

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

As Chair of Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board, I wanted to reach out to staff and volunteers across Cumbria who are currently involved in keeping the most vulnerable people in our communities safe to thank them for their continued contribution.

As a Board, we are currently meeting bi-weekly to seek assurance from statutory partners in respect of their business continuity plans and safeguarding arrangements. I am pleased to report that robust safeguarding arrangements are still in place to support adults with care and support needs who are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

Care Act Easements have not been implemented in Cumbria and there have been no changes to safeguarding roles and responsibilities under the Care Act 2014. Clearly, staff need to consider social distancing guidelines but all requirements under the Care Act are still in place including 'Making Safeguarding Personal'. The key message to all partners is that safeguarding adult duties continue to apply and as far as possible, it is business as normal.

I am however, conscious that safeguarding risks for many of our most vulnerable adults are likely to have increased in the last few months, due to an increase in isolation and stress in addition to professionals having fewer opportunities to identify abuse. As a direct result, the Safeguarding Adults Board have actively engaged with a wide range of organisations across Cumbria to ensure safeguarding messages have been promulgated as widely as possible to ensure individuals know how they can safely access the services and advice available in their local communities. Prevention and information messages have included Scams and Financial Abuse, Domestic Abuse and the impact on Mental Health and Wellbeing. I was also particularly impressed to hear about the initial results from the live Facebook surgeries organised by Cumbria Constabulary, which involved a wide range of partners, providing support and advice to victims of Domestic Abuse. This initiative has been so successful that plans are now in place to continue running it post COVID.

There will clearly be learning for all of us from the initial response to COVID at both a local and national level and as a Board, we will ensure that any learning is embraced and shared across the partnership.

As a Board, we must ensure that partners are prepared for the safeguarding issues that will undoubtedly emerge post COVID and this will be part of the focus of the Board as we move into the next phase of our response. We must embrace the new 'norm' of COVID and continue to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities are supported. Clearly that can only be possible with the on-going contribution of each and every member of staff who is involved safeguarding across Cumbria.



I know I speak on behalf of all Board Members in thanking you for your continued hard work over the last few months in providing on-going support and protection to individuals with care and support needs across Cumbria.

Kindest Regards

Jeanette McDiarmid QPM  
Independent Chair, Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB)