

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE
ADULTS BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2008-2009**

Approved by the Board November 2009

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Forward

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults has been receiving increasing prominence in the media as reports of abuse of adults have been reported and inquiries into institutional failures have been highlighted. Within Buckinghamshire we have been alert to these public concerns and have worked across all agencies to improve the recognition, reporting, and investigation of abuse, as well as the support to those vulnerable adults who have suffered from it.

In all its activities, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board recognises that safeguarding vulnerable adults is 'Everybody's business'. We have focussed attention on providing information to the community to alert the public to the abuse of vulnerable adults, and we have strengthened the training of professionals and staff in all agencies to increase their understanding of abuse of adults and to improve their skills in responding to concerns when they arise.

The Board and its partners have followed the lead of the government report 'No Secrets' in developing and shaping services for vulnerable adults, and 2008 provided an opportunity for the Board to call on the experience of the agencies in Buckinghamshire to contribute to the review of this guidance. Although no date has yet been set for a government response to this review, the Board is enthusiastic about the opportunities that will arise from a refreshed government response to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and we will ensure that the future development of the Board and its constituent agencies will meet the challenges posed by new guidance.

Donald McPhail

Chair, Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board

Introduction

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board is a multi-agency partnership which promotes the welfare of vulnerable adults and their protection from abusive behaviour. It provides strategic leadership for agencies providing services to vulnerable adults, and seeks to ensure there is a consistently high standard of professional response to situations where there is abuse.

The Board has 5 main areas of operation, which together provide an effective means of decreasing the risk of abuse. These are:

- Promoting the message of awareness amongst staff and public to increase their knowledge and confidence in reporting concerns
- Ensuring staff are fully trained and understand their roles and responsibilities in recognising and reporting abusive practice
- Developing policy and standards of best practice for staff and care providers to follow
- Screening out and preventing potential abusers coming into contact with vulnerable people through robust employment practices, and
- Carrying out periodic reviews to learn how to improve our responses.

Terminology - what and who are we talking about?

What is safeguarding?

'Safeguarding Adults' is the name given to the inter-agency system in place to protect individuals from abuse, harm and/or exploitation.

Who is a Vulnerable Adult?

A vulnerable adult is defined as an adult (a person aged 18 or over) who 'is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. *Definition from 'No Secrets' March 2000 Department of Health.*

This could include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people or those with a physical disability or impairment. It may also include an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their particular personal situation such as experiencing domestic abuse, chronic illness, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

When does 'abuse' happen?

It is everybody's right to live in a safe environment free from being threatened, intimidated or abused. The feeling of being unsafe can occur in different ways and in

different circumstances. The most well known types of abuse are physical and sexual abuse but abuse can also be financial or psychological, and through neglect or discrimination. Most people associate abuse as happening to children but it can and does happen with adults too.

A vulnerable adult may be subject to abuse when they are neglected, persuaded to agree to something against their will or taken advantage of because they do not fully understand the consequences of their choices or actions. It can be a single act or repeated over time. It may be deliberate but it may also happen as a result of poor care practices or ignorance.

Sadly, abuse can occur in any relationship, most frequently by people the person knows personally very well.

Keeping vulnerable adults safer.... how we work together in Bucks

A home carer arrives at an elderly couple's home an hour after their daughter has visited to find the father has been physically assaulted by her following an argument. He doesn't want to call the police.

.....the carer tells their GP and the district nurse attends to give him the medical attention he needs.

.....the GP rings the social worker who visits, and gets his permission to photograph the injury and take down the details.

.....the social worker calls a meeting of everyone involved in their care and make an action plan to keep the couple safe.....

.....and gets the father's permission to talk to the Police.....

.....who arrest and bail the daughter with instructions not to enter the house pending further enquiries.

RESULT: a case conference of all professional staff involved was arranged with the elderly father attending. Supervised visits are introduced so his daughter could still see her mother. The father remarks that a huge weight has been lifted from his shoulders.

The National context and developments

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board continues to address the national safeguarding agenda in its work programme, raising awareness with the public and professionals of what constitutes abuse, and by developing policies that promote collaboration, communication, cooperation and partnership. The 'No Secrets' document produced by the Department of Health in 2000 states "The agencies primary aim should be to prevent abuse where possible but, if the preventative strategy fails, agencies should ensure that robust procedures are in place for dealing with instances of abuse".

In 2008 an extensive government review of the 'No Secrets' guidance was undertaken to inform the future direction of national safeguarding vulnerable adults policy and reflect on any legislative changes required. Consultation closed early 2009 and will report in the latter half of the year. Early messages suggest the twin themes of raising awareness and good inter-agency working remain as important and significant as ever.

The Board also seeks to address the requirements of new legislation and best practice guidance as well as existing key pieces of law.

- The concordat 'Putting People First - A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social Care' (2007) signalled the government's commitment to independent living and promotion of wellbeing for all adults. Requiring a 'whole systems' shift to new ways of delivering public care services to those in need, this work continues to be developed and devolved to local authorities for implementation under the title of 'self directed support'.
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 established a new Court of Protection and Office of the Public Guardian in October 2007, both of which have significant implications for the safeguarding agenda. It imposed a duty on local authorities to prepare and train staff to operate as 'best interest assessors' from the 1st April 2009 under the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. These staff assess, amongst other things, an individual's capacity to make decisions, and if they do not have the capacity whether it is appropriate to deprive them of their liberty and allow others to make those decisions for them.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides a new legal framework for employing staff and volunteers working with vulnerable children and adults. Developed in response to recommendation 19 of the Bichard Inquiry Report following the Soham murders, the centrepiece of this legislation is the new Independent Safeguarding Authority's vetting and barring scheme, due for implementation in October 2009. This will provide a positive vetting system for up to 11 million people working or volunteering with children and vulnerable adults.
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 was brought in to address the difficulties posed by previous legislation in bringing to justice organisations for failing to protect their employees, service users and the public, and where failures of any service result in preventable deaths.
- The Fraud Act 2006 came into effect on 15th January 2007. Section 4 of the Act provides powers to bring to justice people who commit fraud by abuse of their position or who fail to prevent fraud occurring.

- The Dignity in Care Campaign requires all older people in care to be treated with dignity and respect , whilst the 'Dignity Challenge' lays a responsibility on commissioners and providers to comply with 10 principles, the first of which is a 'zero tolerance of all forms of abuse'. This is monitored through the national inspection programme.

Keeping vulnerable adults safer.... how we work together in Bucks

A visitor attending a review at an old people's home overhears a staff member shouting at a resident.....
and tells a Care Quality Commission inspector.....
who rings the Bucks Safeguarding Adults team.....
who talk to the manager of the home.....
who checks out the situation and finds that the member of staff has failed to reveal a full employment history and dismisses the staff member.
RESULT: Residents are safer, and the home has tightened up its recruitment procedures.

Keeping vulnerable adults safer.... how we work together in Bucks

A home care service alerted the safeguarding vulnerable adults team about an elderly woman with dementia who had been befriended by a younger man from her originating homeland. Concern was expressed about who was taking care of the woman's financial matters. She had been seen by a consultant psychiatrist and assessed as 'lacking capacity' under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, to manage her affairs. Contact with the next of kin (son), living abroad, failed.

The safeguarding team member interviewed the younger man, the elderly woman and another family friend. The younger man admitted opening the joint account with the elderly woman. The council's legal team sought the Court's agreement to protect the woman's other assets as next of kin could not be traced.

The woman's son arrived in the UK unexpectedly and met with the safeguarding team member. He found that a solicitor had been instructed to change his mother's will, and make application to the court by the younger man to have power over all his mother's affairs. Her son applied to the Court for a deputyship order over his mother's affairs and made arrangements for a family friend living nearby to control her daily and immediate expenses before having to return abroad. Having seen his mother's circumstances and her vulnerability, he was determined to remain in much closer contact from now on.

Local developments 2008-9

The Board

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board is the local multi-agency partnership which leads the strategic development of safeguarding adults work. Formed in 2006, it now has more than 10 local organisations and partners represented. The Board meets bi-monthly to oversee and facilitate progress towards an improved Buckinghamshire wide system of response, and to scrutinise working practices and standards.

During 2008/9 work continued on revising and extending the membership and status of the Board. An independent Chair was appointed to underline the partnership's commitment to challenge and openness. In recognition of the increasing importance of the work of the partnership, Board members further committed to pool resources for a business development manager to support and develop the work of the Board, and a safeguarding training manager to increase training opportunities, both to be appointed in 2009.

The Subgroups

The multi-agency training and safe employment subgroups have been robustly established and able to focus on their work plans, providing regular progress reports to the Board. A summary of these and other work is provided later in this report. The policy and procedure subgroup has been slower to establish, experiencing a lack of continuity of membership which has impacted on the pace of review of the safeguarding policies and procedures. It will be for the Board in the coming year to achieve effective membership of all its subgroups. In addition, the Board has not yet been able to effect its terms of reference by setting up a monitoring and evaluation subgroup although this remains an aspiration. However, the Board has established a serious case review subgroup in readiness to undertake a serious case review.

Project Groups

1. The Mental Capacity Act (2005) developments and safeguarding

The implementation of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) (2005) had been anticipated locally and key aspects were therefore included in training from September 2006. Throughout 08/09 the Mental Capacity Act Local Implementation Group continued to meet monthly to prepare for the introduction of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards in April 2009. This group also reported regularly to the Board throughout 08/09.

Bucks County Council implemented the MCA across the local community working closely with colleagues in the health organisations. Part of this work involved some awareness raising sessions with health partners, GP forums and some GP practices. Early on in the process, it had been agreed that a dedicated team should be set up to respond and manage requests for best interest assessments from April 2009. By January 2009 joint funding for a deprivation of liberty manager post had been agreed between Bucks PCT and Buck Adult Social Care. The manager and team were in place and began operating by the 1st of April 2009.

2. Self directed support (incorporating individual budgets) and safeguarding

To increase independence, well being and choice, the council has been driving through a programme of change in delivery pattern for people who are eligible for council funded care services. A project group, established and operating for several months, has moved from piloting to full scale implementation. As it involves service users purchasing and in some cases, employing staff to deliver a personalised service, the group has been rigorously testing new policies, procedures, guidance and systems against best safeguarding practice. The new system will take some time to 'bed in' and will be an integral part of the Board's plans for some time to come.

External Inspections

During the year, the Care Quality Commission (formerly the Commission for Social Care Inspection) conducted an independence, wellbeing and choice inspection of Buckinghamshire County Council's Adult Social Care Services. Information about star ratings and the inspection report can be viewed on the Care Quality Commission website, www.cqc.org.uk. The concluding summary stated that safeguarding adults had a high profile in Buckinghamshire and had a sound strategic framework and some good effective multi-agency investigation work. They found quality assurance systems and response times to alerts to be areas to improve, and overall judged Buckinghamshire County Council to be adequate with promising prospects. The Board will review the recommendations and action plan at each Board meeting over the next year.

Additional work

In addition to the Board arrangements, each partner has supplementary internal policies and procedures to support partnership arrangements. Bucks County Council Adult Social Care services have internal safeguarding reference groups of managers and champions. Other partners have either set up reference groups or are considering doing so. Organisational champions have been identified during the year and it is recognised that this role needs to be further developed. The timing of this will be matched with the outcomes of the 'No Secrets' consultation and government guidance published.

Conference

A Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults' Conference took place in May 08 with a 105 delegates from a wide variety of statutory, private and voluntary organisations attending, reflecting the partnership that has been created in Buckinghamshire. Covering the subject of elder abuse and safer employment practices, the evaluations indicated that the conference raised awareness and knowledge levels successfully.

Audits

To date the Board has received a quality assurance audit on safeguarding adults activity and the Commission for Social Care Inspection report.

Strategic links

The Board has sought to ensure that it is informed by issues arising in other multi agency strategic working groups, for example, the multi- agency risk assessment conference, the multi-agency public protection arrangement and the Buckinghamshire Childrens Safeguarding Board. This is achieved by a structured board agenda which allows members to inform the Board of any issues affecting vulnerable adults arising there.

08/09 Summary of key achievements

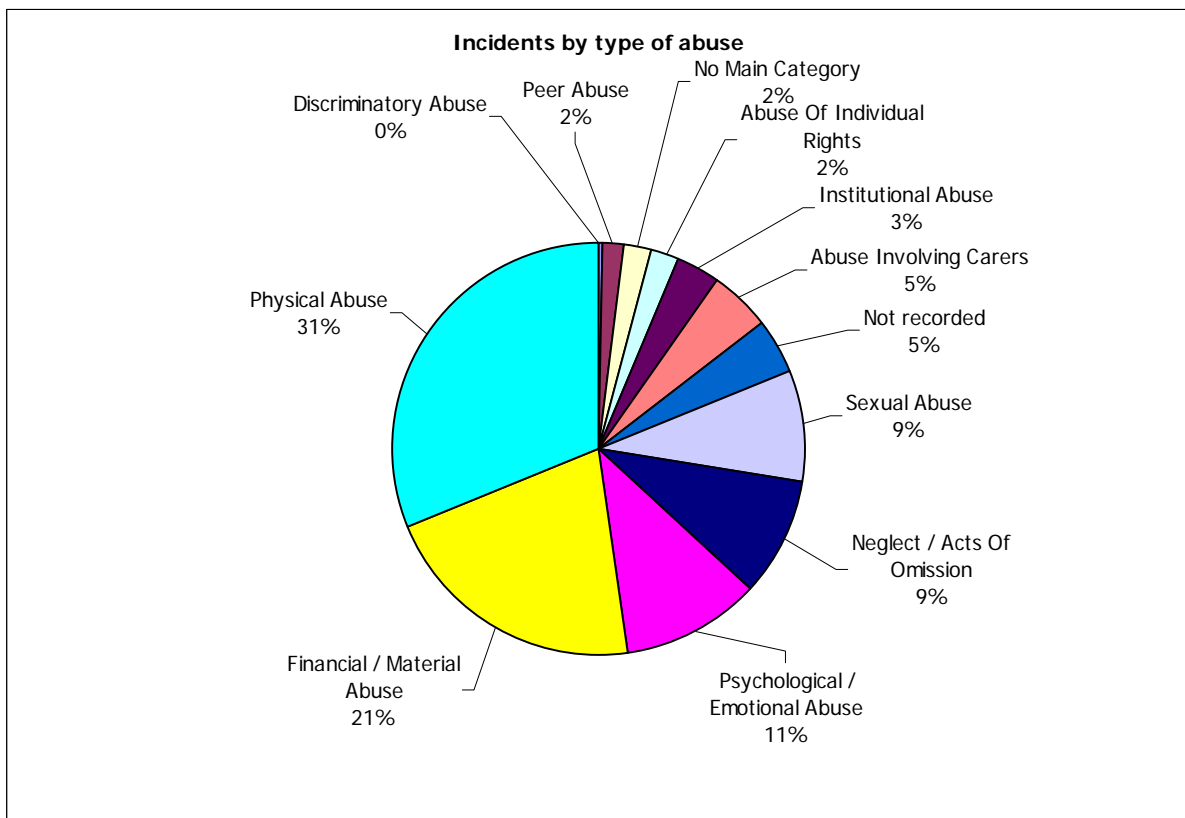
<p>The Board continues to promote a focus on safeguarding vulnerable adults. To do so it takes a strategic lead, creates an environment where knowledge can be improved, and performance scrutinised.</p>	
The partners planned to	The partners
<p>Increase knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues in Buckinghamshire through the development of the Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed an independent Chair to challenge performance and ensure the Board continued to improve • Invested in ways to collect and report on activity and performance • Agreed to pool resources so the Board could work more efficiently • Appointed a manager to lead the development of the development of the Board • Agreed to appoint a training manager to ensure that sufficient training is efficiently and effectively provided to the highest standards across the Buckinghamshire multi-agency partnership • Devised a communication route for increasing services user and carer involvement
<p>Deliver the safeguarding training strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted with trainers and set in place an improved quality assurance system to ensure standards of delivery • prioritised and supported staff in delivering the safeguarding service across Buckinghamshire, through training, recruitment and performance monitoring.
<p>Improve selection and recruitment practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed safer recruitment policies and processes and disseminated guidance • Delivered a safer recruitment workshop
<p>Develop the ways in which information about safeguarding is communicated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information leaflets published and disseminated to the public using informal community routes • Held a conference for staff to disseminate messages of good practice
<p>Address safeguarding issues whilst developing new ways of delivering care services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed and trained staff in readiness for the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act best interest requirements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and piloted support systems for people wishing to use individual budgets and direct payments rather than council provided services
Improve selection and recruitment practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed safer recruitment policies and processes and disseminated guidance • Delivered a safer recruitment workshop
Improve police involvement and understanding of police practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered training for police and other agencies to improve communications and practices
Improve contracting arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed the terms and conditions of spot purchase contracts to include a safeguarding clause • Included safeguarding issues in monitoring arrangements for contracts

