

# Prevention Strategy for Safeguarding Adults

Keeping Adults Safe in Halton

2023-2028

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## SECTION ONE

### Introduction

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on Local Safeguarding Adults Boards to develop and implement a clear strategy around the prevention of abuse or neglect of adults at risk. Prevention is one of the core principles of safeguarding and as such forms a fundamental part of local adult safeguarding policy, framework, and arrangements.

This strategy replaces the previous Halton Strategy for prevention in Adult Safeguarding 2013-2022 and provides an overarching framework and sets direction for Halton Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) and its partner agencies in for the next 5 years. It is informed by:

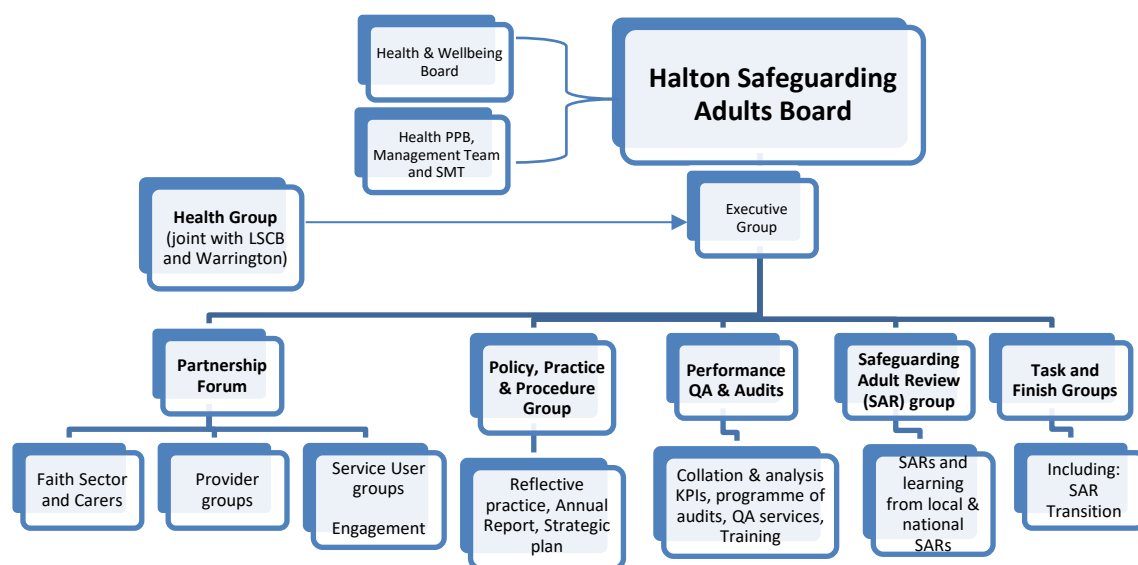
- ❖ National legislation (Care Act 2014) and the guidance from a broad range of health and care policies, both locally and nationally Some examples include Self- Neglect, Adult Human Trafficking, Mental Capacity Act and Financial Abuse.
- ❖ A joint local safeguarding policy with Police and safeguarding agreements with NHS and emergency services.
- ❖ What is identified as best practice and effective prevention
- ❖ What partners and adults have told us through our Consultation and Engagement Strategy

# 1: The Halton Safeguarding Adults Board and its subgroups

Halton’s Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) members represent key services within Halton and meet quarterly. There are subgroups that undertake specific work on behalf of the board. These subgroups provide information and reports for the HSAB for each meeting.

The HSAB decides the direction of work locally based on information gathered from subgroups and wider consultations with the community and information gained including data intelligence (statutory Safeguarding Adults Collection). HSAB shares its information with Halton’s Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Policy and Performance Board.

Halton’s Safeguarding Adults Board produces an annual Strategic Plan in accordance with Care Act 2014 guidance. This plan details the board and subgroup structures, memberships, current priorities and a business plan for achieving the objectives set for each priority. (LINK TO PLAN)



HSAB also has a multi-agency performance framework to monitor and record safeguarding issues locally across each service including safeguarding referrals, investigations and incidents. This information is shared with central government and is also used locally so that any gaps, trends, good practice and learning opportunities can be picked up and actioned through HSAB with the support of the subgroups.

Through this strategy, the Halton Safeguarding Adults Board and its subgroups will have an overview of the prevention work taking place in its area. The Board will also maintain links with other strategic forums and plans to ensure this work ties in with their work. These include links with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and the Care Quality Commission.

Member organisations can use this strategy to inform the development of local plans and guidance to support this work.

The strategy has been agreed by the Halton Safeguarding Adults Board and its subgroups.

## 2: Vision and Purpose of the Strategy

The Vision of the Prevention in Safeguarding Strategy has been developed to reflect the vision of the Halton Safeguarding Adults Board

*“Our vision is that people with care and support needs in Halton are able to live their lives free from abuse and harm”*

### **To keep adults in Halton Safe**

For adults in Halton to live in an environment where they can live a life free from harm and free from the fear of harm, where communities and agencies:

- Create a caring culture with zero tolerance to all forms of abuse
- Work together to prevent abuse and protect all adults
- Have tools and information available to keep themselves safe
- Are enabled to identify potential harm and respond appropriately

Our aim within adult safeguarding is to empower people to live their own lives and make their own decisions by providing services which enable them to live as full members of the community, free from harm, the fear of harm, abuse and intimidation and where their dignity is respected.

