



Communications Strategy

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1. Introduction

The Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) is a multiagency partnership committed to the effective safeguarding of adults with care and support needs in the local area who are unable to protect themselves. The SSAB believes all adults at risk of abuse and neglect should be able to obtain appropriate interventions which enable them to live a life free from fear, harm or abuse.

A cornerstone of the SSAB's work is the provision of information to the public, potential and actual service users, staff working in partner agencies and others interested in adults' welfare.

The aim of this Communication Strategy is to provide a plan of action for improving and strengthening communication to and from the partnership, and to ensure that the SSAB's communications are managed effectively and professionally.

To fulfil its statutory objectives and effectively carry out its functions, the SSAB needs to raise awareness about how everybody can contribute to the safeguarding adults' agenda. This should involve listening to and consulting with service users and carers, and ensuring their views and opinions are taken into account in planning and delivering safeguarding services.

We recognise that people will need information at different stages, in different formats and locations depending on their requirements. The SSAB aims to provide information that is accessible, of a high quality and meets the needs of the public, service users, potential service users and staff working across partner agencies.

Our strategic plan has a strong focus on engagement and communication, and aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Adults at risk, their families and carers, and members of the public have an improved understanding of the aims and role of the SSAB.
- Staff and managers across the partnership have an improved understanding of the aims and roles of the SSAB.
- Two way communication opportunities exist.
- There is an increased awareness of key issues to promote the safeguarding of adults at risk.
- Lessons learnt from local and national safeguarding adult reviews are shared to ensure these contribute to improving safeguarding practice across Somerset to keep people safe from harm.

It is crucial that the Chair of the SSAB is objective and leads the Board in such a way. Whilst the SSAB does not look to apportion blame, there may be times when the finding of a review commissioned by the Board highlights unpalatable truths that are nonetheless crucial to future learning and safeguarding. In the spirit of public accountability and transparency, it is the exclusive prerogative of the SSAB Chair to have the final word on how and when pro-active publicity/news releases will be issued.

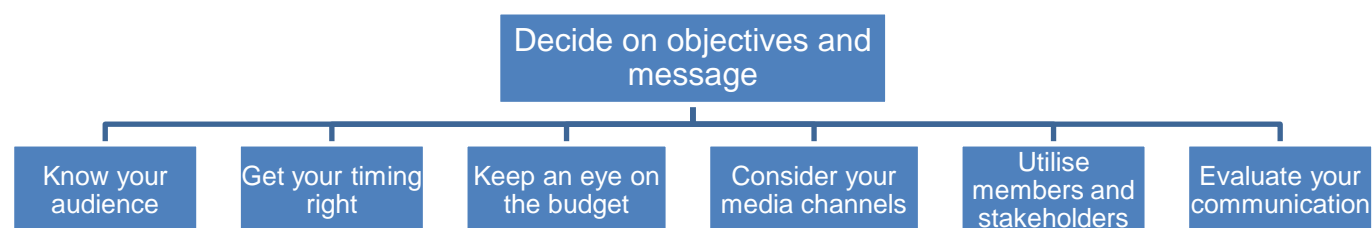
2. Communication Standards

Our approach is based on the following principles:

- Information is a service in its own right
- Making information accessible to everyone
- Communicating clearly and openly
- Using plain English (e.g. avoiding jargon and explaining acronyms) or giving clear explanations where this is not possible
- Promoting equality and valuing diversity is central to the provision of information
- Keeping information up to date and accurate
- Information may need to be delivered in the spoken word to be effective
- Consultation and engagement is central to the Board's continuous improvement.

Effective information requires careful planning and the SSAB encourages the following approach to be considered and confirmed at an early stage:

- Know who your audience is and what they want to see
- Identify the key messages to be shared
- Assess the method of production
- Identify where information is to be distributed or how it will be given direct to people
- Understand how information will be used
- Ensure the outcome will be consistent with the objective of learning and improving quality and safeguarding
- Assess when information materials will need to be removed or reviewed
- Actively facilitate opportunities for involving service users and staff in producing information
- Ensure any service you are publicising or signposting to is aware of the publicity, so they can prepare to meet any potential increase in demand.



3. Target Audience

The main target audiences under this strategy can be broken down as follows:

- Service users and potential service users
- Carers
- Professionals and staff working in voluntary and community organisations and SSAB members
- The general public.

We will seek to raise the visual public profile of the SSAB to improve accessibility to safeguarding services and raise awareness of key issues to promote the safeguarding of adults at risk in Somerset.

What will be communicated?

Key messages:

- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility
- A focus on preventing or reducing risk of abuse or neglect and improving outcomes for adults at risk
- A commitment to making safeguarding personal.

Our aim is to raise awareness of safeguarding responsibilities for organisations and individuals, and to promote good multiagency working, so that:

- The public recognise abuse and neglect when they see it, know what to do in these circumstances and have the confidence to take whatever action is needed.
- Partner agencies take responsibility for the timely sharing of information in the event of an emergency or safeguarding concern.
- The Safeguarding Adults Board communicates in an accurate, timely and appropriate way meeting the needs of the target audiences, and that information is accessible and addresses equality and diversity issues.
- Stakeholders have an appropriate mechanism to communicate views and comments back to the Board, ensuring meaningful participation.

- Each Board member is responsible for communicating to their staff and embedding the highest quality practice in relation to safeguarding.

What is the purpose of our communication?

- Informational
- Promotional
- Behavioural.

The **key messages** the Board intends to publicise include:

Target group – General Public

- What the different types of abuse and neglect are and the signs that someone could be being abused or neglected
- What to do if you are worried about an adult
- What safeguarding is and isn't
- That safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the whole community
- What the different responsibilities to safeguard are and how they should be fulfilled
- A basic understanding of the role of the SAB and how it can be accessed
- Key changes in safeguarding nationally and locally, and the implications of these
- Raising awareness of the Board's priorities outlined in our Strategic Plan

Target group – Adults at Risk

- What to do if you are worried about yourself or someone you know
- How to keep safe
- What to do if you / someone you know is being harmed or abused
- What safeguarding is and what it means to you
- What advocacy is and what it means to you
- How to let us know about issues affecting your safety
- A basic understanding of the safeguarding adults system and what it means to you
- The process of a safeguarding enquiry

Target group – Carers

- What to do if you are worried about someone you care for
- The role and aims of the SAB
- Sources of safeguarding advice for carers
- What to do if they witness or suspect harm or abuse
- Advocacy services
- A basic understanding of the safeguarding adults and what it means to carers
- The process of a safeguarding enquiry

Target Group – Professionals, including Board members

- What to do if you are worried about an adult
- How to make a referral
- The role and aims of the SAB and how it can be contacted
- Your responsibilities for safeguarding adults at risk, including your duty to cooperate
- The training available, and any events or conferences
- What good safeguarding practice is and how this can be improved
- Recommendations and learning from national and local Safeguarding Adults Reviews
- Local issues affecting the safety and wellbeing of adults
- How to recruit staff and volunteers safely and deal with allegations made against them
- Encourage strengthened partnership working across agencies

Target Group – Other Partnerships

- The SAB will inform key forums about its work, specifically its strategic and annual plans. Key partnerships include the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Scrutiny Committee, the Community Safety Partnership (Safer Somerset), Quality Surveillance Groups (QSGs) and Healthwatch.
- The Independent Chair and Business Manager will be available to attend other forums and meetings to discuss their role and the role of the SAB.

The SAB and partner agencies will identify and coordinate a programme of publicity and awareness raising campaigns on a routine basis to tie in with national and local events. The Chair of the SSAB may also wish to take advantage of opportunistic media stories or issues to highlight the role of the Board and safeguarding awareness. This may need to be done at short notice with advice from the SSAB or partner communications staff only.

How will we communicate (methods/materials/locations)?

The general methods of communication to be used or adopted by the SAB are:

- SSAB website/webpages
- Electronic materials
- SSAB newsletters and briefing notes
- Training
- Annual conference
- Annual report
- Strategic Plan
- Consultation and engagement events and surveys
- Leaflets, factsheets and posters
- Advertising
- Emails and email briefings
- Meetings, seminars and workshops

4. Media Protocol

Communicating with the media

Proactive use of the media to promote good safeguarding messages should be a routine part of any public awareness campaign.

