



Issue 3, July 2016

# Newsletter

*Working in partnership to enable adults in Somerset to live a life free from fear, harm or abuse*

## Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) newsletter



The last three months have been very busy and exciting ones for the Board, with a lot of activity undertaken to raise awareness of elder abuse as part of our ongoing 'Thinking it? Report it' campaign.

The SSAB also hosted its very first multi-agency Practitioner Learning Event exploring the themes to emerge from recent serious cases in the county, and engaging over 100 practitioners from a wide range of services and backgrounds.

*Read more overleaf*

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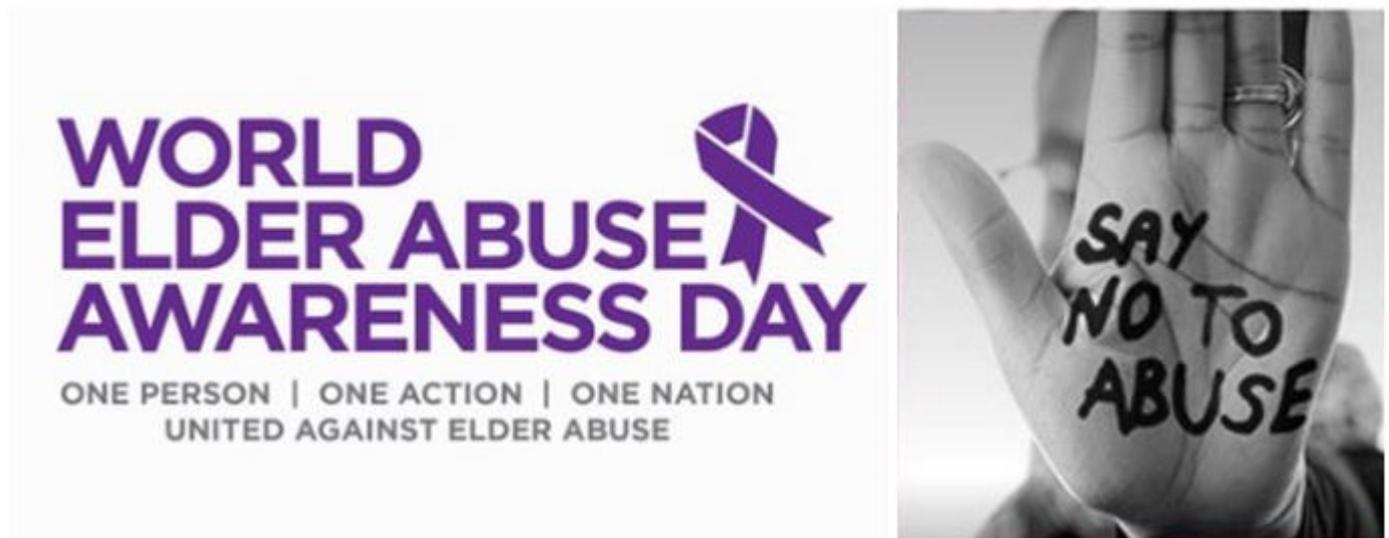
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## Follow us on twitter

Our new website launched mid-April and has had over 1,100 unique visitors to the site since this time, 38% of which are returning visitors. We hope it is proving a useful resource for both professionals and the wider community, and welcome any feedback you may have. Since launch, an additional 45 people have signed up to receive our quarterly newsletter.

The Board is also now on twitter <https://twitter.com/SomersetSAB> which has enabled us to expand our reach and engage in some really interesting conversations and debates with people around the world. Follow us to keep up with adult safeguarding news and info.

## News from the SSAB



**Thinking it? Report it campaign** In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (15 June 2016), the Board launched two new elements to its public awareness raising campaign:

- A **Community Public Pledge** to report concerns if you suspect someone is at risk, in recognition that preventing the abuse of vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Individuals across the county are pledging their support – if you haven't yet done so, please do today: [Sign up to our pledge](#)
- A short, animated **info-mercial** intended to highlight the often hidden abuse affecting older adults and the role the local community can play in recognising abuse or neglect and knowing how to report their concerns. We hope this film increases awareness of elder abuse and how to tackle it, generate conversations, and reinforce the message that safeguarding is a shared responsibility: [Watch our film here](#).