Safeguarding is about much more than just protecting adults at risk, it is about enabling and empowering adults to live their lives as they wish, make their own decisions and choices, take their own appropriate risks, be in control, promote independence and provide equal opportunities for everyone to maximise their chances of living the healthiest, happiest and safest life they possibly can. The prevention of safeguarding issues for adults is a multi-agency and society responsibility.

It is recognised that preventative work around adult safeguarding is broader than the investigative work carried out by local authority safeguarding and police colleagues, and instead involves the broad spectrum of partners that work as part of the HSAB.

### **a) Key messages**

This strategy recognises that there are several building blocks for prevention and early intervention, including:

- A well-trained workforce operating in a culture of zero tolerance of abuse.
- An informed public that is aware of the issues to ensure the success and

effectiveness of the strategy.

- People being informed of their rights to be free from abuse and supported to exercise these rights, including access to advocacy.
- A sound framework for confidentiality and information sharing across agencies.
- Access to good universal services, such as community safety services.
- Needs and risk assessments to inform people's choices.
- Safeguarding to achieve a balance between protecting people and preserving their right to make decisions for themselves

#### **b) Principles which underpin the strategy:**

- Prevention in safeguarding should be broadly defined and include all health and social care user groups and service settings.
- Prevention should take place in the context of person-centred support and personalisation, with individuals empowered to make choices and supported to manage risks.
- Use of Safeguarding monitoring data and other intelligence to identify people, groups or localities most at risk in order to target preventive work
- Identify any not yet reached groups and communications and engagement put in place to raise awareness and improve reporting amongst these groups and communities.
- Actively encourage service users and their families, friends and carers to participate in developing solutions to challenges they may be facing. *'Co-production' and a collaborative strengths-based practice is an approach which enables the individual to influence the support and services they receive. This approach contributes to developing the resilience of individuals and helps promote self-reliance and independence.*
- Good partnership working and a multi-disciplinary approach adopted within and across local services.
- Robust risk management (undertaken within the context of positive risk taking) is an important tool in effective prevention and early intervention.
- Safeguarding training programmes should address prevention and early intervention and include as core skills, Making Safeguarding Personal, risk enablement, risk management, community safety, legal powers and remedies.

### 3: National and Local Context

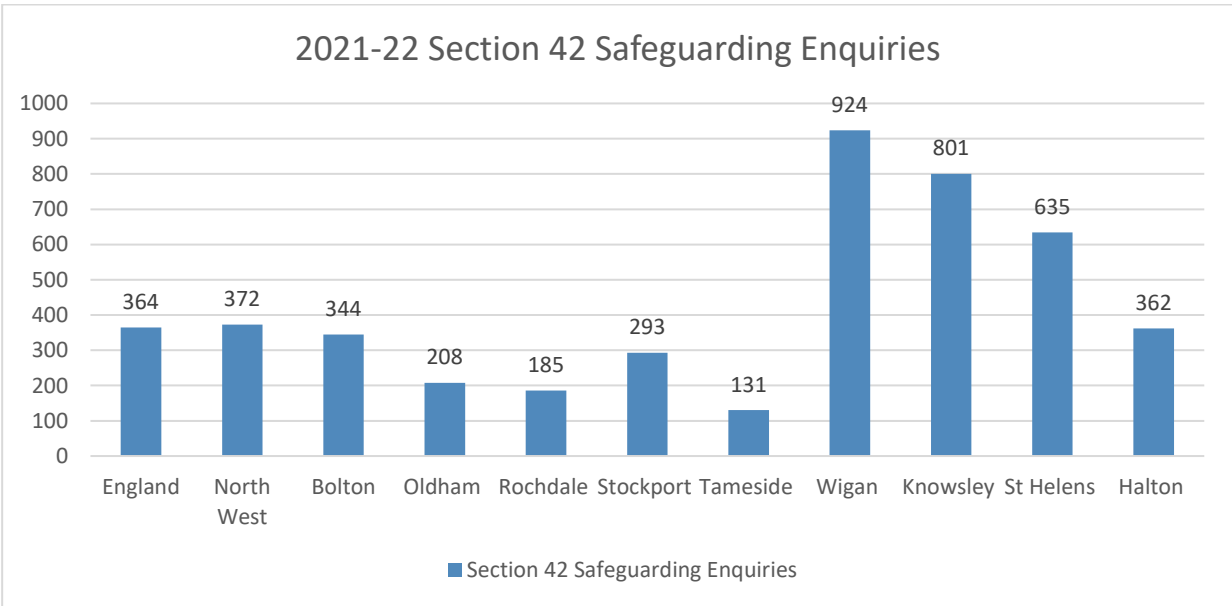
#### a) Local Safeguarding Data -

Following the introduction of the Care Act in 2014, the first annual report of Safeguarding activities for local authorities was released in 2015/16. The 2015/16 data captured the number of referrals and breakdown of the types and demographics of referrals as well as outcomes.

A safeguarding concern is where a council is notified about a risk of abuse, which instigates an investigation under the local safeguarding procedures. The initial investigation may then develop into a formal investigation, known as a Section 42 enquiry. A higher number of enquires may indicate that there are more individuals experiencing a safeguarding issue risk; it may also however, indicate that there is a better awareness of potential risk amongst the community and therefore a lower tolerance or threshold of risk within that community. Without further breakdown, the number of enquiries on its own does not indicate level of real safeguarding activities.

The charts below are the nearest comparable data charts to the 2015/16 data that was included in the Halton 2017-22 safeguarding adults' prevention strategy. They have now been updated with 2021-22 data and the main changes since 2015/16 highlighted.

**Chart 1: Section 42 Enquiries received between April 2021-March 2022 per 100,000 adult population**

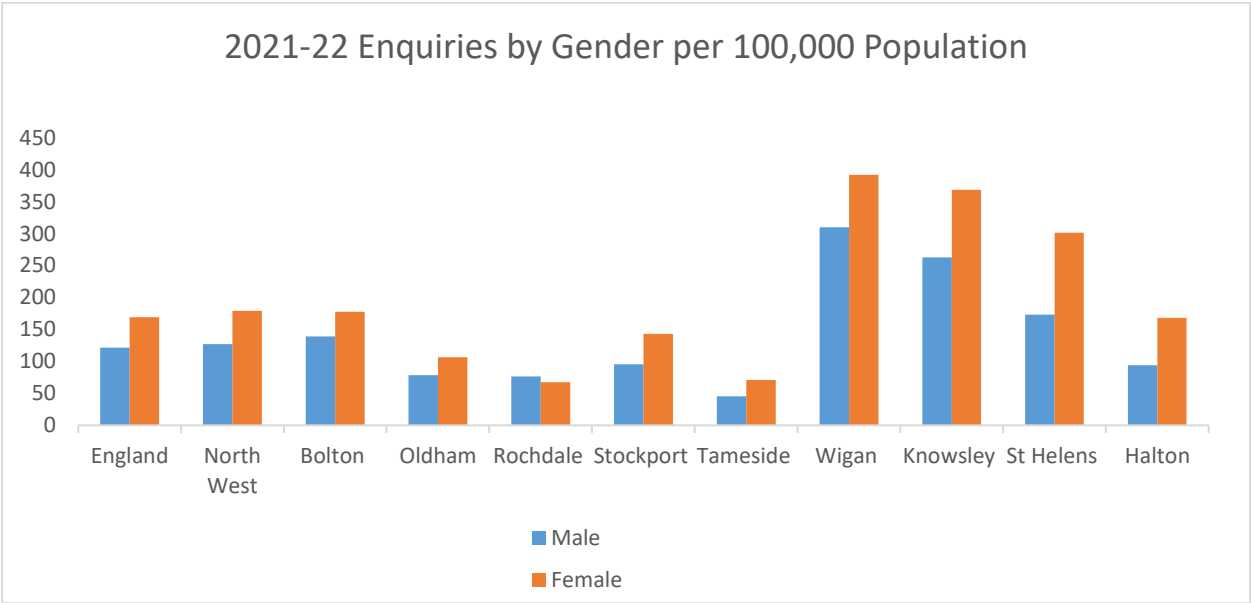


The 2021/22 England average section 42 enquiries per 100,000 population is 364. An increase since 2015/16 when it was 240. In 2021/22 Wigan had the highest



enquiries at 924 per 100,000, a significant increase since 2015/16 for them. Halton had 362 which is slightly below the England average and is significantly reduced from the 678 Halton had in 2015/16 which at the time was twice the rate of section 42 enquires compared to the average of its comparator group (323).

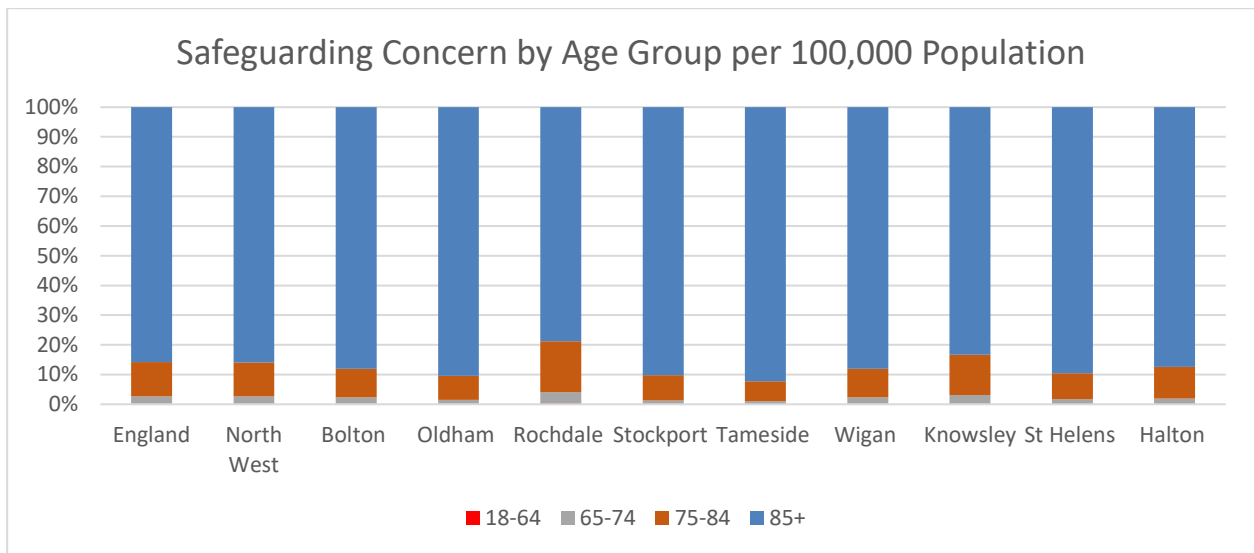
**Chart 2: Enquiries per 100,000 adults for Halton and Comparator group by gender April 2021-March 2022**



