness of a significant high-risk indicator frequently associated with serious harm and homicide.

- Tom's Story – a powerful lived experience training session highlighting the impact of domestic abuse on children and promoting trauma-informed approaches when working with families.

The training offer continued to evolve throughout the year in response to emerging local intelligence, safeguarding concerns and practitioner feedback.

One notable addition was the introduction of Cuckooing Awareness Workshops, delivered in partnership with ADDER, Public Health and members of the Lived Experience Team. More than 200 practitioners attended these sessions, which combined professional expertise with first-hand accounts of exploitation and vulnerability. The development of complementary resources, including a seven-minute briefing and dedicated online guidance, has further strengthened awareness and understanding of this emerging safeguarding issue.

The partnership also refreshed and expanded its Contextual Safeguarding Training, recognising the increasing importance of understanding exploitation and risk beyond traditional family environments. The revised full-day programme supports practitioners to identify and respond to contextual harm through effective partnership working and coordinated safeguarding interventions.

Advocacy awareness training was introduced for the first time in partnership with the Blackpool Advocacy Hub. These sessions have increased understanding of advocacy services, statutory duties and the role advocacy plays in supporting individuals to have their voices heard throughout safeguarding processes.

Importantly, learning and development activity has continued to attract participation from a broad range of sectors, including health, social care, police, housing, probation, education and the voluntary and community sector. This strong multi-agency engagement strengthens shared understanding, promotes effective partnership working and supports more coordinated safeguarding responses.

7.3.2.2 Blackpool's Response to Neglect and Self-Neglect

During the year, the partnership demonstrated its continued commitment to addressing neglect and self-neglect through the launch of two significant pieces of guidance: the BSAB Multi-Agency Guidance for Responding to Self-Neglect and the refreshed Blackpool Neglect Strategy for Children, Young People and Families.

A large-scale multi-agency launch event was held in October 2025, bringing together 182 professionals from across Blackpool's all-age workforce. The

event provided an opportunity to introduce the new frameworks, strengthen understanding of neglect and self-neglect, and reinforce the importance of trauma-informed and family-focused practice.

Evaluation data highlighted a measurable increase in confidence among participants. Practitioners reported improved confidence in recognising and responding to neglect and significantly increased confidence when working with individuals experiencing self-neglect. These findings demonstrate the value of bringing professionals together to explore complex safeguarding themes and support a more consistent approach across services.

The launch also reinforced the importance of early intervention, prevention and "Think Family" approaches, recognising that vulnerabilities often affect individuals, families and wider support networks simultaneously.

7.3.2.3 Safeguarding Adults Week 2025

Safeguarding Adults Week 2025 provided an important opportunity to raise awareness, promote professional learning and reinforce key safeguarding messages across the workforce.

Aligned to the national theme of "Prevention: Act Before Abuse," the partnership delivered a programme of online learning events designed to encourage reflection, strengthen professional practice and support early intervention.

Topics included:

- Creating Empowering and Trauma-Informed Environments
- Professional Curiosity
- Responding to Self-Neglect
- Understanding Safeguarding Concerns and Enquiries in Blackpool

A total of 155 practitioners participated in the learning events delivered throughout the week. The strong levels of engagement demonstrated the workforce's commitment to continuous learning and reinforced the importance of prevention, professional curiosity and early identification of risk.

The week also provided valuable opportunities to share partnership learning, celebrate good practice and encourage cross-sector collaboration.

7.3.2.4 eLearning

The partnership has continued to review how digital learning can support workforce development and improve accessibility for practitioners working across a range of organisations and settings.

During the reporting period, a review of the existing multi-agency eLearning arrangements identified opportunities to strengthen engagement, improve reporting capabilities and better align learning resources to local safeguarding priorities.

As a result, discussions commenced regarding the potential development of a dedicated Blackpool safeguarding eLearning platform. Such a platform would provide:

- Greater flexibility in course development and delivery.
- Enhanced reporting on workforce participation and completion rates.
- Faster responses to emerging learning needs and risks.
- Improved access to locally relevant safeguarding resources.

Work to explore and develop this proposal will continue throughout 2026/27 as part of the partnership's wider commitment to modernising and expanding learning opportunities.

7.3.2.5 Trauma-Informed Approaches

Trauma-informed practice has become an increasingly important area of focus across safeguarding partnerships, reflecting growing recognition of the long-term impact adversity and trauma can have on individuals, families and communities.

During the year, partners agreed to take a more strategic, place-based approach to developing trauma-informed practice across services. This work recognises that trauma-informed approaches must extend beyond frontline interactions and become embedded within organisational culture, leadership and workforce wellbeing.

Progress during the year has included plans for a comprehensive organisational assessment to better understand workforce readiness, identify support needs and inform future training and development activity.

The work also acknowledges the impact safeguarding work can have on practitioners themselves, including the effects of vicarious trauma and emotional fatigue. Future activity will therefore include a greater focus on workforce wellbeing, resilience and organisational support mechanisms.

This long-term programme of work aims to create a more compassionate, effective and sustainable safeguarding system for both practitioners and the individuals they support.

7.3.3 Building Capacity Through a Multi-Agency Training Pool

A major achievement during the year has been the continued development of Blackpool's multi-agency training pool.

Representatives from Adult Services, Children's Services, Health, Lancashire Constabulary, Education, Housing and Blackpool Teaching Hospitals have worked collaboratively to co-design and co-deliver safeguarding training across the partnership.

This approach offers a number of benefits, including:

- Increased capacity to deliver training.
- Greater sustainability of the learning programme.
- Improved consistency of safeguarding messages.
- Enhanced opportunities for shared learning and understanding.
- Stronger partnership ownership of workforce development.

The training pool also provides a valuable mechanism through which learning from reviews, audits and emerging practice issues can be quickly incorporated into training delivery.

Further trainer development and recruitment activity is planned during 2026/27 to strengthen capacity and ensure the continued quality and consistency of training provision.

7.3.4 Embedding Learning from Reviews

A central principle underpinning the workforce development programme is the belief that learning should lead to tangible improvements in practice and outcomes.

Throughout the year, clear processes have been maintained to ensure learning arising from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs), Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and audit activity is disseminated effectively and embedded into workforce development activity.

This has included:

- Production and circulation of learning briefs.
- Development of seven-minute briefings.
- Learning events and workshops.
- Conference presentations.
- Integration of learning themes into training programmes and guidance.

The close alignment between workforce development, audit activity and review learning supports a culture of continuous improvement and helps ensure that lessons are translated into changes in professional practice rather than remaining solely within action plans or reports.

7.3.5 Developing Policy, Guidance and Practice Frameworks

Alongside workforce development activity, the partnership has continued to contribute to the development and implementation of safeguarding policies, guidance and practice frameworks.