Responsive media statements may be required when there is a case issue involving a specific person or where there is negative media coverage of key safeguarding matters which needs to be addressed.

Any communication with the media in the name of the Safeguarding Adults Board should be undertaken by the Independent Chair or a nominated substitute where appropriate.

In the event of a Safeguarding Adults Review, all communication should be directed to the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board before any press releases are made.

Agencies should avoid responding independently and all press releases should be agreed by the Independent Chair to ensure a consistent response is delivered.

Partner agencies must ensure that any public communication does not negatively impact on a partner agency.

Dealing with media enquiries

Much of the work undertaken by SSAB partner agencies is confidential and this confidentiality is fundamental. It is the intention of the SSAB to be open and transparent about its work, whilst protecting the personal details of clients.

From time to time issues may arise that are of interest to the media. These issues may be of a negative nature and may have a damaging impact on the reputation of the SSAB and of partner agencies.

If you receive an enquiry relating to Safeguarding, your Press Office and the SSAB Business Manager should be notified immediately.

If the enquiry relates specifically to the SSAB, the response should come directly from the SSAB Chair and signed off by the SSAB Executive. Where possible, responses should be sent to the SSAB Executive before it is sent to the journalist. However, media deadlines means it is not always possible to wait for a response from each organisation before the response is submitted, although every effort should be made for this to happen.

The SSAB commits to ensuring joint responses to media enquiries wherever possible. This should be established at the initial contact stage. All relevant staff should be alerted to this protocol. (Appendix 1)

Proactive media / communications activity

The SSAB will issue proactive information to the media, as well as to staff, the public and other stakeholders. SSAB communications will normally be joint communications. All proactive activity will be planned jointly and in advance by the SSAB.

All proactive safeguarding related information issued directly by any one organisation in the SSAB will be agreed by the SSAB Executive before it is sent to the media.

Speaking to the Press

When an immediate media response is required, this will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Board or whomever they designate this to.

The Chair will have authority to talk to the media on all Board matters. In the absence of the Chair, this role will be taken on by the Deputy Chair.

The Chair will undertake the role of 'talking head' for the SSAB. This will not be undertaken by any other person without prior agreement from the Chair.

Information may be shared with the press by the SSAB and after alerting partner agencies of the Chair's wish to do so.

Board members will not make any 'off the record' comments to the media.

Drafting and Publishing of Press Releases

Any press releases will be drafted by the Chair and Business Manager in collaboration with press officers from relevant agencies.

The press release template (Appendix 2) will be used for all statements.

Communicating following a Safeguarding Adults Review

The SSAB Chair should be the key representative to speak to the media about a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) and any actions following that review on behalf of the partnership.

It is important to note that any press release will only be made once the SAR has been completed and published. If a media request for a statement is received prior to completion of a review, the SSAB will provide a holding statement on the case.

It is important that the families of those who have suffered the death of a relative or whose relative has been subject of a SAR is kept informed about the SAR process. The health/social care professionals, who would have been involved with the family before and at the time of the incident/s that resulted in a SAR, may be best placed to make informed and professional judgements about the frequency and method of communicating information to the relatives and passing back information to colleagues. Where these staff work for organisations external to Somerset, for example where someone has been placed in to a care home in Somerset by another Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group, the primary responsibility will remain with them. However, the SSAB will also require that a representative from Somerset makes and, unless declined, maintains contact in addition to this.

5. Resourcing

The SSAB is funded through statutory partner agencies and does not have a budget available to produce new marketing material. Therefore, existing and established communication channels will need to be maximised as much as possible.

Each agency has opportunities to promote safeguarding awareness amongst staff and networks through internal communication channels, including newsletters, intranet, training and website publishing. Opportunities to launch / support joint campaigns with relevant partnerships (e.g. the Local Safeguarding Children Board) are encouraged.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

We will work to consider whether:

- We achieved our communication objectives, and whether these were delivered on time and in budget
- Others found our communication easy to understand, knew what they were expected to do as a result of the communication, and were able to feedback on how communication could be improved
- Things worked well, or whether there were aspects that could have been done differently
- There are things we need to do next in response to the communication we have issued.