The 2021/22 data table above shows the highest proportion of enquiries are for individuals who are female. This reflects the national and comparator picture although the numbers of both female and male appear to have reduced significantly for many authorities since 2015/16 apart from Wigan’s numbers which have increased just as they have done in chart 1.

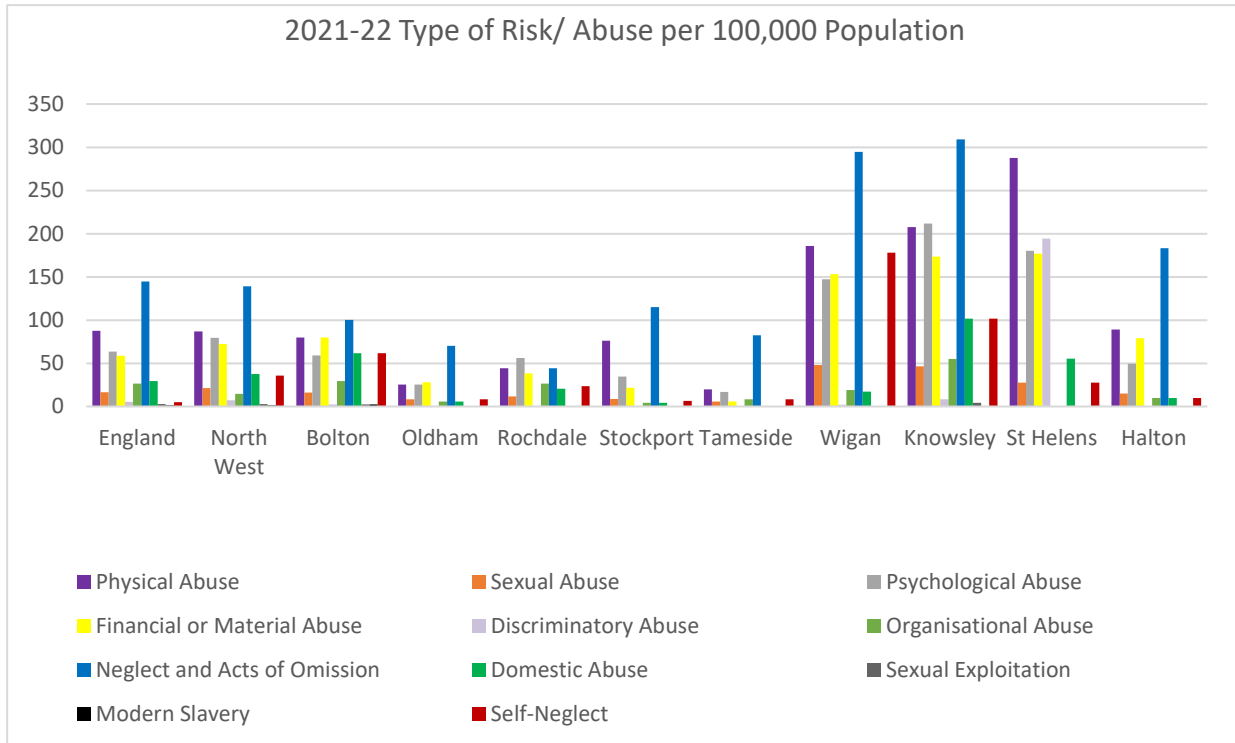
In 2015/16 Halton had 790 female and 500 male enquiries per 100,000 population. This has reduced to 94 males and 168 females per 100,000 population in 2021/22.

**Chart 3: Enquiries per 100,000 Adults for Halton and Comparator Group by Age Group 2021/22**



The 2021/22 data above shows that the highest and the significant proportion of enquiries received were for individuals who were 85 years and over. Both charts 2 and 3 show that the most enquiries were still for females over 85 years and over, which was the same as 2015/16 data.