Safeguarding Performance activity

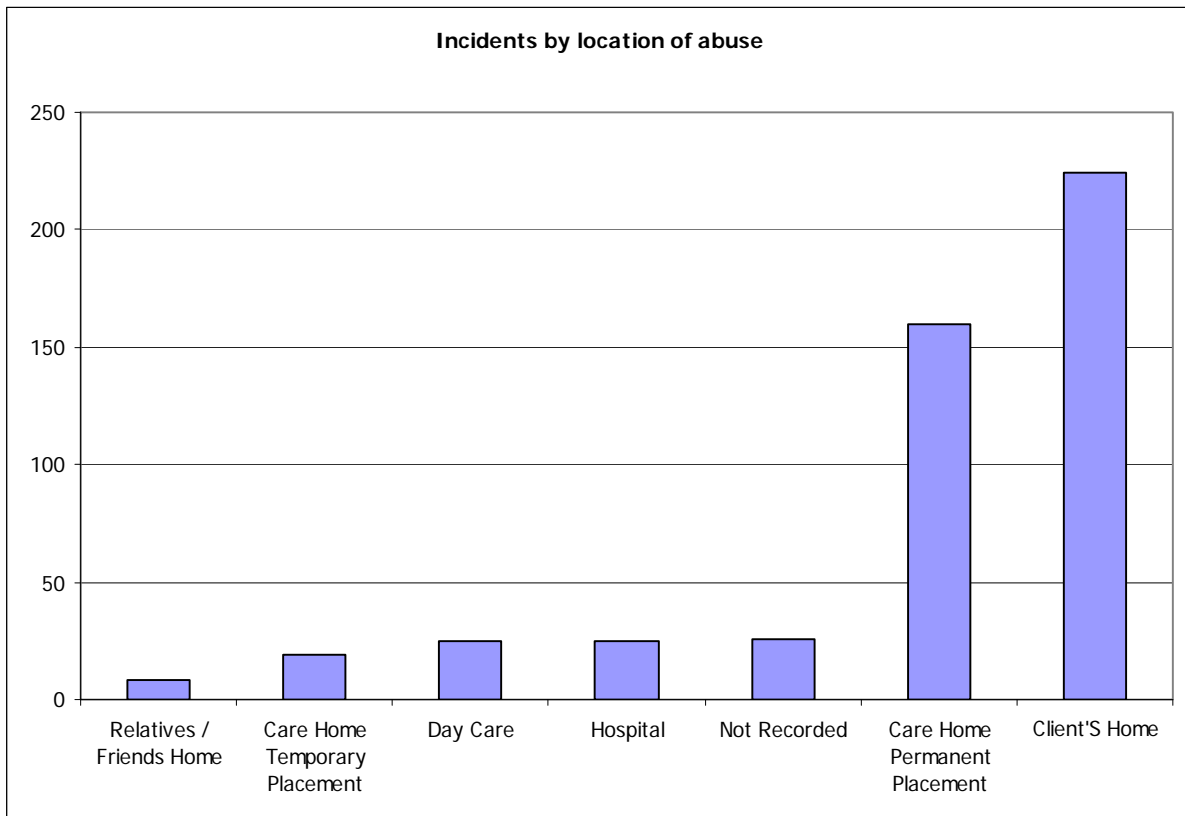
Statistics have been developed to inform of trends and activity. A new government return will be introduced in October 2009 after which it will make it possible to add national comparisons. The charts that follow show analysis of activity in 08/09.

Chart 1: Incidents by Type



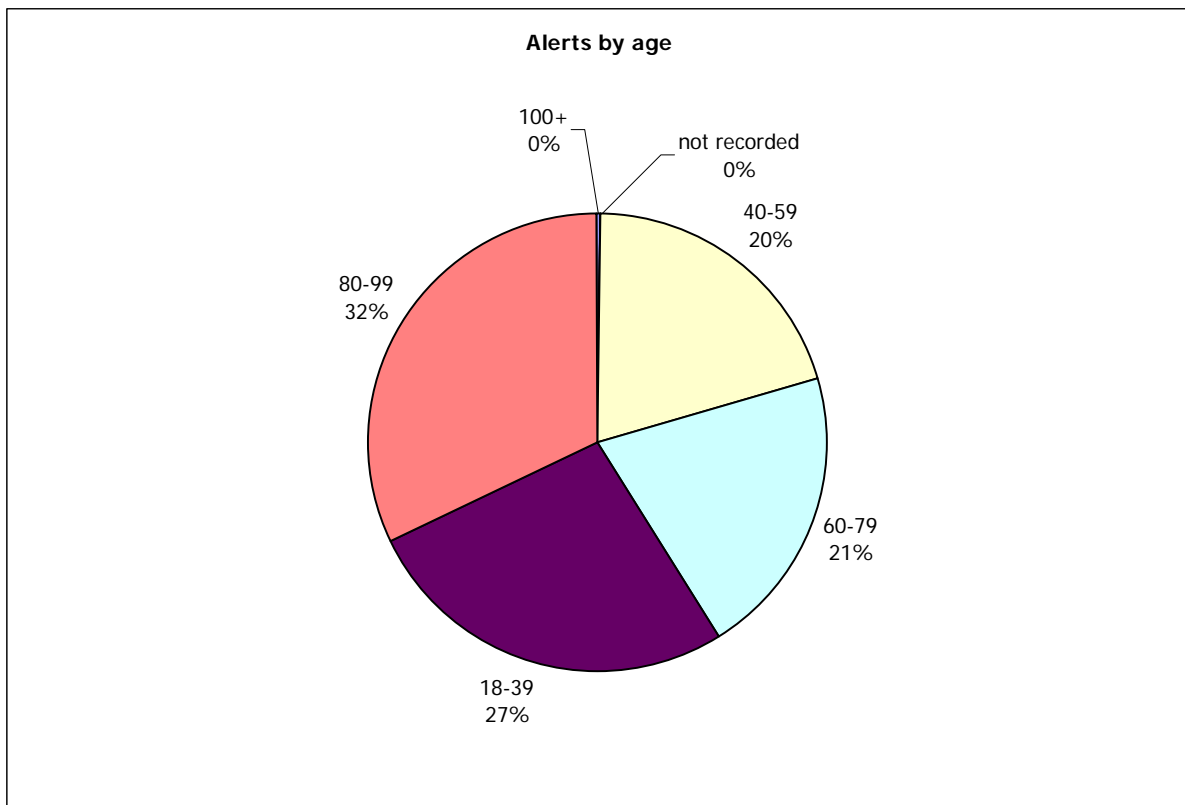
Physical abuse continues to form the largest proportion of alerts in 2008/09 although reduced by 4%. In 2008/09 the enlarged safeguarding team of officers at Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care was able to work more closely with the Multi - Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the Bucks CC domestic violence coordinator. The planned restructure of specialist police services in 2008/09 to one geographical location will also hopefully help this downward trend to continue.

