

Annual Safeguarding Statement 2021

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1. Foreword.

The Active Prospects Annual Report on Safeguarding brings together the work undertaken within Active Prospects with respect to keeping people safe from abuse and neglect, what we have achieved in 2021, and planned developments going forward into 2022.

It outlines our key learning over the last year, changes we have made as a response to events and how we have addressed challenges while working through the COVID-19 pandemic.

It includes how we continue to communicate key issues with our staff and the people we support, our stakeholders and families.

Due to some novel circumstances over the past 18 months, we have been encouraged to work differently and more effectively including embracing a more digital approach. This has given us opportunities for learning and making improvements concerning how we work.

We continue to promote the message that safeguarding is everyone's business. This report outlines our approach to making this happen in practice and how we maintain a focus on quality and safety within our services.



Jade Vallance
Director of Care

2. Introduction

Active Prospects has a legal responsibility to ensure that we have systems and approaches in place to keep people safe from abuse and neglect. We need to ensure that those systems reflect the key principles underpinning safeguarding and includes people at the heart of what we do. This report outlines how we meet our obligations in terms of regulatory compliance, and ensuring we embrace a ‘learning from’ culture in which we bring scrutiny to bear on our actions and identify opportunities for learning.

Six key principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work:

- **Empowerment** – Personalisation and the presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.



Making safeguarding personal

“No decision about me without me” means that an adult has the right to know how Active Prospects and other agencies will work with them to find the right solutions to keep them safe and support them in making informed choices. Making safeguarding personal means that an agency’s work with adults at risk should be person-led and outcome-focused. It means engaging the person in a conversation about how best to respond to a safeguarding concern in a way that enhances involvement, choice, and control, as well as improving quality of life, well-being and safety. We work with families and advocates to represent the interests of people who cannot engage in conversations.

We are accountable to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), local authority safeguarding teams, the Charity Commission, and our Board to ensure that we have clear reporting and investigating processes.

We have a legal duty to ensure all employees are trained and have an appropriate level of awareness in relation to safeguarding. This includes Board members, members of the executive team, managers, support workers, volunteers, contractors and back-office staff.

Active Prospects has clear policies and processes in relation to the safeguarding process. These are accessible in different formats including easy read versions. The easy read policy was reviewed in March 2021 by our Active Prospects Ambassadors who are our experts by experience and offer unique insight from people who use our services. We also consulted with forums such as the Pro-Active Community and Surrey People’s Group to ensure wide representation from people with disabilities.



3. Structures and, functions within Active Prospects in terms of Safeguarding.

Our CEO Maria Mills and the Board have overall duty and responsibility for Safeguarding for Active Prospects. This is delegated to the Director of Care Jade Vallance.

Our Board has a sub-committee which meets quarterly known as the Quality Care Committee. The Director of Care reports to the committee on safeguarding, critical incidents, training compliance and progress on action plans.

In 2021, The Director of Care widened the membership of the internal monthly safeguarding committee meeting to include more key business partners such as members of the executive team, HR, training and development and co-production leads. The role of the internal safeguarding committee is to look at the following themes.

- **Co-production** – how do we ensure that people we support know about safeguarding and how are they involved in keeping safeguarding personal?
- **Training and learning** - National and local themes and sharing of good practice.
- **Current safeguarding concerns** within Active Prospects and actions taken.
- **Current risks** within Active Prospects and actions taken to minimise risks.

In May 2021, a Head of Quality role was added to the Care and Support Management team to support more focus on quality, learning opportunities and good practice. The role offers more scrutiny and independence from direct support roles, and ensures learning is taken not just from Active Prospects, but from other providers locally and nationally.

In July 2021 all Board members received face-to-face safeguarding training, which focused on the new regulations and principles from the Charity Commission. This ensures safeguarding responsibility is at the very top of leadership within Active Prospects.

4. Key National Themes

National Safeguarding Week

Active Prospects participated in National Safeguarding week in November 2021. This was focused on the theme of 'safer cultures'. The emphasis was on ensuring that the culture within services includes open reporting mechanisms linked to the wider organisation, and that staff are well trained and informed about safeguarding. Active Prospects worked in partnership with Surrey County Council to provide workshops and training for people with learning disabilities and people with autism during this week.