**Chart 4: Type of Risk as a proportion of enquiries received for Halton and Comparator Groups**



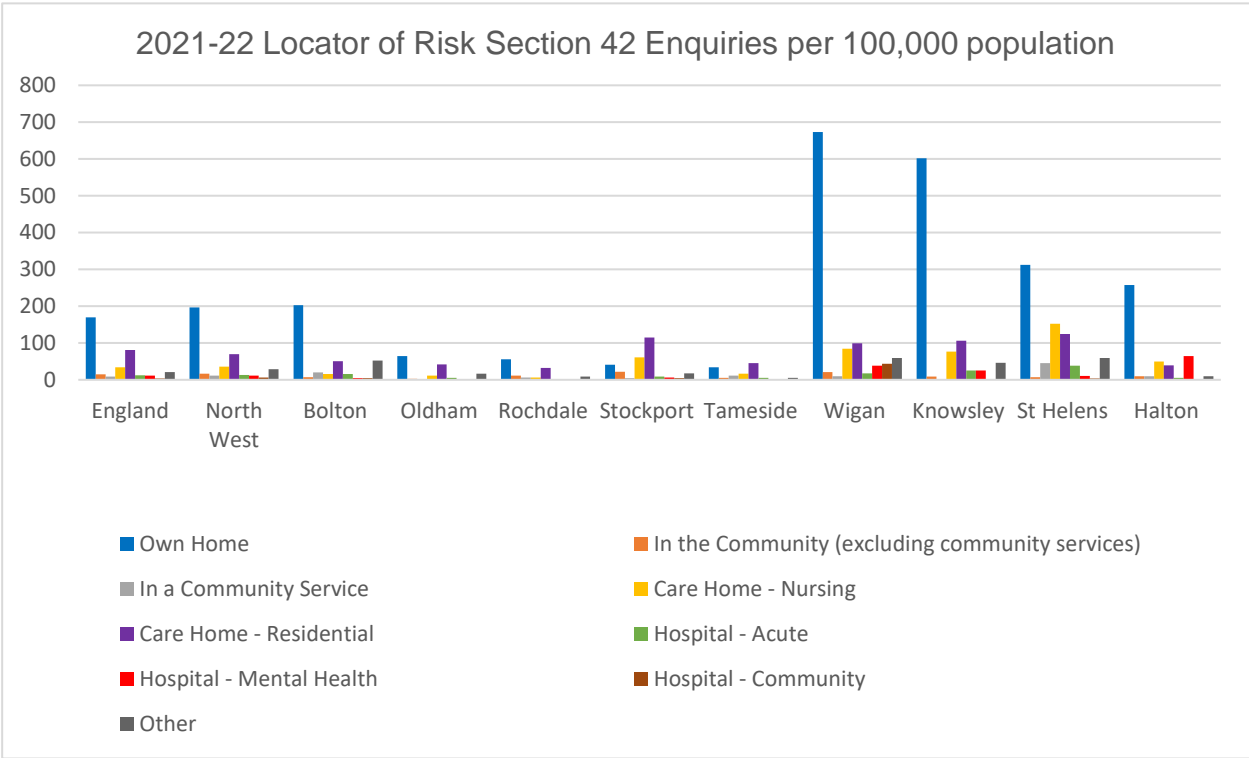
The types of risks reported within the enquiries received in Halton reflect the national trend with the majority of risk identified for two main categories, neglect and acts of

omission and physical abuse which were the same main categories identified in the 2015/16 data. In Halton the 2015/16 showed the two main categories were almost equal.

The 2021/22 data highlights a significant change in Halton data as Neglect and Acts of Omission (183 per 100,000) were twice as high as physical abuse. (89). This also seems to be the trend nationally and, in the northwest, apart from St Helens, where physical abuse is now the highest risk.

It is a possibility that the increases recorded in neglect and acts of omission may be somewhat linked to the COVID Pandemic and sustained period of lockdown which was still in place in 2021

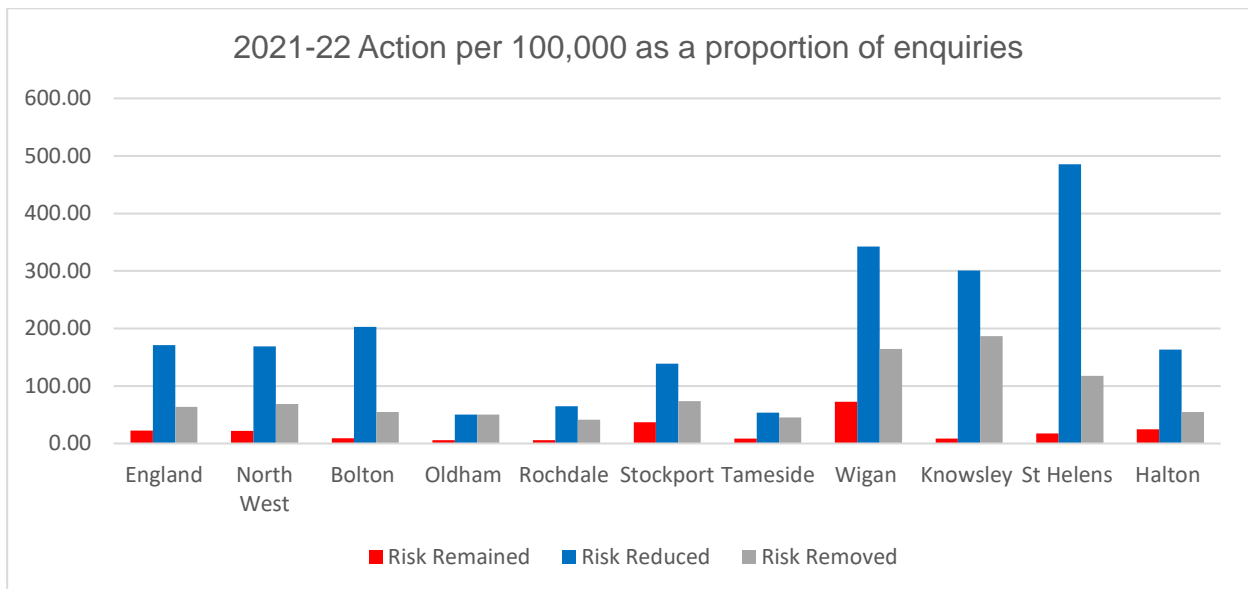
**Chart 5: Location of Risk/ Abuse for Halton and comparator Group as a proportion of enquires**