Key achievements during the year include:

- Publication of the Person in a Position of Trust (PiPoT) Framework.
- Finalisation and implementation of the Multi-Agency Guidance for Responding to Self-Neglect.
- Development of the Pan-Lancashire Data Sharing Agreement.
- Contribution to the review and development of safeguarding and community safety strategies across partner organisations.

These developments help provide practitioners with clear and consistent guidance while ensuring safeguarding responses remain aligned with legislative requirements, emerging practice developments and partnership priorities.

7.3.6 Communication and Engagement

Effective communication remains essential in supporting workforce development and maintaining awareness of safeguarding priorities across the partnership.

The Blackpool Safeguarding Partnerships website has continued to evolve as an important resource for practitioners, providing access to guidance, learning materials, policies, training opportunities and safeguarding information.

Throughout the year, new content has been added covering key safeguarding themes including:

- Advocacy.
- Contextual Safeguarding.
- Cuckooing.
- Prevent.
- Self-Neglect.

Regular safeguarding newsletters have also continued to provide updates on partnership priorities, learning from reviews, awareness campaigns, training opportunities and emerging safeguarding risks.

Supporting this activity has been the implementation of a dedicated Communication and Engagement Strategy. The strategy aims to strengthen communication across the safeguarding system, increase awareness of learning opportunities and ensure that safeguarding messages are delivered consistently across organisations.

This coordinated approach supports greater workforce engagement and helps strengthen the partnership's overall learning culture.

7.3.7 Priorities for 2026/27

Building on progress made during the year, workforce development activity during 2026/27 will focus on:

- Expanding the safeguarding training programme to include Professional Curiosity, Safeguarding Adults Awareness, Making Safeguarding Personal, Self-Neglect and Mental Capacity.
- Further embedding trauma-informed approaches across all levels of practice and leadership.
- Strengthening and expanding the multi-agency training pool.
- Enhancing the dissemination and application of learning from reviews, audits and safeguarding practice.
- Improving approaches to evaluating learning and evidencing impact on practice and outcomes.
- Developing digital learning opportunities and workforce intelligence systems.
- Strengthening links between workforce development, assurance activity and lived experience.
- Continuing to demonstrate how workforce development contributes to improved outcomes for adults, children and communities.

Conclusion

The Workforce Development Strategic Delivery Group has made significant progress during 2025/26 in strengthening Blackpool's multi-agency safeguarding workforce and supporting a culture of learning, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Through the delivery of a comprehensive training programme, the introduction of new learning opportunities, the implementation of key safeguarding guidance and the continued embedding of learning from reviews and audits, the partnership has strengthened practitioners' ability to identify risk, respond effectively and work collaboratively to safeguard vulnerable adults, children and communities.

Importantly, the year's achievements demonstrate a shift beyond the delivery of training alone towards a more strategic approach to workforce development—one that links learning directly to partnership priorities, emerging risks, quality assurance findings and the experiences of those who use safeguarding services. This provides a strong foundation for continued development in 2026/27 and supports the partnership's ambition to deliver increasingly effective, person-centred and trauma-informed safeguarding practice across Blackpool.

7.4 Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Strategic Group – Annual Summary 2025/26

During 2025/26, Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), working in partnership with Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen Safeguarding Adults Boards through the Pan Lancashire SAR arrangements, has continued to strengthen the way Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) are commissioned, managed and used to drive improvement across the safeguarding system.

SARs remain one of the most important mechanisms available to the Board for understanding complex safeguarding circumstances, identifying opportunities for learning and improvement, and providing assurance that agencies are working effectively together to protect adults with care and support needs. Whilst SARs are commissioned in response to individual cases, their purpose extends far beyond understanding what happened to one person. They provide valuable insight into how organisations work together, highlight barriers to effective safeguarding practice, and help shape system-wide improvements designed to prevent similar circumstances occurring in the future.

Throughout the year, the Board has worked with Pan Lancashire partners to strengthen governance arrangements, improve consistency in decision-making and increase focus on the impact of learning arising from reviews. This reflects both local priorities and national expectations that safeguarding partnerships should be able to demonstrate not only that learning is identified, but that it results in meaningful improvements in professional practice and outcomes for individuals.

7.4.1 Progress and Key Developments

Significant progress has been made during the year to strengthen the quality, consistency and effectiveness of SAR arrangements across the Pan Lancashire partnership.

Recognising the importance of strong governance and clear accountability, the SAR Strategic Group undertook a review of its governance arrangements, resulting in refreshed Terms of Reference and greater clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes. These changes have strengthened oversight and supported a more consistent approach across the three safeguarding adults boards.

A key development has been the introduction of a SAR decision-making framework and decision tree methodology. This work was undertaken to support more consistent interpretation and application of Section 44 Care Act criteria, ensuring that decisions regarding SAR referrals are transparent, proportionate and evidence-based.

The partnership has also introduced enhanced guidance and support for SAR panel members. This includes clearer expectations regarding participation and contributions, alongside increased recognition of the potential emotional impact of SAR work on professionals. Consideration of vicarious trauma and practitioner wellbeing is now embedded within the review process, reflecting the often complex and distressing nature of cases being considered.

Across Pan Lancashire, partners have continued to utilise a common SAR process pack and supporting guidance. This has helped establish greater consistency in practice, reduce variation between areas and promote a shared understanding of expectations throughout the review process.

In addition, a multi-agency SAR training programme has been agreed to improve knowledge and confidence across partner organisations. The programme aims to strengthen understanding of statutory responsibilities, review methodologies, family engagement and the practical application of learning.

Collectively, these developments have enhanced the Board's ability to deliver high-quality reviews, encourage effective professional challenge and maintain a clear focus on learning and service improvement.

7.4.2 What is Working Well

Partners have identified a number of strengths within current SAR arrangements, demonstrating the continued maturity of safeguarding partnerships across Blackpool and the wider Pan Lancashire area.

One of the most significant strengths is the positive learning culture that exists across organisations. Agencies continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to openness, reflection and continuous improvement. There is widespread recognition that reviews should be viewed as opportunities for learning and system improvement rather than exercises in attributing blame.

Multi-agency partnership working remains a particular strength. Effective collaboration between safeguarding partners has supported constructive challenge, transparent discussion and shared accountability for learning and improvement. Partners have consistently engaged with SAR processes and demonstrated commitment to implementing recommendations arising from reviews.

Governance and scrutiny arrangements have also strengthened considerably during the year. Improved oversight and clearer decision-making processes have increased confidence that referrals are being considered consistently and that learning is being monitored appropriately.