Chart 2: Incidents by location of abuse



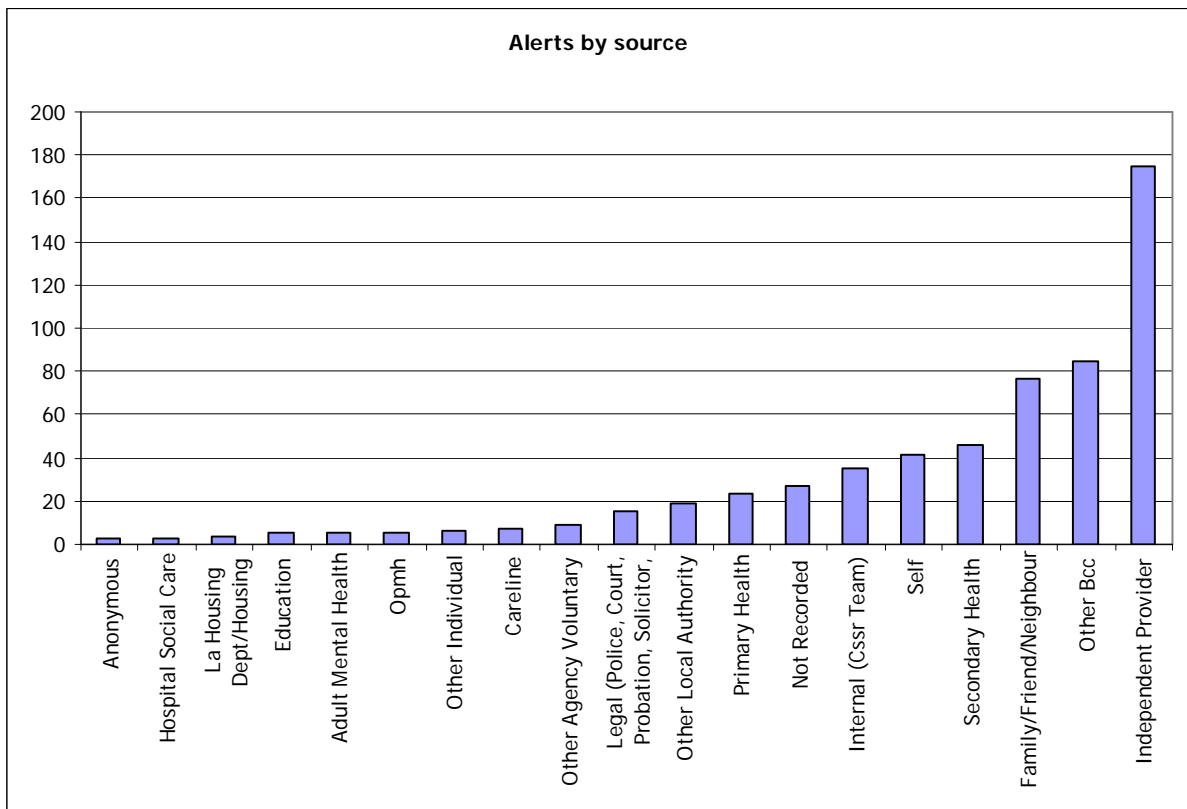
The number of alerts about abuse occurring in a vulnerable person's own home continues to be of major concern, as it was last year. The self directed support programme can and will continue to address the issue by educating people wishing to take up the scheme of the dangers and how to avoid problems and keep themselves safe. However, an increasing population of elderly people providing their own care presents a challenge for the Board in future to alert and inform local communities. A continuing area of concern is the number of alerts from residential care which has remained similar to 07/08 (around 160), and this will be addressed through the training sub group.

Chart 3: Alerts by age



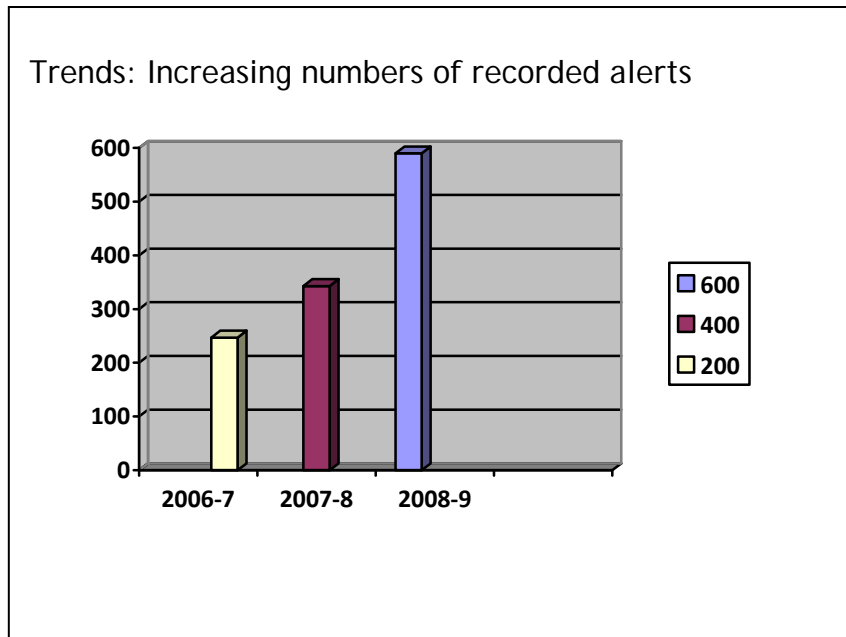
The numbers of alerts in each age band are evenly distributed for a second year running although the largest group continues to be in the 80 - 99 years band. The Board will use the data to build knowledge of trends and investigate causes in future.