In 2015/16 the locations of the enquiries in Halton reflected the national and comparator trend with the primary source of concern being within an individual’s own home, with care homes forming the next highest proportion of enquiries.

The 2021/22 data shows that the locations of enquiries are still the most prominent in a person’s own home for England and the northwest.

**Chart 6: Action and results as a proportion of enquiries received for Halton and Comparator Groups**



The 2021-22 data shows the proportion of enquiries for which the investigation identified action to be taken and subsequently resulted in a reduction or removal of the risk in Halton mirrors the England and Northwest trend. This also applied to where the risk remained.

This is a change for Halton from the 2015/16 data which showed that Halton had a much higher rate of enquiries at that time (as per chart 1)

## b) Data Summary

For Halton, the main changes between the 2015/16 data and the 2021/22 data are the reduction in the number of enquiries being received which had halved for Halton between 2015/16 and 2021/22 bringing it in line with or slightly below the national and regional averages.

The main areas of risk remain in a person's own home and with the highest risks being to females over the age of 85. This has not changed since the 2015/16 data was published although the neglect and acts of omission risk have increased more in some northwest authorities than they have nationally (as per chart 4)

## **SECTION TWO**

### **1. Activities to promote prevention in safeguarding**

Local services are encouraged to undertake a range of activities aimed at promoting general wellbeing and maintaining independence as a means of eliminating or reducing the service user's vulnerability to potential exploitation, abuse or neglect.

### **2. General activities to promote wellbeing:**

- Providing universal access to good quality information.
- Supporting safer neighbourhoods.
- Actively addressing hate crime or anti-social behaviour.
- Promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
- Reducing loneliness or isolation, such as via befriending schemes or community activities.
- Encouraging early discussions in families/groups about potential future changes.
- Having conversations about care arrangements if a family member becomes ill or disabled.

### **3. Specific activities to prevent exploitation, abuse or neglect:**

- Identifying vulnerability factors and potential risks as part of the needs assessment and addressing these as part of the support planning process.
- Using support plans to reduce loneliness or isolation and helping the person to strengthen or build their social and support networks.
- Using accessible ways and support to help people understand the different types of abuse and its prevention including what to look out for and the steps to take if abuse is suspected.
- Providing people with information about sources of independent information, advice and advocacy.

Providing people with information about the role of the Court of Protection and Office of the Public Guardian as well as the mechanisms available (e.g., power of attorney, deputyship, Department of Work and Pensions appointee-ship) to ensure their best interests are protected and to safeguard against financial exploitation if they lose their capacity to make welfare and/or property and financial decisions in the future.

- Reinforcing through literature and awareness that everyone has the right to be free from abuse and ensuring where someone needs support in exercising this right, they can access appropriate support, including advocacy services.
- Providing training and education of service users on exploitation and abuse

in order to help them to recognise this and to have the interpersonal skills necessary to deal with the situation should this occur.

- Developing and promoting a range of 'Keeping Safe' initiatives e.g., Leaflet and Posters to promote Safer Places, Buy with Confidence, Making Money Matter, Hate Crime Awareness, SCAM Awareness initiatives, Neighbourhood Watch, Dementia Friendly Communities.
- Ensuring people are safe in whatever setting they live and that they are protected by the crime prevention measures aimed at the whole community and that they can access mainstream criminal justice and victim support services. This requires effective links between adult safeguarding arrangements and the full range of community safety services and resources
- Supporting carers by offering a needs or carer's assessment and use this as an opportunity to explore the individuals' circumstances and consider whether it would be possible to provide information, or support that prevents abuse or neglect from occurring, for example, by providing training to the carer about the condition that the adult they care for has or to support them to care more safely.
- Recognition that abuse or neglect may be unintentional and may arise because a carer is struggling to care for another person. This makes the need to take action no less important, but in such circumstances, an appropriate response could be a carer assessment and support package for the carer and monitoring.
- Ensuring the person is able to access support and services to help them recover from the abuse or neglect they have experienced. This approach will also help build future resilience.