Another positive development has been the growing recognition of the importance of engaging families and those closest to the individual throughout the review process. Increasing emphasis has been placed on ensuring reviews are conducted with openness, transparency and compassion, supported by duty of candour principles and a commitment to meaningful family involvement wherever possible.

These strengths provide a solid foundation for continued development and reflect a safeguarding system that is increasingly focused on learning, accountability and improvement.

7.4.3 Key Challenges

Although significant progress has been made, the Board recognises that important challenges remain.

A recurring theme across safeguarding reviews continues to be the challenge of demonstrating how learning translates into sustained improvements in frontline practice and outcomes for individuals. While agencies generally engage well with action plans and recommendations, obtaining evidence that learning has become embedded remains more difficult.

Timeliness also continues to present challenges. SARs often involve multiple agencies, extensive information gathering and complex circumstances. While this complexity is unavoidable in many cases, lengthy review processes can delay opportunities for learning and implementation of improvements.

Variation in reviewer practice remains another area requiring attention. Whilst reviewers bring considerable expertise to the process, differences in methodology, style and reporting approaches can affect consistency across reviews and make comparison of findings more challenging.

The review of Pan Lancashire arrangements also identified differences in how individual Boards approach SAR consideration, scoping and commissioning decisions. While local flexibility remains important, greater consistency has been identified as a priority to ensure fairness, transparency and shared understanding across the partnership.

Recurring themes continue to emerge across reviews, including issues relating to self-neglect, mental health, trauma, substance misuse, multi-agency coordination and support for individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage. The persistence of these themes highlights the need for stronger assurance arrangements to ensure learning is embedded and sustained over time.

Partners also recognised that family engagement remains an area requiring ongoing development. Whilst progress has been made, there is a need to further improve communication, provide clearer information about processes and ensure families feel supported and involved throughout reviews.

7.4.4 Learning from the Multi-Agency Review of SAR Processes and Learning

In October 2025, partners participated in a Pan Lancashire engagement event designed to review existing SAR arrangements and identify opportunities for improvement. The event brought together professionals from across safeguarding partnerships to reflect on current practice, share learning and explore how SARs can achieve greater impact.

A number of important themes emerged from this work.

The need to strengthen communication with families was identified as a key priority. Participants highlighted the importance of providing clear, accessible information throughout the process and ensuring that families understand how they can contribute to reviews and how learning will be used.

There was also considerable discussion regarding the need to better evidence the impact of SARs. Whilst reviews regularly identify learning and recommendations, partners acknowledged that more work is needed to answer the question: "What difference has the SAR made?" This includes understanding how recommendations influence practice, improve services and contribute to better outcomes for adults at risk.

Participants further identified opportunities to strengthen the way learning is embedded within frontline practice. This includes increasing direct engagement with practitioners, using more accessible learning products and developing approaches that encourage reflection and discussion in operational settings.

The review also highlighted opportunities to streamline SAR processes and adopt more proportionate approaches. Earlier scoping activity, clearer review objectives and more focused documentation were identified as ways of reducing unnecessary complexity and improving timeliness without compromising the quality of learning.

7.4.5 Priorities for 2026/27

In response to learning and feedback gathered throughout the year, BSAB and Pan Lancashire partners have agreed a number of priorities for 2026/27.

1. Improving Family Engagement

The Board will continue to strengthen family involvement throughout the SAR process, ensuring communication is timely, compassionate and accessible. Consideration will also be given to the availability of independent support and advocacy arrangements for families where appropriate.

2. Strengthening the Impact of Learning

A greater emphasis will be placed on demonstrating how learning influences practice and outcomes. Additional learning events, practitioner engagement activities and practical resources will be developed, alongside post-review audit activity to assess whether recommendations have been effectively implemented.

3. Improving Timeliness and Proportionality

The Board will explore opportunities to streamline SAR processes, improve project management arrangements and strengthen scoping activity to ensure reviews remain focused, proportionate and timely.

4. Improving Quality and Consistency

Further work will be undertaken to strengthen commissioning arrangements and quality assurance processes for independent reviewers. Partners will continue to embed agreed methodologies and seek greater consistency across Pan Lancashire Boards.

5. Strengthening Assurance and Governance

The Board will enhance oversight of recurring themes, emerging risks and implementation of recommendations. Greater focus will be placed on ensuring recommendations are outcome-focused, measurable and capable of demonstrating impact over time.

7.4.6 Conclusion

During 2025/26, Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board and its Pan Lancashire partners have continued to strengthen the strategic oversight, governance and effectiveness of Safeguarding Adults Reviews. Significant progress has been made in improving consistency, strengthening decision-making processes and enhancing the systems used to capture and share learning.

The year has also demonstrated the strength of partnership working across the safeguarding system, with agencies showing a strong commitment to openness, reflection and continuous improvement. This collaborative approach has provided a solid foundation for future development and ensured that learning remains at the heart of safeguarding activity.

Looking ahead, the Board's focus will increasingly be on evidencing impact. While processes and governance arrangements have matured considerably, the next stage of development will be ensuring that learning from reviews is consistently embedded in frontline practice and leads to demonstrable improvements in outcomes for adults at risk, their families and communities. Through a continued focus on learning, quality assurance, timeliness and meaningful engagement, the Board is well positioned to maximise the value and impact of SAR activity across Blackpool.

7.5 Contextual Safeguarding Group – Annual Summary 2025/26

The Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) continues to provide strategic leadership and oversight of Blackpool's response to exploitation, harm and vulnerability occurring beyond traditional family settings. Reporting jointly into Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), Blackpool Community Safety Partnership (BSafe) and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA), the group plays a critical role in ensuring that safeguarding responses reflect the increasingly complex environments in which children, young people and adults may experience harm.

Contextual safeguarding recognises that risks often emerge within peer groups, neighbourhoods, online spaces, educational settings and community environments, rather than solely within the family home. As patterns of exploitation continue to evolve, the partnership has increasingly adopted a whole-system approach that brings together safeguarding, community safety, health, education, housing and criminal justice partners to identify, assess and respond to risk.

During 2025–26, the group's work has focused on strengthening strategic governance, improving partnership intelligence, enhancing workforce understanding of exploitation, and responding proactively to emerging safeguarding threats affecting both children and adults. This has included significant progress in developing a shared strategic framework, improving multi-agency collaboration and strengthening the partnership's understanding of contextual risk across Blackpool.

7.5.1 Strategic Development and Governance

A significant achievement during the year was the formal approval and adoption of the Contextual Safeguarding Strategy by BSAB and partner safeguarding boards. The strategy provides a clear three-year framework for partnership activity and establishes a shared vision for preventing, identifying and responding to exploitation and contextual harm across Blackpool.