Chart 4: Source of reported alerts



The majority of alerts continue to come from independent sector providers, followed by those generated by Buckinghamshire County Council. This is broadly in line with expectations. The number of alerts from primary and secondary health sources is low. Concerns as to whether they are being properly reported will be monitored by the Board.

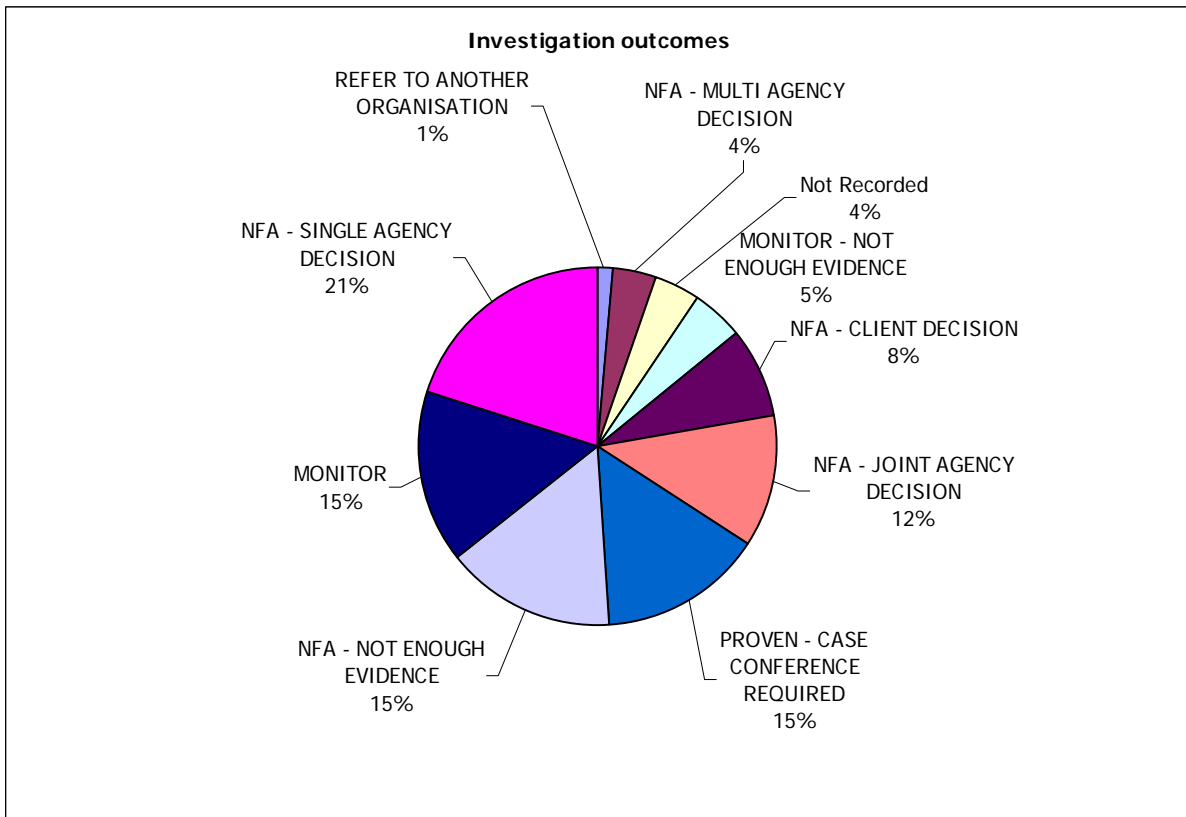
Chart 5: Number of alerts



For the past three years, data collection sources have indicated a steady increase in the numbers of people who were referred to Buckinghamshire's safeguarding process for further investigation. This reflects the determination and priority given to safeguarding work by Board members. Comparing Buckinghamshire's population with national average referral rates, we would expect about 600 alerts to be maintained and recorded annually. In 2008/9 we recorded 590 alerts. We estimate that this is a minimum figure as the recording system does not reflect all safeguarding activity but merely the last contact with the safeguarding team (the more complex and serious cases). It also does not record the total numbers of independent investigations which were safely resolved, and that took place in organisations other than Buckinghamshire Adult Social Care.