The impact of awareness-raising activities will be measured through:

- Public/staff surveys and feedback
- Measuring post campaign activity on the SAB website
- Comparing pre and post campaign data on safeguarding referrals and alerts, particularly the source of referral
- Media publicity and audience reach

7. Roles and Responsibilities

SSAB members have a specific responsibility to ensure that information from the SSAB is cascaded to all relevant people within their organisation. They are also responsible for ensuring that any issues raised by members of their organisation are fed up to the SSAB.

The SSAB Terms of Reference specify the following tasks for, and obligations of, its members:

- Promote awareness of Safeguarding issues and disseminate accessible information about the work of the SSAB via a comprehensive communications strategy aimed at ensuring that abuse is recognised, reported and immediate action taken wherever it arises.
- Representatives of wider groups such as independent providers, service users and carers must have access to appropriate networks to communicate information to and from the Board.

Each partner organisation on the SSAB will have their own agreed protocols for communicating with the media, use of websites and corporate identity for single agency communication.

Single agency communication about safeguarding should be shared with the Chair of the SSAB.

8. Risk Management

The SSAB anticipates the following communication risks:

- Not identifying safeguarding issues before they reach the media
- Inconsistent and unclear messages delivered from partner agencies
- Not sharing information which could result in mixed messages being presented by partners
- Communication leaks of confidential information

Risks are mitigated by Board members being aware of this strategy and working within the framework set out within it.

9. Strategy Review

The SSAB's Communication Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Policy and Procedures Subgroup and Board prior to implementation.

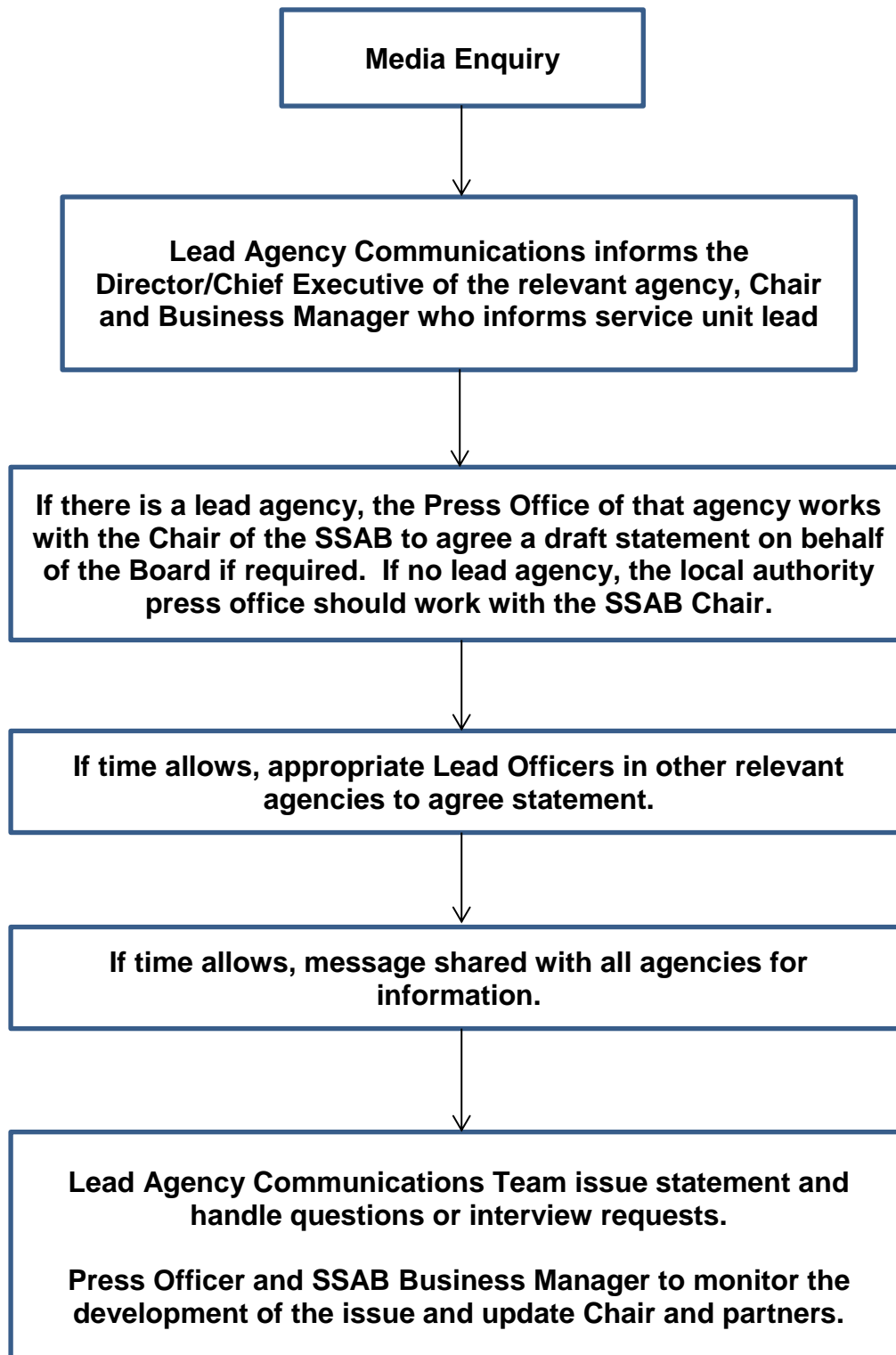
10. Contact

All general and media enquiries should be passed to the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Business Manager (ssab@somerset.gov.uk; Tel: 01823 359157)

Document History

Revision Date (yyyy/mm/dd)	Summary of changes	Version issued	Sign off
2015/10/18	First draft	V0.1	
2015/11/19	Appendix 2 update	V0.2	P&P subgroup
2015/12/01	Media 'Top Tips' added and SSAB Branding doc embedded	V0.3	
2016/02/22	Feedback incorporated from SSAB Member agencies	V0.4	Approved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCG 19/02/16 ○ Police 19/02/16 ○ ASC 12/02/16 ○ NPS 18/02/16 ○ Housing rep 15/02/16 ○ Public Health rep 15/02/16
2016/02/25	Final	V0.5	Ratified by SSAB Board
2018/07/24	Multiple changes throughout based on experience. Branding section removed.	1.1	
2019/07/24	Minor changes agreed	1.2	Agreed by SSAB Policy and Procedures Subgroup

APPENDIX 1 – FLOW DIAGRAM (MEDIA ENQUIRY)



APPENDIX 3 – TIPS FOR GREAT INTERVIEWS

Who, what and why?

Find out who will be interviewing you, what they want to talk about, and why they want to do it now.

When, how and where?

Ensure you know if the interview is live, pre-recorded, at the studio or elsewhere, or down the phone. (If it is phone interview don't breathe down the handset!)

Think about the audience

Different radio stations attract very different audiences. Bear that in mind when you are preparing what you want to say.

Practice your 'hello' for TV and radio

The first words you say on air are the most powerful way of making a good first impression. You want to come across as friendly and confident.

Keep in conversation and be yourself

The best interviews look, feel and sound like normal conversations. Chat to rather than lecture your interviewer. Be yourself.

Give examples

People love stories, so identify a graphic example or anecdote to back up your point.

Use analogies and comparisons

Analogies are a good way to make your message stick. Relate large numbers to everyday items (hectares to football pitches).

Give advice where appropriate

People love to be 'in the know'. Give them tips on how to get the best out of something or to avoid disaster.

Avoid Jargon

We all use language in our workplaces that people outside may not understand. Avoid jargon and work out in advance how to explain complicated terms or ideas.

Posture and body language

This is really important. Make sure you sit up straight and use your hands to communicate. Eye contact with the interviewer is really important too.

Never, ever lie

Under no circumstances say something that is untrue: it'll almost certainly come back to haunt you. If you get stuck, say you don't know but you'll let them know later.

**Provided by Somerset County Council Communications Team
November 2015**