## News from the SSAB - *continued*

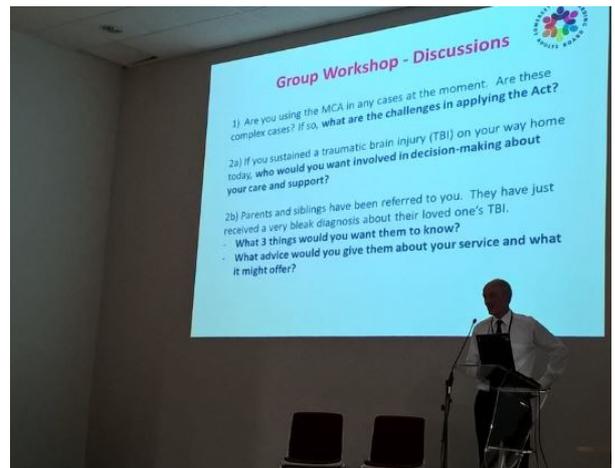
### Who was at risk of abuse and neglect in Somerset during 2015/16, and what were they at risk from?

- 40% of abuse was against men; 60% against women
- 57% of victims had a physical support need; 9% had a mental health need
- 61% of safeguarding enquiries undertaken related to people aged 65 and over
- 87% of abuse was caused by someone known to the individual, but not in a social care capacity
- 54% of abuse took place in the adult's own home
- 22% of the concerns we took action on involved physical abuse; 17% neglect and acts of omission

**Multi-agency Practitioner Learning Event** On 24<sup>th</sup> June, over 100 frontline professionals, representing many different agencies, including Local Authority social care staff (from both Adult and Children's services), health staff (including District Nurses and those working in acute hospitals), housing providers, and the voluntary and community sector, came together to learn the lessons to emerge from recent serious cases reviewed within the county. The event was co-facilitated by Hilary Brown and Margaret Flynn, and also included presentations from Headway Somerset, the brain injury charity.

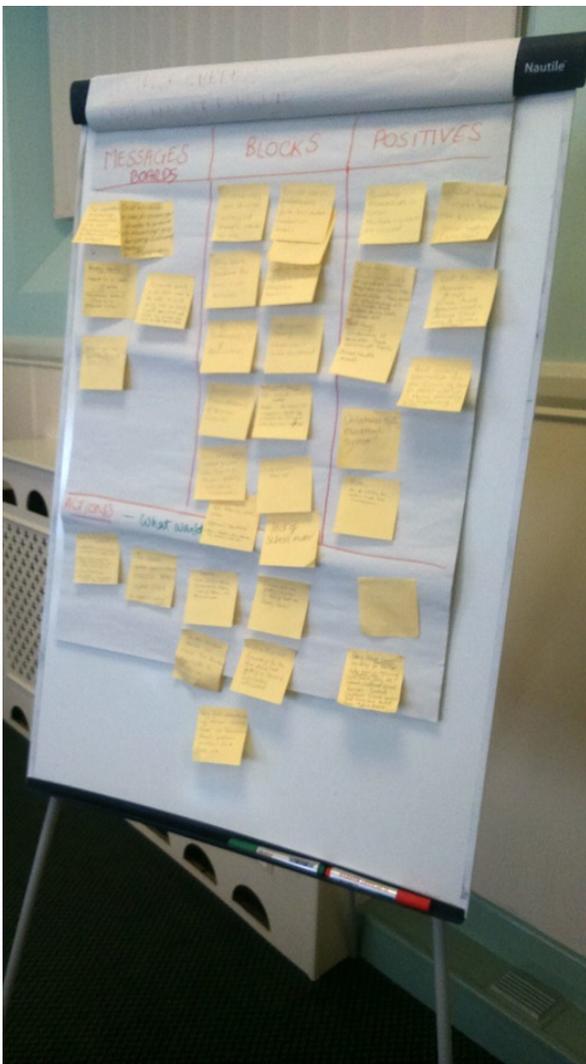
Attendees told us they valued:

- hearing from service users and families - the vast majority specifically referred to these aspects being the most valuable part of the day;
- the chance to explore and discuss the Mental Capacity Act in complex cases;
- the opportunity to come together, as a multi-agency group – they said they would like more events like this in future.



**Think Family Workshops** On 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> July the Business Managers of the county's Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safeguarding Children Board worked together to deliver 4 x 'Think Family' multi-agency practitioner workshops to 98 staff across the county (Glastonbury, Yeovil, Bridgwater and Taunton). This joint working directly supports the stated ambitions of the 2016 Partnership Protocol for Working Together. The aim of the sessions was to:

- enable staff to gain a greater appreciation of the national and local context around the 'Think Family' agenda;
- explore themes to emerge from recent serious case reviews in Somerset and how these impact on local practice;
- provide an opportunity for the workforce to feed-into and feedback to both Safeguarding Boards.



## Summary of main messages – Think Family 2016

### Staff told us that:

- they value the opportunity to come together in multi-agency forums and are keen to have these held more frequently, extended across children's and adult services
- they believe things are moving "in the right direction" in relation to 'Think Family' in Somerset. They gave some specific examples around transitions team work, and the work of the Young Carers service
- information-sharing and issues around consent can serve as a block to effective safeguarding practice. Multiple systems and an inability to access or piece together information from other agencies in order to assess risk concerns them
- they would like to develop stronger working relationships with staff in other agencies, and enhance their awareness of other services and their respective roles and responsibilities
- they worry vulnerable children and families may "fall through the gaps" as a result of service thresholds, and are concerned about risky young people on the cusp of adulthood who don't meet eligibility criteria for children's or adult services.

A report has been prepared for both Safeguarding Boards to consider and take action on over the coming months, pulling together all the feedback received via the workshops.

'Think Family' is a specific improvement priority outlined within the county's Children and Young People's Plan and it is also listed as a priority within the SSAB's Strategic Plan (2016-19). The SSAB looks forward to working more holistically across children's and adults services in the months and years ahead, and thanks all those who took the time to attend the workshops earlier this month.

**Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)** The SSCB has also launched their new website and is now on twitter – visit the links below to find out more:

<http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>

<https://twitter.com/SomersetSCB>



# Spotlight on: Self-Neglect & Hoarding

Self-neglect is an increasingly common feature in cases being brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Adults Board, and has also been evident in a significant proportion of serious case reviews completed across the country following the death of an adult with care and support needs. Reviews illustrate the complexity of practice with adults who self-neglect, which can be a difficult area for intervention as issues of capacity and lifestyle choice are often involved.

## What is it?

Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It involves any failure by an adult to take care of him or herself which causes, or is likely to cause, serious physical, mental or emotional harm, or substantial loss of assets.

## Indicators of self-neglect

Self-neglect is often defined across three domains – neglect of self, neglect of the environment and a refusal to accept help.

Neglect of self may include:

- Poor hygiene
- Dirty/inappropriate clothing
- Poor hair care
- Malnutrition
- Medical / health needs unmet (e.g. diabetes – refusing insulin, treatment of leg ulcers)
- Eccentric behaviour / lifestyle leading to harm
- Alcohol / substance misuse
- Social isolation
- Situations where there is evidence that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm due to self-neglect by an adult

Neglect of the environment may include:

- Unsanitary, untidy or dirty conditions which create a hazardous situation that could cause serious physical harm to the individual or others
- Hoarding
- Fire risk (e.g. smoker with limited mobility / hoarder)
- Poor maintenance of property
- Keeping lots of pets who are poorly cared for
- Vermin
- Lack of heating
- No running water / sanitation
- Poor finance management (e.g. bills not being paid leading to utilities being cut off, unexplained money drawn from bank/savings account)

The above is usually accompanied by a refusal to engage with services.

## Causes of self-neglect

Causes may be many and varied. Self neglect is often seen in older people for whom physical or mental decline means that the person is no longer able to meet all their personal or domestic care needs. In an ageing society, people may outlive their friends and relatives, and become increasingly isolated and lonely which in itself may contribute to depression and helplessness. Poverty and lack of mobility may exacerbate this and all these factors may contribute to the adult becoming unable to access health, care or maintain their home.

In some instances neglect occurs when an adult who is unable to self-care and who is dependent on a family carer does not receive the care they need and in some cases, offers of assessment and support may be prevented by the carer.

People on the autistic spectrum may also struggle to self-care and to manage their environment, and may be fearful of intervention because of difficulties communicating and engaging with others.

### **Hoarding**

Hoarding is the persistent difficulty in discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value. The behaviour usually has deleterious effects – emotional, physical, social, financial, and even legal – for a hoarder and family members. For those who hoard, the quantity of their collected items sets them apart from other people. Commonly hoarded items may be newspapers, magazines, paper and plastic bags, cardboard boxes, photographs, household supplies, food and clothing as well as collections of items have got out of hand and take over the living space.

Hoarding may become a reason to make safeguarding enquiries when:

- The level of hoard poses a serious health risk to the person or neighbours
- There is a high risk of fire or infestations by insects or animals
- Hoarding is connected with other concerns of self-neglect, such as neglect of physical health, lack of adequate nutrition
- Hoarding may be linked to serious cognitive decline and lack of capacity to self-care and care for the environment
- Hoarding is threatening a person's tenancy and they are at risk of being made homeless through closure orders or possession orders.

### **Working with people who self-neglect**

It has become increasingly evident that a short term case management approach to people who self-neglect is unlikely to be successful. Case examples of successful work with people who self-neglect demonstrate the need for traditional social work values of relationship building, gaining trust, listening to people, assessing capacity at both a decision making and executive functioning level, taking account of the person's history and why they may have begun to self-neglect. The concept of throughput of cases and early closure must be varied when working with adults who self-neglect; managers and supervisors need to take this into account in terms of case load allocation. It is also clear from research into adults who self-neglect that intervening at an early stage is more effective than waiting until the concerns have become more severe and entrenched. Therefore too rigid an adherence to eligibility criteria in these cases may be counterproductive and lead to more intensive, intrusive and costly support being required later on.

Research evidences the importance of:

- A **person centred focus** which attempts to establish a relationship of trust and cooperation that can facilitate greater acceptance of support
- **Gaining insight into family background** and work by professionals to explore the motivation and understanding behind decisions to decline services
- Not accepting superficially refusals of service, which leave professionals working reactively to each crisis rather than **proactively engaging with repeated refusals of support**
- **Monitoring changing needs** in order to be ready to respond when the individual did recognise the need for help and may be prepared to engage
- **Ensuring that capacity is assessed and recorded** thoroughly on a decision specific basis and reassessing capacity over time.
- Developing legal literacy and **recording the legal basis for decisions.**

To support multi-agency professionals working with individuals who self-neglect, the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board has developed some **Practice Guidance** which details more information about this subject area, and outlines how you might look to intervene in such cases.

You may also be interested in accessing these presentations on self-neglect, given by Professor Michael Preston-Shoot to a regional conference in March 2016:

- [Adults who self-neglect](#)
- [Self-neglect as a safeguarding concern](#)



### **Case Study – Mr J**

The SSAB has developed a Practice Briefing Sheet following a case debrief session involving staff from across a number of agencies in April 2016.

The key messages contained within the briefing sheet reflect some of the learning to emerge following the death of an elderly, terminally-ill gentleman, Mr J.