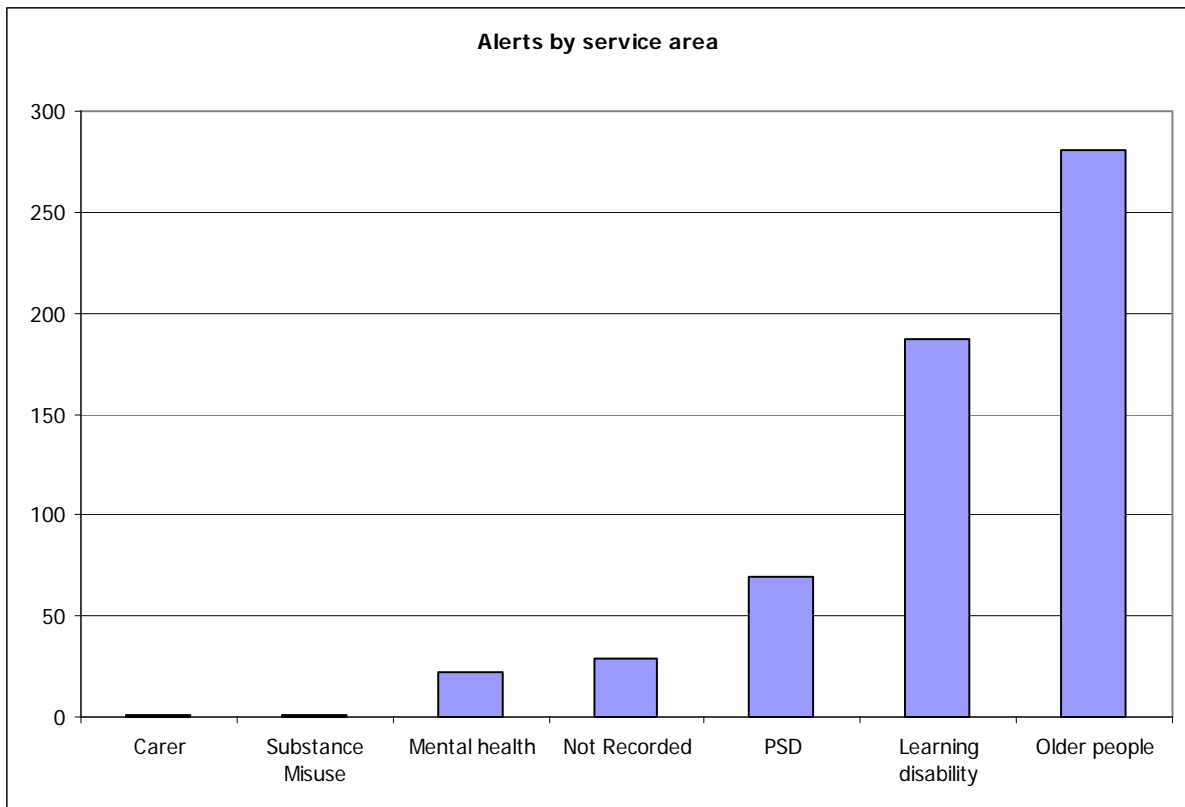
In 2009/10 a new reporting Government return will be introduced with new definitions and counting arrangements. The challenge will be to respond, increase and maintain the number of alerts once a baseline figure has been established. This should help to provide comparison data in due course.

Chart 6: Outcomes of Safeguarding Inquiries and investigations



Methods of recording this activity have changed this year so comparisons are not possible. This chart will be used as a baseline for developing trend data and used in discussions at Board meetings in future.

Chart 7: Alerts by Service area



Over a 3 year period the number of reported concerns has fluctuated for each client category. Alerts concerning people with a learning disability were identified as receiving the greater number of alerts in 2006/2007. In 2007/2008, there was an increase in the numbers reported for older people that has taken this group to the most prevalent for two years running.

Alerts continue to be made from a variety of organisations and individuals. From April 08 all alerts were referred to the safeguarding vulnerable adults team, as a single point from which to manage and monitor cases. There continues to be work to be done to establish this as routine across the partnership.

Independent sector providers for older people services remain a significant source of alerts/referrals to the safeguarding adults procedures, emphasising the importance of continuing to promote awareness of adult abuse in this sector, and valuing this sector's contribution to safeguarding vulnerable adults. The information sharing protocol and procedures for reporting across the partnership should build on the progress so far.

Appendix 1

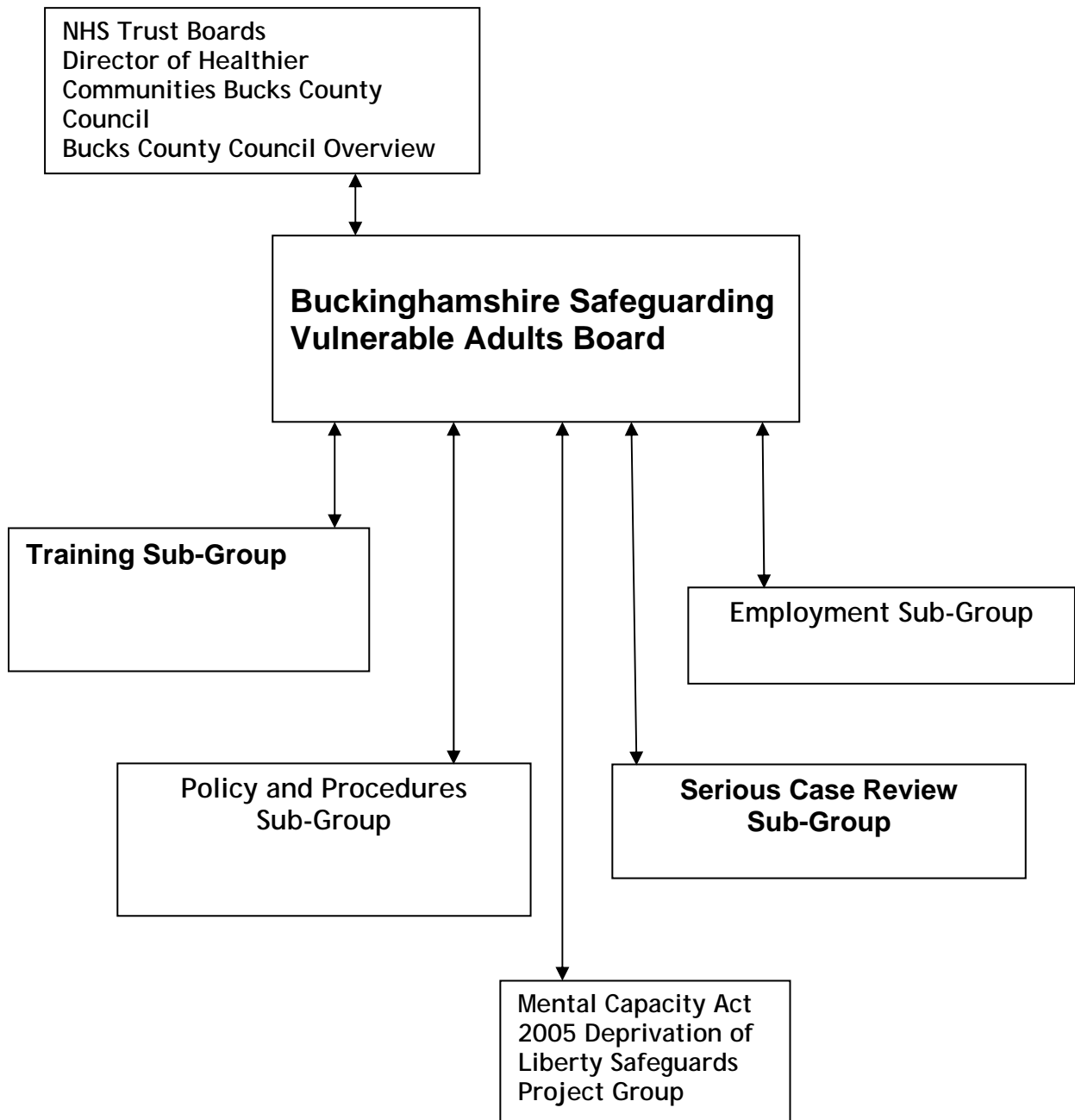
Membership of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board at 31 March 2009