The strategy reflects growing recognition that safeguarding issues such as criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, county lines activity, cuckooing, serious violence and online harm require coordinated responses that transcend traditional organisational boundaries. Development of the strategy involved extensive multi-agency engagement and was strengthened through the inclusion of adult safeguarding perspectives, ensuring that vulnerabilities experienced by adults are appropriately reflected alongside those affecting children and young people.

To support delivery, a comprehensive action plan and performance tracker have been developed, supported by a dedicated task and finish group responsible for identifying priorities, milestones and success measures. This provides a mechanism for monitoring progress, measuring impact and ensuring accountability across partner agencies.

The implementation of a clear strategic framework represents an important step forward in creating a more coordinated and evidence-based approach to contextual safeguarding, enabling the partnership to move from reactive responses towards earlier identification, prevention and disruption of harm.

7.5.2 Strengthening Practice and Learning

Strengthening practitioner understanding and confidence remains central to the partnership's response to exploitation and contextual harm.

Throughout the year, the SDG has supported a range of learning, audit and workforce development activities designed to embed contextual safeguarding principles across frontline services. Demand for learning in this area has continued to increase, reflecting growing awareness of exploitation risks and the need for professionals to understand how harm can occur across a range of environments and relationships.

Contextual safeguarding training has become firmly established as part of the partnership's workforce development programme and remains fully subscribed well into the coming year. The sustained demand for training demonstrates both the relevance of the subject matter and the commitment of practitioners to strengthening their understanding of exploitation and vulnerability.

The group has also reviewed and refined its Group-Based Exploitation (GBE) Action Plan. The revised approach places greater emphasis on systemic learning and strategic improvement rather than focusing solely on individual cases. Key areas of focus include:

- Strengthening educational responses to exploitation.
- Challenging language and terminology that may minimise harm, including issues relating to adultification.
- Promoting whole-family approaches to intervention and support.
- Improving data quality, intelligence gathering and evidencing impact.

Within Adult Social Care, important progress has been made through the revision of safeguarding documentation and recording systems. These changes have enhanced the ability of practitioners to identify and record exploitation risks such as cuckooing, criminal exploitation and coercive influences, improving the quality of intelligence available to the partnership and supporting future analysis of safeguarding trends.

Despite this progress, partners recognise that further workforce development is required, particularly in relation to identifying exploitation among adults who may not traditionally be viewed as vulnerable, including individuals with learning disabilities, autism and complex support needs. Strengthening understanding in this area remains a priority moving forward.

7.5.3 Data, Intelligence and Performance

Developing a stronger evidence base has been a major focus throughout the year.

Recognising that effective responses to contextual safeguarding require high-quality intelligence and analysis, the partnership has made significant progress towards developing a comprehensive multi-agency contextual safeguarding dataset.

Current contributions include information from policing, education and social care services, with ongoing work to expand participation from adult safeguarding, health and wider community safety partners. This work supports the development of a more complete picture of local harm, vulnerability and exploitation.

Partnership working with the North West Regional Contextual Safeguarding Hub has further strengthened this work through the development of a regional data toolkit. The toolkit incorporates a range of indicators designed to improve understanding of contextual risk factors, including:

- Accident and Emergency attendance patterns.
- Violence and serious harm indicators.
- Substance misuse trends.
- Mental health presentations.
- Vulnerability and exploitation markers.

Work is continuing to strengthen data-sharing arrangements, improve the mapping of high-risk locations and enhance understanding of the effectiveness of interventions and disruption activity.

The long-term ambition is to develop a richer intelligence picture that combines quantitative performance information with qualitative insight, practitioner intelligence and lived experience. This will support earlier identification of emerging risks and enable more targeted safeguarding responses.

7.5.4 Key Safeguarding Initiatives

Missing from Home

One of the key achievements during the year has been the implementation of updated Pan Lancashire Missing From Home Guidance.

The revised guidance strengthens partnership responses to children and adults who go missing and recognises the strong links between missing episodes, exploitation, abuse and vulnerability. To support implementation, a comprehensive workforce rollout programme was delivered, engaging over 200 practitioners from across multiple agencies.

The guidance is currently subject to further review to ensure greater consistency in recording, information sharing and operational responses across all partner organisations, particularly within health settings.

This work supports earlier identification of risk, improved safeguarding planning and more effective disruption of exploitation.

Home Safety Checks

The Home Safety Check programme has continued to evolve and expand during the year.

Originally focused on specific safeguarding concerns, the initiative now supports both adults and children who may be affected by exploitation, vulnerability and community-based harm, including individuals linked to Awaken and related safeguarding pathways.

The enhanced approach has contributed to:

- Increased protection for vulnerable individuals.
- Reduced opportunities for exploitation within residential settings.
- Greater identification of risk factors within homes and communities.
- Improved partnership responses to concerns relating to cuckooing and criminal exploitation.

The initiative demonstrates the practical benefits of coordinated multi-agency working and the importance of combining prevention, safeguarding and disruption activity.

Further evaluation work is planned to strengthen understanding of impact and support future development.

Health and Emergency Department Response

Health services continue to play a vital role in identifying hidden vulnerability and exploitation.

Throughout the year, Emergency Department Navigators have provided important support to individuals aged 18 years and above who may be experiencing exploitation, violence or other safeguarding concerns. This work has strengthened opportunities for early identification of risk and enabled timely referrals into safeguarding and support services.

The initiative reflects increasing recognition that healthcare settings often provide critical opportunities to engage individuals who may not otherwise come into contact with safeguarding services.

7.5.5 Responding to Emerging Risks

The exploitation landscape continues to evolve, requiring the partnership to remain responsive to emerging threats and changing patterns of vulnerability.

Criminal exploitation remains a significant concern locally, particularly where organised crime groups target vulnerable individuals for criminal activity, drug distribution or financial gain. Partners have reported increasing concern regarding exploitation affecting both older adolescents and younger age groups, highlighting the need for continued prevention and early intervention activity.

Cuckooing, sometimes referred to as home invasion, also remains a persistent challenge. During the year, policing and safeguarding partners have managed multiple concurrent property closures and disruption activities aimed at protecting vulnerable residents and reducing opportunities for exploitation.

The partnership has additionally identified concerns relating to exploitation linked to prison release arrangements and offender movement into the area, creating new safeguarding challenges requiring coordinated responses from community safety, probation and safeguarding agencies.

Emerging patterns of substance misuse have also been identified within educational settings, particularly involving vaping devices containing synthetic substances. Whilst still developing, this issue has been recognised as an important area of focus for future safeguarding and prevention activity.