The case presented learning around working with people who self-neglect, working with hard to engage families, safe hospital discharge, as well as safeguarding, carers and safeguarding, and advocacy

[\*Read the Mr J Practice Briefing Sheet here\*](#)

## **Domestic Abuse Awareness Referring to Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (SIDAS)**

[www.somerseturvivors.org.uk](http://www.somerseturvivors.org.uk)

Freephone support line: 0800 69 49 999

**If someone discloses they are a victim of domestic abuse:**

- **Assess their risk using the DASH Checklist available on this [website](#)**
- **Refer to SIDAS**
- **Consider using the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

# Learning Lessons

## National

### **Learning from Experience Database**

Hampshire's Safeguarding Adults Board has kindly agreed to the SSAB referencing its fantastic 'Learning from Experience Database' on our own website. The database contains links to national and local case reviews and aims to support the dissemination of learning, and in doing so promote evidence-based practice. The database allows visitors to filter case reviews by theme (such as mental health or self-neglect), year and local authority area. **Visit the 'Learning from Experience' section of our website via:**

<http://ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/information/learning-and-development/>

### **Early intervention can reduce elder abuse by family carers**

New research published May 2016 in *Age and Ageing*, the scientific journal of The British Geriatrics Society, reveals that over one-third (36.8%) of family carers engage in behaviours that may act as early warning signs. They may predict more seriously harmful future psychological or physical abuse of an older person in their care. Early identification and intervention with family carers involved in these types of 'precursor' behaviours would help prevent more serious elder abuse in future and improve quality of care. The report suggests that potentially abusive behaviours, including physical abuse, can act as a precursor to more serious elder abuse. Many family carers may not be aware that their behaviours have the potential to be psychologically or physically harmful. This lack of awareness highlights the importance of family carers receiving the support and skills they need to manage difficult caregiving situations, as well as the ability to recognise when they should seek help. The report concludes that, as the main providers of community care, greater emphasis should be placed upon ensuring that family carers receive adequate training and that community-based professionals, such as public health nurses, GPs, social workers and home care staff, should be given the skills to recognise behaviours that might lead to more serious cases of elder abuse.

**Read more:** <http://ageing.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/05/24/ageing.afw085.full.pdf+html>

## Local

In June 2016, the Safeguarding Adults Board received a Serious Case Review, authored by Margaret Flynn, concerning a man who, in his early twenties, sustained a traumatic brain injury in a road traffic accident. Tom went on to take his own life in 2014, aged 43. A [Practice Briefing Sheet](#) has been produced by the SSAB together with the author of the review, outlining the main themes and findings to emerge from the review. There is learning around how we support those with brain injuries, working with people with multiple and complex needs, and how staff engage and involve family members. **We'd encourage staff to use this briefing sheet in team meetings or supervisions, and feedback to the Board how they will use it to develop their practice.** The full review will be published following completion of a Coroner's enquiry later in 2016.

**“As a family we will have to live our lives wondering whether we could have done more to prevent this happening, hoping he is finally at peace, and living with the terrible knowledge of what he did to himself.**

**He may well have always gone on to take his own life, but it is my belief that had he received the support and treatment he so desperately needed it could have been postponed and maybe even postponed just long enough for him to be able to true meaning in his life, enough to prevent him going through with it at all”**

*Tom's sister*

# New Practice Guidance – Acquired Brain Injury

Acquired brain injury is a condition that may well present to social workers in assessment teams, both in adult and children's services, but not necessarily as the presenting problem.

Guidance, published earlier this year by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) and the Brain Injury Social Work Group (BISWG), aims to increase awareness among social workers of the condition and to provide advice and guidance about what an acquired brain injury is and how social work intervention can help.

**What is an acquired brain injury?** Brain injuries can be caused by a trauma – such as a blow to the head, fall, assault or car accident or can be acquired due to an infection such as encephalitis. There are some unexpected causes of brain injury, such as cardiac arrest which deprives the brain of oxygen. Cases are complex and they are all different. If brain injury occurs in childhood, there are often ways in which the brain is able to compensate although there are usually long-term issues. If the brain is injured in adulthood, it is harder for the brain to compensate.