Restraint, abuse and long stay hospitals

2021 saw concerns being raised nationally that a high number of people with learning disabilities are still being admitted to assessment and treatment units without a plan for discharge into a community placement. This has continued despite the Transforming Care programme. Despite several high-profile scandals – such as Winterbourne View – people are still subject to inappropriate restraint and have placements which are many miles from their home community. One key factor is the funding model as placement in a hospital setting is paid for by the NHS while community placements become the responsibility of local authorities who are currently facing cuts to their funding.



5. Learning from safeguarding

Communication with families - we know in some instances that we have not always managed expectations concerning what we can and cannot do as support workers or as a provider. We know that our relationship with families is key to delivering high quality support and they need to be fully updated when things change including when staff shortages may impact on people's opportunities.

People we support monies - in 2021 we updated our monies policy due to an incident when a person we support handed over their bank card and pin number to staff to get money out of a cash machine during lockdown. We have introduced preventative measures to ensure that this cannot happen in the future and worked in partnership with Barclays Eagles to arrange workshops on fraud for the people we support. They have been encouraged to understand that they should not be giving bank cards and details to anyone, including their support staff.

Use of Agency staff- we know that our agency rate has increased from 10% to 15% in recent months due to a new variant of the COVID-19 virus as well as the national crisis in recruitment within health and social care. We know that high use of agency can lead to an increase in incidents and complaints, with some people we support refusing support. We have reviewed our recruitment strategy and continue to make this our main priority as an organisation.

Reviewing notice periods - in some instances our critical incident review process has identified that we need to be firmer with a local authority concerning notice periods when support packages are not working and there is an impact on others within the environment.

Police involvement/mental health teams - we are currently doing some partnership work with the police and mental health teams concerning when it is right for a person to be arrested for a crime or if a person requires a mental health assessment. This can be a grey area and clarity is needed to ensure an appropriate professional response from the right agency.

6. Celebrating success and key achievements

In 2021 Active Prospects was successful in getting endorsement from BILD (British Institute of Learning Disability) for our training in positive behaviour support and Maybo. This is an approach which supports staff to work with people with complex needs in a safe way and avoids the use of restraint. We

were able to continue with our training program throughout the pandemic using digital systems to ensure our training compliance remained at 90% and above. We continued to deliver our 3-day Maybo program on conflict resolution and breakaway techniques face-to-face in a COVID-19 safe environment. This resulted in Active Prospects trainer Vicky Marshall winning Southeast trainer of the year 2021 at the Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards.

New Audit process - The Head of Quality has reviewed our internal quality assurance processes. The new audit process looks at clear performance indicators and captures service culture and risks, such as when services are short-staffed, experiencing recruitment issues, if complaints have been raised and concerns of any other kind. This means we can focus our resources where they are most needed.

Launch of Sekoia - In August 2021 we invested in a digital care management system and now have eight services using this system. By June 2022, all services will be using this system. This allows us to capture support in real time and closely monitor what is happening in our services. The system supports us with keeping people safe by capturing clear details in relation to health needs, risks and support needed and evidencing that we are meeting those needs.

7. Conclusion

Throughout the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Active Prospects have remained focused on keeping people safe. We are committed to ensuring that concerns are resolved in a timely manner, with opportunities to learn captured to maintain a culture of continuous improvement. We recognise our collective responsibility for safeguarding as an organisation and the commitment we must all have to ensuring that we have safe working practices that protect people's rights and their freedoms.

8. Priorities for 2022

	Action	Whom responsible	timelines
1	National Safeguarding week for 2022 - ensuring greater impact within Active Prospects and national presence	Director of Care	Nov 2022
2	A program of training for people who use our services, which include safeguarding.	Training Manager	April 2022
3	Family or stakeholder representation on the Quality Care Committee with Board members.	Director of Care	June 2022
4	Weekly communication from Director of Care to families, which includes staff shortage information	Director of Care	January 2022
5	Produce a set of films to show about safeguarding	Director of Care	December 2022
6	To ensure safeguarding forms part of the AP ambassadors' business strategic plan and co-production strategy	Director of Care	March 2022
7	Clear working protocol with the police, intensive support teams and mental health teams	Director of Care	May 2022
8	New health audit in place across services with use of Sekoia digital system	Clinical Lead	March 2022