Encouragingly, despite these ongoing challenges, several positive performance trends have been observed across the partnership, including:

- A reduction in serious violence.
- A reduction in youth anti-social behaviour.
- A decrease in reported rape offences.
- Increased partnership disruption activity targeting exploitation and organised criminality.

These improvements demonstrate the value of coordinated preventative approaches and targeted partnership interventions.

7.5.6 Participation and Lived Experience

The group remains committed to ensuring that contextual safeguarding activity is informed by the experiences of those most affected by exploitation and vulnerability.

Throughout the year, there has been increasing involvement of individuals with lived experience in strategic discussions, learning activity and service development. This has helped partners gain a deeper understanding of how exploitation is experienced and identify opportunities for improving support and intervention.

Strong links have been maintained with services such as Awaken and other specialist support programmes, creating opportunities to engage with both young people and adults who have direct experience of exploitation, violence and vulnerability.

The growing emphasis on co-production reflects the wider partnership commitment to ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are informed not only by professional knowledge and performance information, but also by the voices and experiences of individuals and communities.

7.5.7 Priorities for 2026–27

Building on progress made during the year, the Contextual Safeguarding SDG has identified the following priorities for 2026–27:

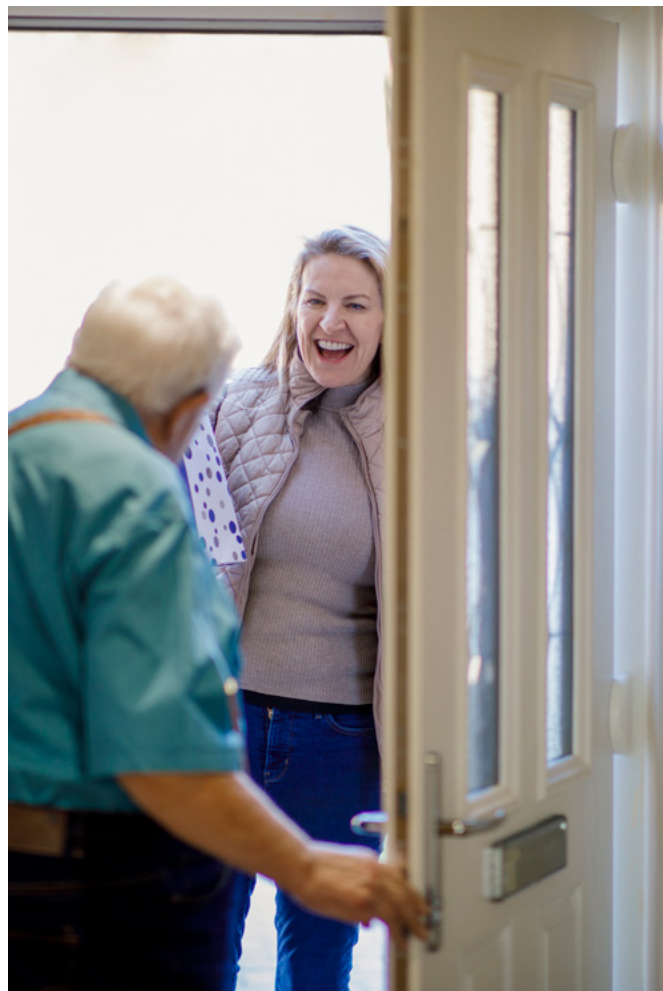
- Delivering and monitoring the Contextual Safeguarding Strategy action plan.
- Embedding a fully integrated multi-agency contextual safeguarding dataset.
- Strengthening workforce development relating to adult exploitation and vulnerability.
- Expanding prevention and early-help approaches across communities.
- Enhancing intelligence sharing, disruption activity and partnership responses to exploitation.
- Improving understanding of contextual safeguarding outcomes and impact.
- Further embedding lived experience and co-production within governance, practice and service development.

7.5.8 Conclusion

The Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Delivery Group has continued to make significant progress during 2025–26 in strengthening Blackpool's response to exploitation, vulnerability and contextual harm. Through the development of a clear strategic framework, improved governance arrangements, enhanced workforce development and stronger partnership intelligence, the group has strengthened the foundations for a more coordinated and effective safeguarding response.

Importantly, the partnership has continued to adapt to an increasingly complex safeguarding landscape, responding to emerging risks such as criminal exploitation, cuckooing, organised crime and evolving substance misuse trends, whilst maintaining a strong focus on prevention, early intervention and disruption.

Although challenges remain, particularly in relation to data integration, understanding adult exploitation and evidencing impact, the progress achieved during the year places the partnership in a strong position to continue improving outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and adults. The coming year will focus on embedding these developments further and ensuring that contextual safeguarding remains a central component of Blackpool's wider safeguarding and community safety arrangements.



8. Statutory Partner Agency Contributions

Partners including the Blackpool Council - Adult Social Care, Police and ICB continue to demonstrate strong safeguarding commitment and collaboration

8.1 Adult Social Care

8.1.1 Multi Agency Achievements (2025/26)

The development and launch of the Self-Neglect framework is an excellent piece of multiagency working which should have a significant positive impact on the lives of Blackpool's residents. This development work was undertaken across the partnership and resulted in a very robust document which includes clear guidance for practitioners. Once further work is done to embed its use we should see a significant improvement. This will help reduce the severity and prevalence of self-neglect in people's lives and a good way to measure its impact would be to see less referrals to single agency review processes and SAR consideration for people who experience self-neglect.

The introduction of robust themed multiagency audits will more clearly identify areas for multiagency improvement and provide a way to measure this improvement. The audits regarding self-neglect were timely in light of the above and will provide a way to show the impact and improvement which comes from the self-neglect framework.

The developing of information sharing processes and shared timescales between Adult social care and LSCFT is a significant achievement, and the intention is that this be replicated across the partnership.

8.1.2 Multi Agency Challenges (2025/26)

- Ensuring effective ways of embedding learning are in place- including learning from multiagency audits
- Further improving partnership wide relationships and communication
- Agreeing timescales and KPI's for information sharing

8.1.3 Organisational Contribution to BSAB Priorities

- Leading the development of the Self Neglect Framework
- Commissioning of an external audit into all areas of practice and recording
- Redesign and refresh of Safeguarding adults recording processes and recording guidance
- Introduction of Safeguarding handbook
- Development of Safeguarding practice development roles
- Introduction of PSW/Head of Safeguarding role.
- Development of internal post incident review process, contributing to more robust SAR consideration
- Development of career development and ASYE programmes to include specific safeguarding considerations.