The new guidance highlights the importance of thorough assessments and post-assessment support, and reflects some of the key learning to have emerged locally following a recent serious case review.

## Want to find out more about brain injury?

- [Practice Guidance for Social Workers with people with an acquired Brain Injury, Feb 2016](#)
- [Headway Somerset](#): The Brain Injury Charity
- Watch [Hear My Voice](#) – Headway Somerset film
- [Caring for someone with a brain injury e-booklet](#)

### **'Living with Acquired Brain Injury..... The Journey'**

Headway Somerset presents its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016, at Edgar Hall, Somerton, TA11 6SB. The thought-provoking and stimulating agenda will cover aspects of living with ABI, drawing from powerful personal accounts and clinical perspectives. The cost will be £20 per person, to include a light lunch.

To reserve your place, email [sam@headwaysomerset.org.uk](mailto:sam@headwaysomerset.org.uk)

A certificate of attendance will be issued to all delegates as proof of CPD.

You can help me by

- Understanding how I communicate
- Recognising that I am afraid
- Giving me time

# Scams Awareness Month

July 2016

## July is Scams Awareness Month - how #scamaware are you?

- Don't be rushed – resist pressure to make a decision straight away
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is
- Don't suffer in silence – speak out about scams
- If you haven't bought a ticket – you can't win it
- Never send money to someone you have never met or don't trust
- You shouldn't have to pay anything to get a prize
- Contacted out of the blue? Be suspicious
- Reject cold calls offering investments or pension advice
- Walk away from job ads that ask for money in advance
- Your bank will never attend your home to collect cash, your pin, payment card or chequebook if you are a victim of fraud
- Your bank will never phone you to ask for your PIN or your online banking password
- Your bank will never ask you to transfer money to a new account for fraud reasons
- Suspect a phone scam? Hang up, wait five minutes to clear the line or use another phone to call your bank
- Genuine computer firms do not make unsolicited calls to help you fix your computer

### Some key facts about scams

- £5bn – the estimated amount lost each year by UK consumers to mass-marketed scams via phone and post
- 1 in 10 people have fallen victim to financial scams losing hundreds, sometimes thousands, even hundreds of thousands of pounds

### Scams & Doorstep Crime Online Training

The best way to avoid scams is to make sure you know how to spot them. To help local residents spot scams and doorstep crime, Devon & Somerset Trading Standards has produced a short training session.

The training should take about 15 minutes but allow longer if you want to explore the further reading links and watch the suggested video.

[Take the training](#)

### What can consumers do to tackle scams?

1. **Get advice** from Citizens Advice consumer service **03454 04 05 06**. Get online consumer advice and information at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk). To report a problem to trading standards, contact the Citizens Advice consumer service. Trading standards are responsible for protecting consumers and the community against rogue and unfair traders.
2. **Report** scams and suspected scams to Action Fraud **0300 123 2040** [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)
3. **Tell** family, friends, neighbours so they can avoid scams

**Don't let your Gran get scammed**

Gran often target older people to scam them out of their money. What can you do to protect Gran from getting scammed?

Signs Gran might be responding to scams and how to help:

- Receiving lots of post and sending lots of post to companies abroad.
- Going through large amounts of stamps and cheque books.
- Receiving lots of phone calls from strangers or companies.
- Large amounts of cheap tat and scam mail.
- Frequent visits to the Post Office or bank.
- Unpaid bills.

What can you do?

- If you're worried Gran might be easy to trick, telephone scams look at installing a call blocker.
- Sort her mail with her so she can recognise a scam.
- Get Gran's permission to post her mail for her.
- The most important thing you can do is spend time with Gran. Many older people respond to scams as a result of loneliness or social isolation.

If you want advice on scams, want to report a scam or need advice on how to help someone who has been scammed, please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 040506.