#### **4. Activities to promote prevention and early intervention in care settings:**

- Organisations should ensure that the principles of wellbeing and adult safeguarding are directly linked into commissioning, contract and procurement activity.
- Commissioners should assure themselves, through contracting arrangements that providers have clear arrangements in place to prevent abuse or neglect and that they undertake a range of activities aimed at keeping service users safe.
- Care providers should be able to demonstrate a person-centred approach to care; a zero tolerance of abuse and neglect which encourages whistleblowing; staff, service user and family awareness of the nature of abuse and what to do if this is suspected; safe recruitment practices; regular quality monitoring and audit of care; regular staff training and updating of skills and clear policies and practice guidance available to all staff and volunteers.

- Care providers should make their staff aware through internal guidelines of what to do when they suspect or encounter abuse of adults in vulnerable situations. This should be incorporated in staff manuals or handbooks detailing terms and conditions of appointment and other employment procedures so that individual staff members will be aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding adults. This information should emphasise that all those who express concern will be treated seriously and will receive a positive response from managers.
- Commissioners should assure themselves, through contracting arrangements that a provider is capable and competent in responding to allegations of abuse or neglect, including having robust processes in place to investigate the actions of members of staff.
- Commissioners should put in place robust arrangements to enable poor or unsafe care to be identified and addressed at an early stage.
- All commissioners or providers of services in the public, voluntary or private sectors should disseminate information about the multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedures.

## SECTION THREE

### Prevention in Adult Safeguarding – Delivery and Learning Plan

The Delivery and Learning plan are linked to HSAB's priorities

1. **Prevention:** The golden thread that runs through the strategy and its priorities. We will be responsible for overseeing the performance of safeguarding activity.
2. **Performance Quality Assurance and Audits:** We will be responsible for overseeing the performance of safeguarding activity.
3. **Policy Practice and Procedures:** We are assured that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcomes focused.
4. **SAR's:** Develop methods to ensure SAR practice and learning is shared
5. **Partnership-Co-production and Engagement:** We obtain peoples experiences to enable improvement to help prevent abuse and neglect where possible.
6. **Learning and Professional Development-** We are committed to learning and improving –

Each of the priorities has aims and objectives which then form the basis of the Prevention and Learning Delivery Plan 2023-2028.

The aims and objectives for these priorities are also linked to the six national safeguarding principles.

1: Empowerment 2: Prevention 3: Proportionality 4: Protection 5: Partnership  
6: Accountability

The Learning and Delivery Plan (Appendix 1): The Exec Group and HSAB will monitor the implementation of the strategy through reports and action plan updates provided to it via its subgroups. Progress of the delivery plan initiatives will continue to be reviewed by the Exec Group and SAB on a quarterly basis through those reports. Performance data will continue to be monitored annually and inform the delivery plan and its priorities if further changes are required.

One of the key priorities for the prevention activities within this strategy will be the information given to residents to keep themselves safe from abuse and to have the knowledge of where to seek support if needed.

Provision of staff training is another key tool in the prevention of adult abuse. The Performance Quality Assurance (QA) and Audit, SAR subgroups and Partnership Forum will regularly report and share information on the training delivered to their own front-line staff and work together with the council to gain access to more specialist safeguarding training.



Appendix 1: Prevention and Learning Delivery Plan against SAB Strategic Priorities

**Note – Key performance metrics will be identified and incorporated in to the strategy / action plan.**

<b>1: Prevention</b> -The golden thread that runs through the strategy and its priorities. This also includes how we respond to abuse and neglect in timely and proportionate ways						
<b>Objective/aim</b>	<b>National Safeguarding principle</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Actions to ensure achievement of aims</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Comments/ Updates</b>
Improve understanding of and responses to adults and older people at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse across the borough and partnership	Prevention	The SAB is assured through improved reporting of domestic abuse	Partnership Forum subgroup	Partnership Forum Task and finish Group – Domestic Violence and Older People to look at awareness of staff Further DASH Training for MARAC effectiveness	July 2024	Task and Finish Group Domestic Violence and Older people
Identify key themes and raise awareness of abuse and neglect with staff, partners and the public	Prevention	Themes identified through Partners Audits and Strategic events	Partnership Forum subgroup Performance QA and Audits subgroup	Actions Plans in place to achieve aims with reviews undertaken annually.		
Respond to emerging themes – Currently Cost of Living Crisis	Prevention		Partnership Forum subgroup Performance QA and Audits subgroup	Reporting on emerging themes and actions completed in SAB annual report		

**2: Performance, Quality Assurance and Audits** - We are assured that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcomes focused

Objective/aim	National Safeguarding principle	Success Criteria	Lead	Actions to ensure achievement of aims	By when	Comments/Updates
Oversee the performance of safeguarding activity and audits and develop a framework to ensure effective and accountable safeguarding performance indicators and monitoring systems are in place.	Protection Accountability	This will enable the SAB to consider trends in safeguarding activity.  SAB are assured that training for employees is kept up to date with learning from case work, SARS and Mental Capacity Act implementation	Performance, QA and Audits subgroup	Quarterly meetings and reports		
Availability of funded, good quality multi-agency workers	Protection Prevention	SAB is aware of good quality agency workers	Performance, QA and Audits subgroup	Quarterly meetings and reports to SAB		
Data on adult safeguarding referrals, is used to identify factors that indicate an increased risk of abuse and raise awareness amongst staff through training and other briefings.	Empowerment Protection Partnership Accountability	Regular data and information made available for subgroup and SAB	Performance, QA and Audits subgroup	Performance Subgroup to share regular data and reports to raise awareness of any emerging themes		