Title	First Name	Last Name	Role on Board	Organisation
Mr	Donald	McPhail	Independent Chair of the Board and Chair of the Serious Case Review Group	Donald McPhail Consultancy Ltd
Cllr	Patricia	Birchley	Lead representative for Buckinghamshire County Council	Buckinghamshire County Council
Ms	Chris	Daltry	Human resource manager and chair of the employment sub-group	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr	Peter	Cullimore	Lead representative for independent care providers	Buckinghamshire Domiciliary Care Association
Ms	Sarah	Watson-Fisher	Lead representative for Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Mrs	Rachael	Corser	Lead representative for Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust	Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust
Ms	Sandra	Lemon	Lead representative for Care Quality Commission	Care Quality Commission
DCI	Yvonne	Hitch	Lead representative for Thames Valley Police	Thames Valley Police
Mr	Chris	Furness	Lead representative for the 4 Buckinghamshire District Councils	South Bucks District Council
Mr	Kerry	Stevens	Lead representative for Head of Service Provision Adult Social Care	Buckinghamshire County Council
Ms	Alison	Bussey	Lead representative for Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust	Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust
Mr	Leon	Ferreira	Lead representative for Voluntary and Independent Residential Care providers	Fremantle Trust/MKB Care Association
Mrs	Felicity	Sparshott	Lead representative for Probation	Thames Valley Probation
Mr	Richard	Kingston	Safeguarding manager and chair of the policy & procedure sub-group	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr	Stuart	Mitchelmore	Lead representative for Oxfordshire and	Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental

Title	First Name	Last Name	Role on Board	Organisation
			Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust	Health Trust
Mrs	Theresa	Martin	Lead representative for community safety manager	Community Safety Partnership
Mrs	Su	Davy	Lead representative for Supporting People Service	Supporting People Service
Mr	Ron	Gardener	Lead representative for Council for Racial Equality	Council for Racial Equality
Mr	Roy	George	Lead representative for safeguarding adults team and chair of the training Sub group	Bucks CC
Ms	Sarah	Haigh	Deprivation of liberty manager	Deprivation of Liberty Service, Bucks CC
Mrs	Monica	Collings	Business development manager for the Safeguarding Board and co-chair of the policy and procedure sub group	Hosted by BCC

Appendix 2.

Current Structure of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Board



Appendix 3

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board

Terms of Reference

The Board will promote the independence, choice, dignity and the individuality of vulnerable adults in all aspects of the work of the Board. In particular it will:

1. Monitor the effectiveness of each organisation's implementation of their responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults as detailed in 'No Secrets'
2. Ensure that there is communication with the public to develop awareness of the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and to provide information on how to access services to secure their safety and the safety of others.
3. Develop policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable adults in Buckinghamshire.
4. Ensure that systems are in place to identify and support the safety of all vulnerable adults, including those who are in receipt of direct payments, who have individual budgets to provide care and who are privately funded.
5. Develop and implement a training strategy to meet the training needs of staff across all agencies to work effectively together to safeguard vulnerable adults.
6. Develop standards for the recruitment and supervision of persons who work with vulnerable adults and monitor their implementation and compliance.
7. Ensure that systems are in place in all agencies for the investigation of allegations of breaches of safeguarding practices concerning persons working with vulnerable adults and to monitor compliance with procedures.
8. Ensure that the work of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board addresses the diverse needs of vulnerable adults from all communities in Buckinghamshire.
9. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the local authority and Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard vulnerable adults and advise them on ways to improve.
10. Participate in the local planning and commissioning of adult services to ensure that they take account of safeguarding vulnerable adults.
11. Formally report on its work to Buckinghamshire County Council's Strategic Director for Healthier Communities and Adult Services. Reports will also be made to Buckinghamshire's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, who will decide on issues to be reported to Cabinet. An annual report will be made to the Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council.
12. Undertake serious case reviews in accordance with the Board's serious case review policy.