



The development of the Safeguarding Advocate role in a hospice environment

In recent years, the number of safeguarding concerns relating to patients and families supported by St Richard's Hospice has increased – reflecting the trend seen nationally⁽¹⁾.

Safeguarding concerns recorded by hospice staff rose from nine in 2018/19 to 499 in 2022/23.

The hospice's Family Support Team wanted to improve the identification and handling of safeguarding cases across the charity, and to ensure continued compliance with Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards⁽²⁾.

The role of the Safeguarding Advocate was developed to enhance safeguarding practice.

St Richard's is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all those it cares for. Teams recognise their responsibility to promote safe practice and to work to protect all from harm.

What is a Safeguarding Advocate?

Advocates help ensure consistent, current, competent safeguarding advice and support is available within each hospice department.

They help staff and volunteers identify those in need of protection and support them to understand the action they need to take.

They also support the hospice's two Safeguarding Leads, among other responsibilities.

reported annually to trustees and the CQC. Safeguarding has been introduced as a standing agenda item for team meetings, where staff have the opportunity to raise concerns. Quarterly workshops are arranged and further training is provided as required.



Safeguarding Advocates represent departments across the hospice

The increase in incidents reported between October 2020 and August 2023 is clear in the graph shown on this poster.

This indicates the Safeguarding Advocates' impact on staff awareness and confidence in reporting safeguarding concerns.

The graphs below show the types of incident reported between October 2020 and August 2023.

The category for mental health is recently-added and we will monitor this area as more data becomes available.

- a slight increase from 54 per cent to 56 per cent in the proportion who had some training and felt reasonably confident about dealing with safeguarding situations.
- an increase in awareness of who the Safeguarding Leads are from 67 per cent to 91 per cent.
- an increase in the proportion of people feeling they would benefit from training from 67 per cent to 70 per cent.
- an overall reduction in the proportion who felt confident in dealing with any safeguarding situation from 17 per cent to 12 per cent.

An increase in staff reporting safeguarding concerns means the hospice can respond promptly and ensure the right support and safeguards are put in place.

Conclusion

The exponential increase in recorded cases since the programme was introduced is reassuring as it shows safeguarding concerns are being reported. However, training improvements are required to increase staff confidence, including tailored training for individual departments. This innovative scheme is ongoing. The hospice continues to experience a rise in the number of safeguarding concerns. Training and support for advocates continues to evolve.

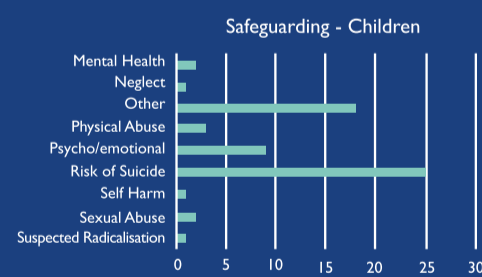
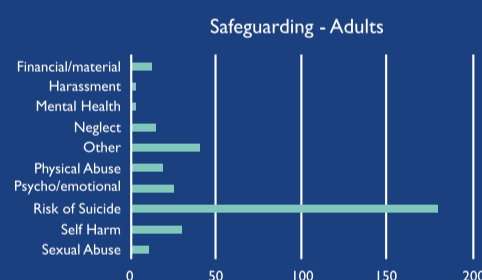
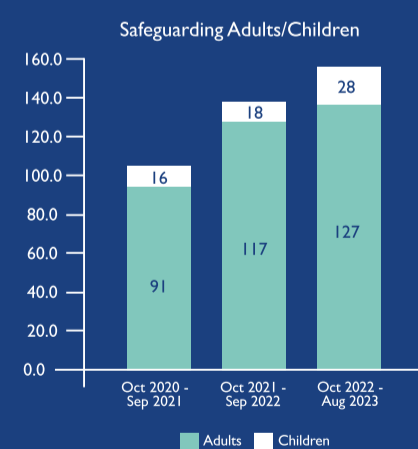
How we developed the role

The role was introduced at St Richard's in 2018 and a handbook and training programme were developed. All services were asked to put forward at least one member of staff to become a Safeguarding Advocate.

Representatives from Community Nursing, Living Well, Family Support, Spiritual Care, Accounts, Fundraising and others attended training run by the Safeguarding Leads. All hospice departments are now represented by a Safeguarding Advocate. Impact is monitored through an ongoing review and performance indicators

What are the results so far?

In October 2020, a new recording system for safeguarding incidents was introduced.



A safeguarding audit undertaken across all hospice staff in 2016 was repeated in 2023 to measure the impact of the programme. This found:

References

1. NSPCC. Child cruelty offences jump by 25% in a single year. 10 June 2022 [cited 8 May 2023]. Available from: www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/child-cruelty-offences-up-by-quarter-one-year/
2. Care Quality Commission (CQC). Regulation 13: Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment. 16 January 2023. Available from: www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-13-safeguarding-service-users-abuse-improper

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