8.1.4 Priorities for 2026/27

- Further planned investment in safeguarding roles
- Development of Quality Assurance framework (Including quality assurance of safeguarding practice and recording)
- Contribution to development of social work education in Blackpool via B&FC
- Ensuring residents receive a timely, consistent response when they are at risk of abuse or neglect- regardless of which of our teams is allocated to support them.
- Complete the co-production of our prevention strategy to more thoroughly meet our duty to prevent, reduce and delay needs.
- Further embed knowledge and use of the self-neglect framework.
- Further strengthen practice in Mental Capacity
- Putting research and evidence at the heart of safeguarding practice

8.2 Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB

8.2.1 Multi-Agency Achievements (2025/26)

During 2025/26, the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) continued to work collaboratively with partners across health and social care to strengthen safeguarding practice and improve outcomes for adults at risk.

A key area of work was the development of the 'Case of Ben' multi-agency learning resource. This anonymised case study, based on the lived experience of a young adult with complex health, social care and substance misuse needs, explores the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences. The learning package supports practitioners to better understand the interrelationship between substance misuse, mental capacity, executive functioning, Court of Protection thresholds and the management of professional disagreement. The resource has been incorporated into Level 3 multi-agency safeguarding learning opportunities across the system.

The ICB has also refreshed its mandatory Mental Capacity Act (MCA) training programme in line with national recommendations. MCA practice and learning from reviews have been embedded within primary care learning events to strengthen practitioner confidence and consistency of application.

In partnership with the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), the ICB contributed to the self-neglect audit and supported the development and implementation of the Self-Neglect Framework, helping to strengthen the partnership response to individuals experiencing self-neglect.

8.2.2 Multi -Agency Challenges 2025/26

There have been challenges in timely information sharing in relation to safeguarding enquiries and outcomes, which was being worked on at the time of writing this report across the system and improvements have been made. There was ongoing work for the partnership to be assured that learning from reviews and audits have resulted in a change in culture and practice across the system.

8.2.3 Organisational Contribution to BSAB Priorities:

Safeguarding Effectiveness

The ICB remains committed to supporting effective safeguarding practice through implementation of statutory frameworks, trauma-informed approaches and strong partnership working.

Key developments during the year included:

- Development and delivery of the 'Case of Ben' multi-agency learning resource to support professional practice in complex safeguarding situations.
- Refresh of mandatory Mental Capacity Act training and enhanced focus on MCA learning through primary care safeguarding events.
- Continued development of robust Court of Protection Deprivation of Liberty (COPDOL) processes to ensure applications are triaged, assessed and managed effectively, supporting lawful, proportionate and person-centred safeguards.
- Strengthened collaboration between the COPDOL Team and All-Age Continuing Care Teams, leading to improved coordination, continuity of care and better experiences for individuals and families.
- Strengthening organisational arrangements for the management of allegations through enhanced governance, assurance and escalation processes.
- Review and updating of key safeguarding policies, including:
 - Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy
 - Safeguarding Supervision Policy
 - Domestic Abuse in the Workplace Policy

Workforce Development

The ICB continues to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the health system.

Key workforce development achievements included:

- Ongoing thematic review of learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) to identify recurring themes and support sustainable improvements in practice.
- Leadership of the review and development of the Pan-Lancashire Self-Neglect Framework, with emerging learning shared nationally through presentations to the National Safeguarding Adults Network.
- Delivery of internal safeguarding awareness campaigns and engagement activities aligned to national safeguarding priorities and weeks of action.
- Strengthening support for staff experiencing domestic abuse through improved policies, guidance and access to specialist support services.
- Development of additional training and resources to increase manager confidence in recognising and responding appropriately to domestic abuse disclosures.

Making Safeguarding Personal

The ICB is committed to embedding the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) and ensuring that lived experience informs safeguarding improvement.

Throughout the year, the ICB:

- Utilised case studies and patient stories within Place-Based Assurance Meetings to support learning and service improvement.
- Contributed, as a statutory Safeguarding Adults Board partner, to partnership evaluations of MSP and the effectiveness of service user involvement.
- Maintained representation on MSP subgroups, supporting strategic development and co-production approaches across the safeguarding partnership.
- Continued to host the Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) Steering Group, ensuring reviews consider individual experiences and outcomes alongside opportunities for system learning.
- Embedded the principles of compassionate engagement through implementation of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF).

A number of individual safeguarding cases also demonstrated the impact of person-centred practice. These included supporting a Continuing Healthcare (CHC) patient to achieve their preferred outcome of returning home through collaborative assessment, risk management and care planning, and ensuring a care home resident's views informed a subsequent change of placement following concerns raised through a whistleblowing process.

8.2.4 Priorities for 2026/27

The ICB enters 2026/27 during a period of significant NHS reform and organisational change. Despite these challenges, safeguarding remains a core priority, with continued focus on statutory responsibilities, leadership, accountability and effective multi-agency working.

Key safeguarding priorities for the coming year include:

- Promoting and assuring person-centred care and support across the health system, including greater use of co-production and lived experience.
- Strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and supporting an effective safeguarding partnership.
- Embedding learning and continuous improvement to enhance safeguarding practice and outcomes.
- Supporting development of pathways for people with complex needs, including those with bariatric care requirements.
- Strengthening system understanding and responses to challenges associated with executive functioning, mental capacity assessment and multiple disadvantage, including ketamine-related harm.
- Improving the use of data and intelligence to identify emerging safeguarding themes, risks and opportunities for intervention.
- Maintaining robust governance and assurance arrangements as the ICB transitions towards a more strategic commissioning role.



8.3 Lancashire Police

8.3.1 Multi Agency Achievements (2025/26)

During 2025/26, Lancashire Constabulary has continued to strengthen safeguarding arrangements through collaborative partnership working, enhanced scrutiny processes, and a commitment to continuous improvement across vulnerability and safeguarding services.

Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding

A complex domestic abuse incident involving a person living with dementia was reviewed through a multi-agency forum, enabling partners to collectively consider risk, vulnerability, safeguarding responsibilities, and opportunities for learning. This promoted a coordinated, person-centred approach to safeguarding and victim support. A Domestic Abuse audit undertaken in April 2026 identified both organisational and multi-agency learning opportunities. Outcomes from the audit have informed service improvements, enhanced partnership understanding of effective practice, and contributed to improving outcomes for victims.

Pan Lancashire Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel

A monthly Pan Lancashire Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel has been established, bringing together police, criminal justice partners and the Crown Prosecution Service. The panel reviews domestic abuse investigations to identify learning opportunities, improve investigative standards, promote consistency across criminal justice partners and improve outcomes for victims.

Stalking Scrutiny Panel

A dedicated Stalking Scrutiny Panel has been implemented, comprising representatives from Lancashire Constabulary Legal Services, Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service, the Vulnerability Governance Unit and requesting officers. The panel reviews Stalking Protection Order applications and provides specialist guidance to investigating officers. This has improved understanding of legislative requirements, enhanced consistency in decision making, and strengthened safeguarding arrangements for stalking victims. In addition, Paladin has been engaged to undertake victim surveys and focus groups to ensure the voice of victims is captured and used to inform future service improvements.