Logos for Citizens Advice, Action Fraud, and Trading Standards are visible.

**I'm glad I listened to my gut feeling.**

**Be scam aware**

Get advice from the Citizens Advice consumer service 03454 04 05 06 who can provide advice and pass details on to trading standards.

Report scams or suspected scams to Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040 [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

Tell a friend, neighbour or relative about any scams you become aware of.

Logos for Citizens Advice and Action Fraud are visible.

**"It was a call out of the blue... I was suspicious."**

**Be scam aware**

**#scamaware**

**"I hadn't bought a ticket... So how could I win a lottery?"**

**Be scam aware**

**#scamaware**

# Training & Development

It is the responsibility of all organisations to ensure they have a skilled and competent workforce who are able to take on the roles and responsibilities required to protect adults at risk, and ensure an appropriate response when adult abuse or neglect does occur.

Although the Safeguarding Adults Board does not currently provide training at this time, our website includes signposts to **e-learning** links around adult safeguarding, the Mental Capacity Act, modern slavery, PREVENT, and FGM.

<http://ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/information/learning-and-development/>



Working together to promote quality care and support

**Care Focus South West** offers open course dates to individuals and organisations in the health, housing and social care sector. This gives employers the flexibility to send only those workers that require the training and helps save on costs. Visit: <http://www.carefocussw.co.uk/open-courses/>

They can also deliver a range of bespoke training in your workplace. Visit: <http://www.carefocussw.co.uk/bespoke-and-in-house-care-training/>



The **Safer Somerset Partnership** aims for the effective prevention and response to domestic abuse. All organisations can have a basic awareness of domestic abuse to help provide a shared community understanding of the complexity surrounding the problem. Somerset County Council on behalf of the partnership organises a range of courses.

Visit: <http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/information-for-professionals/training/>

# National Headlines

## June 2016

- [Why we need to make elder abuse an imprisonable offence](#): Action on Elder Abuse head explains why the charity has launched a campaign for new laws to protect abused older people
- [Police data reveals that abusers of elderly let off lightly](#): Police are failing to press charges in thousands of cases of “elder abuse”. Figures obtained from forces across the country show the only a fraction of such abuse cases investigated by police are referred to the Crown Prosecution Service, with most perpetrators getting off with a caution.
- [High Court allows legal challenge over Care Act wellbeing principle](#)

## May 2016

- [NICE guidance addresses need for safe and appropriate discharge from hospital](#)
- [Law Commission publishes Interim Statement on Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty](#)
- [Government publishes its response to Alan Wood’s review of local safeguarding children boards \(LSCBs\)](#): Local agencies are the front line when it comes to safeguarding and it is vitally important they work well together. On 26 May, the government published its response to the review carried out by Alan Wood CBE of the role and functions of LSCB, and what it intends to do to strengthen multi-agency working and improve practice at a local and national level.
- [Cuts making it more difficult to achieve health and social care integration, warns research](#): Pilots to test new ways of integrating care report struggle to engage frontline professionals as they “firefight” to keep services running.

## April 2016

- [Rise in care homes going out of business](#): Research shows steady increase in number of care home providers entering insolvency
- [Government to introduce national AMHP accreditation system](#): Department of Health review concludes national oversight and governance of AMHP services should be introduced in April 2018
- [One year on, what has the Care Act achieved?](#) While councils project optimism about the legislation’s impact, cuts to care packages, problems meeting advocacy duties and social work shortages are sources of concern

## Get in touch

If you have any suggestions for future topics or comments about this newsletter, please contact us via:

[ssab@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ssab@somerset.gov.uk)

Alternatively call our Business Manager, Niki Shaw, on:  
**01823 357014**

**If you are worried about a vulnerable adult, don't stay silent**

**Phone Adult Social Care on 0300 123 2224 or email [adults@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:adults@somerset.gov.uk)**

In an emergency always contact the police by dialling 999.

If it is not an emergency, dial 101

