Department of Health & Social Care

National Adult Safeguarding Board – Summary of meeting 5 October 2026

Attendees

Sarah McClinton (Chair), Chief Social Worker for Adults, DHSC

Chris Badger, Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care and Integrated Care, CQC

Vic Rayner, Chief Executive Officer, National Care Forum

Tamara Cooper, Adult Safeguarding Lead, NPCC

Michael Preston-Shoot, Joint Convenor, National Network for SAB Chairs

Melanie Williams, Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Nottinghamshire County Council

Lucy Rush, Principal Social Worker / Director of Practice and Assurance, Hertfordshire County Council; Chair of National PSW Network

Anthony Douglas, former CEO of CAFCASS and DASS/DCS and current Improvement Adviser for DHSC and DfE

Isaac Samuels, Co-chair of the National Co-production Advisory Group and the Think Local Act Personal Board (contribution shared by email)

Clenton Farquharson, Associate Director, Policy and Influencing, Think Local Act Personal (contribution shared by email)

Additional Attendees

Ian McCreath, Head, Think Local Act Personal (TLAP)

Simon Williams, Director of Social Care Improvement, Care and Health Improvement Programme, Local Government Association (LGA)

Dr Adi Cooper OBE, Care and Health Improvement Advisor (Safeguarding Adults) at the Local Government Association

Tabitha Brufal, Adult Safeguarding Policy Team, DHSC

Martin Teff, Adult Safeguarding Policy Team, DHSC

Emily Fleming, Adult Safeguarding Policy Team, DHSC

Geena Connolly, Adult Safeguarding Policy Team, DHSC

Lisa Gwyn, Private Secretary to Chief Social Worker, DHSC

Apologies

Acosia Nyanin, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for England, NHS England

Opening remarks

Sarah McClinton welcomed members to the second meeting of the National Adult Safeguarding Board and reflected on the role it is playing in strengthening national leadership and oversight of adult safeguarding. The Minister of State for Social Care and Mental health spoke to the Chair ahead of the meeting and she has a strong interest in the Board's work, its role in identifying strategic and systemic issues and influencing national priorities to support wider reform.

Discussion

Item 1: Adult safeguarding work programme update

DHSC officials updated the Board on the strategic direction of the adult safeguarding programme, focused on strengthening governance and accountability, data and intelligence, and learning and improvement. The review of Care Act Guidance Chapter 14 is now underway. A second key programme deliverable is a rapid review of adult safeguarding powers and duties, underpinned by better use of data and intelligence.

Board members supported the overall direction of the programme, and reinforced the need for a strong emphasis on people's rights, dignity, choice, control and outcomes, alongside better use of existing data and intelligence across agencies. The discussion highlighted the potential value of a theory of change in articulating the programme's purpose and intended impact.

Item 2: Rapid review of accountability and system learning

DHSC officials outlined plans for an evidence-led rapid review of adult safeguarding arrangements, considering leadership, accountability, learning and multi-agency governance. The Chief Social Worker would lead the review, with the Board providing strategic oversight, ahead of recommendations in spring 2027. This would include consideration of the current statutory framework for adult safeguarding and whether or not changes were required.

Members supported the proposed approach. Members also emphasised the importance of clarity about the scope and key questions for the review, ensuring it focuses on how effectively current arrangements protect and support people, where change is needed, and how national and local arrangements can better support consistent and effective safeguarding practice. Members stressed that people's rights, freedoms, relationships, choice and control should remain central throughout.

Item 3: Lived Experience Reference Group

Think Local Act Personal outlined an approach for embedding lived experience within the work of the Board through a dedicated Reference Group, designed to provide insight, challenge and influence as the Board's work develops. The ambition is for a Lived Experience Reference Group to be in place early next year, supported by an immediate phase of co-design and development.

Members agreed that that lived experience, including that of unpaid carers as well as people who draw on care and support, should be meaningfully embedded in the Board's work. This would draw on diverse perspectives and wider networks, be done sensitively and with clear routes for people's experiences to inform priorities and decision-making. Board members offered to support the work by facilitating access to their own networks and existing lived-experience groups.

Item 4: CQC adult safeguarding findings and sector-led improvement

CQC shared emerging learning from their first report on local authority assessments and improvement activity, highlighting variation in safeguarding practice and opportunities to strengthen learning and improvement nationally.

Local authority assessments 2023 to 2026: Emerging themes and findings - Care Quality Commission

Partners in Care and Health shared their approach to supporting local authorities with improvement.

Members considered how this information could support continuous improvement across adult safeguarding, including where greater consistency would add value and where variation may reflect legitimate differences in local context and delivery. Discussion emphasised the importance of involving the full range of safeguarding partners and ensuring that people's experiences, equity and outcomes remain central to understanding what good safeguarding looks like.

Item 5: Visibility and engagement

Members supported using the upcoming National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC) and National Safeguarding Adults Week to raise the Board's profile and strengthen the adult safeguarding agenda. They encouraged positive, accessible and person-centred communications, including a stronger focus on what good safeguarding makes possible in people's lives.

Decisions and actions

1. Rapid review: The Board supported the overall approach of the adult safeguarding work programme. DHSC will refine the scope and review questions, drawing on members' feedback, expertise and wider networks.

2. Review governance: The National Adult Safeguarding Board will act as the Steering Group for the rapid review. DHSC will confirm and share the governance for the review, expectations of Board members and opportunities to engage wider safeguarding partners.

3. Lived experience: DHSC will progress co-design of the Lived Experience Reference Group and establish how it will connect with and inform the Board's work.

4. Board engagement: The secretariat will develop and share a Board engagement and visibility plan to support the Board's wider reach and influence.

Annex: Agenda

Item	Lead
1. Welcome, apologies and actions from previous meeting	Sarah McClinton
2. DHSC Adult Safeguarding Programme Update	Martin Teff
3. Adult Safeguarding Accountability and Learning Review update	Martin Teff
4. Lived Experience Reference Group	Ian McCreath
5. CQC Local Authority Assessment Safeguarding Findings	Chris Badger, Simon Williams
6. Visibility of the Board and upcoming engagement	Sarah McClinton
7. AOB and Wrap up	Sarah McClinton