MARAC Scrutiny Panel

A MARAC Scrutiny Panel has been established involving police and victim service partners. The panel reviews cases that have not met the threshold for referral to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), providing assurance around decision making and promoting consistency in risk assessment practices. This process helps ensure that those victims most likely to benefit from multi-agency intervention are appropriately identified and supported.

Missing from Home (MFH)

Continued development of the Missing from Home (MFH) process through collaborative working between the Safer Neighbourhood Team and partner agencies. This work has strengthened multi-agency engagement and information sharing to support the identification, safeguarding and management of individuals who are repeatedly reported missing, ensuring a coordinated approach to reducing risk and vulnerability.

Night-Time Economy Safety Initiatives - NightSafe

Lancashire Constabulary has continued to support and develop NightSafe, a multi-agency initiative designed to ensure people feel safe whilst enjoying Lancashire's night-time economy. The initiative brings together police, licensing authorities, venue operators, security staff, Street Pastors, Street Angels and other partners to create a safer environment for residents and visitors. Activity includes high-visibility patrols at key times, coordinated licensing visits, door staff compliance checks, use of the Ask for Angela scheme and proactive engagement with businesses operating within the night-time economy. The partnership approach enables the swift identification and management of risks, supports vulnerable individuals, and helps prevent crime, violence and intimidation within Lancashire's town and city centres.

Lancashire Constabulary has continued to support Project Vigilant, which aims to identify and deter predatory behaviour within the night-time economy and public spaces. The operation utilises specially trained plain-clothed officers who identify behaviours that may indicate predatory intent, such as following, harassing or targeting members of the public. Where concerning behaviour is identified, intelligence is passed to uniformed officers who undertake appropriate interventions, safeguarding activity and enforcement action where necessary. The initiative enhances the protection of vulnerable people, particularly women and girls, and demonstrates a proactive approach to preventing offending before it escalates into more serious criminal behaviour. Project Vigilant complements broader partnership activity to reduce violence against women and girls and improve public confidence in community safety.

The DRIVE project

The DRIVE project has been rolled out across Blackpool with great success. DRIVE works with service users (SUs) who have been assessed as posing a high-risk, high-harm level of domestic abuse (DA) to the people they are in intimate relationships with. The DRIVE Project's focus on support for those causing harm in their relationships digresses from the usual 'victim focus,' offering tailored support and interventions which fit the complexities of the SU's lives, through coordinated multi-agency communications and disrupt / behavioural change interventions.

Continuation of Op Centurion, the overarching brand for tackling ASB in Lancashire, Operation Intrusion the constabulary's response to cuckooing issues relating to County Lines and exploitation of vulnerable children and adults and Operation Astral, the local response to Ketamine abuse in Blackpool.

8.3.2 Multi Agency Challenges (2025/26)

While partnership working across Lancashire remains positive and effective, some challenges have been identified:

- The volume of meetings across the Lancashire partnership landscape continues to create demand on police and partner agency resources. There is potential duplication across multiple partnership groups and governance structures. At times, it can be challenging to identify shared strategic priorities due to overlapping workstreams being undertaken independently across different forums.

Opportunities exist to streamline governance arrangements and strengthen coordination to maximise efficiency and collective impact.

8.3.3 Organisational Contribution to BSAB Priorities

(Safeguarding Effectiveness/ Making Safeguarding Personal/ Workforce Development)

The Audit and Assurance Group is chaired by a Detective Chief Inspector and provides scrutiny and assurance regarding safeguarding performance and effectiveness. The Vulnerability Governance Unit (VGU) monitors performance across vulnerability themes through a range of internal and external boards, partnerships and sub-groups. This includes a recent deep dive into RASSO and Stalking and Harassment. Through partnership engagement and performance analysis, opportunities for service improvement are identified and progressed through workforce development, policy review and process improvement. Changes are monitored through audit and assurance activity to assess impact and provide confidence that improvements are delivering better outcomes for vulnerable people.

8.3.4 Priorities for 2026/27

- Introduction of the COBI (Compulsive & Obsessive Behaviour Intervention) programme provides a psychology-led, DBT-based intervention targeting root causes of stalking behaviour.
- Introduction of DAPO (Domestic Abuse Protection Orders) by November 2026.
- Robustly pursue perpetrators of harm against vulnerable adults, utilising criminal and civil opportunities.
- Continue to improve the way people contact us when they are in need, to ensure an outstanding service to the public.
- Identify and safeguard the most vulnerable people.
- Hold partners accountable to ensure that people get the right support from the right agency, at the right time.
- Reduce serious youth violence.
- Reduce violence against women and girls
- Continue to focus on reducing antisocial behaviour.
- Ensure effectiveness and efficiency in our service delivery by maximising the innovative use of technology and data.
- Strengthen our local partnerships with a focus on a collaborative and preventative approach.
- Deliver high quality, proportionate and timely investigations, providing regular updates to victims.
- Contribute towards criminal justice system reform and improvements to ensure criminals are effectively and efficiently brought to justice.
- Work with our partners to manage offenders appropriately to prevent re-offending.

8.4 Healthwatch/Empowerment

8.4.1 – Multi Agency Achievements (2025/26)

1. Strengthening Learning and Practice Development Across Adult Social Care

During 2025/26, Empowerment Charity strengthened its partnership working with Practice Development Leads across Adult Social Care. Through these relationships, we contributed lived experience perspectives and shared case studies to support multi-agency learning circles involving social workers and safeguarding practitioners. This collaborative approach has enhanced opportunities for reflective practice, strengthened understanding of person-centred safeguarding approaches, and supported the application of learning from complex cases across partner agencies.

2. Leadership and Contribution to the Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) Agenda

Empowerment Charity continue to play an active role within the Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) delivery group, including chairing meetings and contributing to the development of workstreams focused on co-production and strengths-based approaches. Through partnership with statutory and voluntary sector colleagues, we have helped progress discussions around meaningful involvement of people with lived experience in safeguarding processes and service development. This work has supported the Board's commitment to person-centred safeguarding and has promoted innovative ways of working across agencies. Strengthening co-production and further embedding MSP principles remains a key priority for the coming year.

