



Manchester Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB)

Safeguarding is Everybody's Business including the VCS

The voluntary and community sector in Manchester is, collectively, a significant provider of health and wellbeing services in the City and therefore has a key role to play in safeguarding adults, young people and children. The sector also has close links with communities and can be a valuable conduit to obtain the views of the communities of Manchester. We know that safeguarding improves with the engagement of individuals, service users and carers. Macc (Manchester's local voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisation), Manchester Carers' Forum and Age Concern Manchester, are members of the MSAB.

Over the past year, these organisations have sought to bring to the MSAB's discussions, a perspective from the Voluntary Sector to inform the strategic development of the Board. Collectively these organisations do not represent the Sector but bring their views and experiences from the communities they work with, to the table to inform the strategic thinking of the Board.

Macc has been working to develop stronger links between the MSAB and the wider voluntary and community sector providers through

- Our Health and Wellbeing Forum and the developing Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly.
- Continuing to increase understanding and knowledge of safeguarding issues and duties through information sharing and ensuring that the Sector can access appropriate safeguarding training
- In August 2012, Macc launched the voluntary and community sector Safeguarding toolkit, developed in partnership between Macc, Manchester City Council and MSAB in response to the Safeguarding Minimum Standards.

www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/voluntary-sector-safeguarding-toolkit

Manchester Carers Forum continues to support carers and enable them to have a voice in the development of local safeguarding policy and practice. They continue to ensure that staff, volunteers and students on social work placement are fully trained in all aspects of safeguarding awareness and have implemented policies and procedures relating to reporting of safeguarding issues.



An important part of this is to keep challenging the often unacknowledged assumption that safeguarding is just an issue for those who receive some form of social care service: something which becomes all the more important with the tightening of eligibility criteria in health and social care assessments.

Recent research for Carers UK has clearly indicated that the higher levels of demand placed upon unpaid carers is having a significantly negative impact upon their health, social and economic wellbeing. 'More for less' means more is being asked at greater cost to family carers. This is clearly unsustainable and has massive implications for those charged with the safeguarding agenda.

There is clear evidence to show that the effects of reduced public spending impacts on public, private and voluntary sector agencies and that it is a challenge for all agencies to keep vulnerable adults safe at a time of austerity and change. The pressure on all of us is to do more for less and do it better.

It is indicative to note Macc's previous work with MSAB to develop an Advocacy Toolkit to support choice, control and independence of vulnerable adults. A significant percentage of local advocacy services and support have been lost following the implementation of cuts at local level arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010.

Across all local voluntary and community sector groups, there is increased pressure to support more people with higher levels of need, which they may not have the skill or capacity to do while also seeking to minimize costs and compete for scarce resources. This is a challenge that the sector has taken on board and Macc is seeking to ensure that continuous improvement in safeguarding practice remains a priority with local groups.

We cannot however allow cuts to budgets, reconfigurations and efficiency savings to be achieved at the cost of weakening safeguarding policies and practice. As has been stated by many, Dignity and Respect lie at the centre of health and social care provision and we have a duty of care to ensure that safeguarding is at the top of everyone's agenda.

Both Macc and Manchester Carers Forum will continue to champion, support and insist on continuing to improve safeguarding policy and practice in Manchester.

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Forum