

## Following up Francis-what should Safeguarding Adults Boards do?

The central message from Robert Francis' report on Mid Staffs and Winterbourne is the need for cultural change in the health and social care system.

Francis emphasises the importance of:

Candour

Openness and

Transparency.

Sadly his report makes no mention of the role of Safeguarding Adults Board in changing and improving local systems. Neither does the Government's response. However a recent publication from NHS England [Safeguarding Vulnerable People in the reformed NHS] emphasises the importance of safeguarding boards and highlights the importance of NHS organisations having constructive local relationships.

If you combine the need to address cultural change set out in the Francis Report with the obvious importance of ensuring that another Winterbourne couldn't happen in a SAB's patch then there is clearly a responsibility for a SAB to take a leadership role.

However getting bogged down in detailed action plans is unlikely to pay dividends as the Board runs the risk of losing sight of the big picture and taking over the responsibility of each partner agency. The SAB's job is to receive assurance that members are taking the right action.

So what could the leadership role be?

There are 2 key tasks:

- 1 Cultural Leadership – encouraging candour, openness and transparency
- 2 Identifying and managing the system risks relating to safeguarding.

The second won't be addressed in a meaningful way unless the first is.

This document should be read alongside **A framework to support improving effectiveness of safeguarding adults' boards** published in May 2013 by the Independent Safeguarding Adults Chairs Group which will help SABs be confident that they are working effectively and securing good outcomes for people. The following questions are suggested as a way of helping SABs get beyond the rhetoric and help them exercise their corporate responsibility for the safety of their local health and care system. as partnership bodies The answers need to be owned by agency boards and directors.

They could be used in a number of ways, for example :

- As the basis of a formal report to the SAB by partner agencies
- As the framework for one to one dialogue between SAB members and the Chair
- As a structure for a SAB report to the Health and Wellbeing `Board

The questions need to be asked in the context of a number of arrangements being in place;

- SABs should routinely receive analysis of SUI's and inspection reports which have safeguarding issues with assurance regarding action
- The SAB should have an agreed threshold agreement about what constitutes a safeguarding issue for Trusts and other providers
- CCGs should be maintaining a safeguarding risk register for the NHS and independent providers they commission from which they report to the SAB

**Key Questions that all partner agencies should know via their own governance and be able to report to the SAB**

1. What are your priority actions relating to safeguarding in response to the mid Staffs and Winterbourne reports?
2. What are the key messages for your agency arising from your engagement with staff, users, carers, public, partners?
3. What are the cultural challenges you need to address relating to embedding candour, openness and trust?
  - in your organisation
  - in the wider system
4. What have you found that is good about your organisation's approach to safeguarding that you could share with partners?
5. What have you found that gives you cause for concern- including evidence from Serious Untoward Incidents or other worrying events?
6. What are the top safeguarding risks for:
  - Your agency?
  - The SAB?
7. What difference will you make to people's experience?
  - In the next 3 months
  - In the next year
8. What indicators are you using to be assured that the changes have really happened and people who may be vulnerable are safe, and what to the say?

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Endorsed by Independent Safeguarding Board Chairs Group.