**3: Policy Practice and Procedures-** We will be responsible for overseeing the performance of safeguarding activity

Objective/aim	National Safeguarding Principle	Success Criteria	Lead	Actions to ensure achievement of aims	By when	Comments/ Updates
<p>Lead on the development and review and update of local policies and procedures, systems and protocols for inter-agency work to safeguard adults at risk of abuse or neglect</p> <p>Ensure any new practice and procedures from learning are included in revised policies</p>	Partnership Empowerment Protection Accountability	All relevant policies and procedures are up to date and shared with staff.	Policy, Practice and Procedures subgroup	<p>Regular Review of policies and procedures</p> <p>Examples of case studies/scenarios would be beneficial</p>		
Developing reports and plans such as the Annual Report for the HSAB and the strategic plan on a page	Accountability	Reports completed approved and published annually	Policy, Practice and Procedures subgroup	Input from key stakeholders	Annually	
Effective implementation of LPS and Code of Practice	Protection Accountability	The SAB is assured that partner agencies are prepared for the LPS changes and successful implementation	<p>Executive group</p> <p>Policy Practice and Procedures subgroup</p> <p>Performance, QA and Audits subgroup</p>	Develop Multi-Agency training to support the implementation of the LPS. Aligning work across the borough on effective implementation of LPS and the MCA Code of Practice	On Hold	Awaiting launch of government consultation and code of practice

**3: SAR's-** We will review the multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Protocol and ensure it is implemented across all organisations

Objective/aim	National Safeguarding Principle	Success Criteria	Lead	Actions to ensure achievement of aim?	By when	Comments/ Updates
Consider relevant local and national information regarding serious cases and 'near misses' in order to inform and improve local practice by ensuring that learning is incorporated into local policies and procedures.	Empowerment Protection Partnership Accountability		SAR'S subgroup  Policy Practice and Procedures Subgroup	Receive, oversee and monitor action plans from agencies to implement recommendations from safeguarding adults or critical incident reviews.		
Develop a consistent approach to conducting and sharing learning effectively for a range of serious incidents including SARs, DHRs, Coroner's inquests	Protection Partnership	One consistent approach is agreed and embedded	SAR's subgroup  Partnership Forum subgroup			
An overview of good practice examples to ensure that good practice is disseminated	Protection Partnership	Good practice examples are shared within the group and with teams and partners	Performance QA and Audits subgroup  Policy Practice and Procedures subgroup	Use of Safeguarding Partnership meetings and quarterly newsletter to share examples with partners		

**4: Co-production and Engagement** – Obtain peoples safeguarding experiences to enable awareness and improvement

Objective/aim	National Safeguarding Principle	Success Criteria	Lead	Actions	By when	Comments/ Updates
Ensure engagement of service users, carers and community and voluntary sector to ensure current concerns and trends are captured	Partnership Protection	The Board is assured that the engagement of service users and the voluntary community sector and their priorities is feedback to the Board	Partnership Forum subgroup	Continue to build feedback loops to use data and community intelligence to understand current community concerns and trends	Quarterly from June 2022	Survey /Questionnaire completed Dec 2022
Identify key themes and raise awareness of abuse and neglect with staff, partners and the public through improved communications and campaigns.	Empowerment Prevention Partnership	The Board is assured that there is a cycle of well-informed public campaign and communications in place with evaluation criteria that includes measuring access and impact	Partnership Forum subgroup	Support development of capacity in the community and voluntary sector to raise awareness of adult safeguarding and working with risk.	Quarterly from June 2022	
Providing accessible information and advice to small community groups and the wider public is an essential building block for adult safeguarding prevention.	Prevention partnership		Partnership Forum subgroup	Newsletter, Posters Leaflets regular e-bulletins	Ongoing	

**5: Learning and Professional Development**- We are committed to learning and improving

Objective/aim	National Safeguarding Principle	Success Criteria	Lead Groups	Actions to ensure achievement of aim?	By when	Comments
In conjunction with other subgroups use data on adult safeguarding referrals, is used to identify factors that indicate an increased risk of abuse and raise awareness amongst staff through training and other briefings.	Empowerment Protection Partnership Accountability		Performance, QA and audits subgroup	Group to share Data with other Subgroups	Annually	
Develop methods to ensure SAR practice and learning is shared across all agencies	Protection Accountability	All agencies are offered safeguarding training to include learning and best practice as a result from SAR's	SAR's subgroup  Partnership Forum subgroup	Training Schedule for 2023  Process for feeding back learning from SAR's		
Develop a consistent approach to conducting and sharing learning effectively for a range of serious incidents including SARs, DHRs, Coroner's inquests	Partnership		SAR's subgroup  Partnership Forum Subgroup	Ensure learning is also shared with partners	Ongoing	
Support the delivery of multi-agency training	Partnership	Annual calendar of training produced and distributed to partners	SAB All subgroups		Annual	