3. Building Safeguarding Capacity Through Training, Advocacy and Collaborative Practice

Throughout the year, Empowerment Charity has worked collaboratively with Adult Social Care and wider partners to strengthen safeguarding knowledge and practice. We delivered and promoted advocacy training through our business unit, creating opportunities for practitioners to develop their understanding of advocacy rights and the role of independent advocacy in safeguarding. We have also increased engagement and dialogue with Adult Social Care teams to support greater awareness and access to advocacy services. In addition, our Changing Futures team has continued to work within a collaborative, multi-agency framework, bringing together services to address complex needs and improve outcomes for individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage. This partnership approach has supported more coordinated safeguarding responses and improved service accessibility for vulnerable adults.

8.4.2 – Multi Agency Challenges (2025/26)

Identify any partnership level challenges encountered during the year, including barriers to communication, collaboration, information sharing, or the embedding of shared learning.

One of the key partnership challenges experienced during 2025/26 has been facilitating consistent multi-agency discussions involving Adult Social Care across some areas of our support provision, particularly in relation to proactive, neighbourhood-level approaches to care and support.

Whilst positive relationships exist with individual teams and practitioners, opportunities for regular collaborative discussions and early intervention planning have not always been available. This can limit the ability to coordinate support effectively, share information at an early stage, and maximise the benefits of a multi-agency approach for people with complex or emerging needs.

In response, Empowerment Charity has continued to invest in relationship-building with Adult Social Care colleagues and other key partners. We have increased engagement through safeguarding forums, practice development activities, advocacy discussions, and collaborative networks. Strengthening these connections and developing more consistent opportunities for multi-agency working at a neighbourhood level will be a key priority for 2026/27, with the aim of improving coordination, information sharing, and safeguarding outcomes for the people we support.

8.4.3 – Organisational Contribution to BSAB Priorities

Safeguarding Effectiveness

Empowerment Charity has continued to strengthen safeguarding effectiveness across the organisation during 2025/26. We successfully embedded the action plan developed following our Leaders in Safeguarding Accreditation, achieved in early 2025, ensuring continuous improvement in safeguarding leadership, governance, and practice. Through our advocacy services, we have worked closely with Adult Social Care and partner agencies to promote individuals' rights, voice, and involvement in safeguarding processes. Our Changing Futures team has continued to contribute to collaborative, multi-agency approaches that support people experiencing multiple disadvantage and complex needs.

Challenges: Strengthening engagement with Adult Social Care at a neighbourhood and early intervention level remains an area for development. We are prioritising relationship-building and creating more opportunities for proactive multi-agency working to support coordinated safeguarding responses.

Workforce Development

Workforce development has remained a key priority throughout the year. Staff have participated in safeguarding training and development opportunities, including Safer Recruitment Training. As a result, we have strengthened recruitment processes and now ensure that at least two-thirds of recruitment panel members are safer recruitment trained. We have also delivered and promoted advocacy training through our business unit, increasing awareness and understanding of advocacy within partner organisations and creating further opportunities for collaborative learning with Adult Social Care colleagues.

Challenges: As safeguarding practice continues to evolve, maintaining workforce capacity and ensuring consistent opportunities for joint learning across agencies remains important. We will continue to seek opportunities for shared training, learning events, and collaborative development with safeguarding partners.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

Empowerment Charity has actively supported the Making Safeguarding Personal agenda through leadership and participation in the MSP Subgroup, including chairing meetings and contributing to work focused on co-production and strengths-based approaches. We have promoted the involvement of people with lived experience in shaping services and safeguarding practice. This includes the continued involvement of our lived experience youth panel in recruitment processes for children's roles, ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience influence decision-making and service development. We have also contributed case studies and learning to multi-agency learning circles, supporting reflective practice and person-centred approaches across the partnership.

Challenges: While progress has been made in embedding co-production and lived experience approaches, there remains further opportunity to strengthen involvement across all areas of safeguarding practice and partnership activity. Further embedding co-production and expanding opportunities for meaningful participation will remain a priority during 2026/27.

8.4.4 – Priorities for 2026/27

Please describe your organisation's safeguarding priorities for the 2026/27 period, including any planned developments, areas for improvement, or opportunities for strengthened partnership working.

Empowerment Charity's safeguarding priorities for 2026/27 focus on continuous improvement, strengthening partnership working, and further embedding Making Safeguarding Personal principles across our services and the wider safeguarding system.

A key priority will be undertaking a comprehensive internal safeguarding audit to review policies, procedures, and practice against current standards and best practice. This will provide assurance that our safeguarding arrangements remain robust, effective, and responsive to the needs of the people we support, while identifying opportunities for further improvement.

We are also keen to work collaboratively with the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and partner organisations to explore a system-wide community engagement project. The aim of this work would be to gather feedback from people with lived experience, communities, practitioners, and partner agencies to better understand how Making Safeguarding Personal principles are being experienced in practice. This will help identify examples of effective, person-centred safeguarding, celebrate areas of good practice, and highlight opportunities for further development across the partnership.

Strengthening multi-agency relationships and collaborative working will remain a significant focus. We will continue to build relationships with Adult Social Care and other partners to support earlier intervention, improved communication, and more coordinated responses for individuals with complex needs. Alongside this, we are committed to ongoing discussions with partners about how organisations can work to their respective strengths, maximising collective expertise, reducing duplication, and improving outcomes for adults at risk.

Through these priorities, Empowerment Charity aims to contribute to a stronger safeguarding culture, enhanced partnership working, and improved experiences and outcomes for the people and communities we support.

9. BSAB Priorities for 2026/27

1.1 Safeguarding Effectiveness

A. Effectiveness of Blackpool Safeguarding Adult Board and Governance Structures

What will we do?

- Refresh our membership to ensure there is correct representation at the Board.
- In Partnership, develop appropriate and effective safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensure that the appropriate Governance Structure is in place, is right for Blackpool and gives assurance.

B. Effectiveness of Operational Practice

What will we do?

- Use Partnership data/information to understand demand and current/emerging risks and the quality of data/referrals.
- In partnership, develop and deliver innovative strategies/practice that reduces demand and the risk of abuse/neglect.
- Develop a robust performance framework.

1.2 Workforce Development

What will we do?

- Use peoples lived experience to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery.
- Ensure the learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR's) and local reviews, translate into effective development/training for organisations and staff, including the use of learning circles.
- Develop a positive workforce skilled in effective safeguarding prevention and intervention.

1.3 Making Safeguarding Personal

What will we do?

- Provide access to the public to the right information to help them identify services to help them and empowering them to make referrals, complaints and provide feedback. With this, ensure the voice of the community is heard and incorporate this into service delivery by seeking opportunities for feedback for service improvement.
- Have an effective communications strategy, providing details of events throughout the year.
- Facilitate reviews and audit activity to ensure appropriate audit and assurance function is embedded. This year an emphasis will be placed on staff wellbeing and whether we are doing enough to support staff. We need their feedback and engagement to make improvements

