

## Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

**December 2017**

What is our safeguarding 'cadence'?

I was out for a cycle ride the other day. The sky was clear and it was bitterly cold but dry, lovely. As I cycled along, my bike computer (cycling 'dashboard') was telling me some interesting information, including my cadence.

Cadence is the speed at which you pedal. Cyclists measure this in revolutions per minute, or rpm. So, if one foot pedals a full circle about once every second, you are cycling at 60 rpm. Advanced cyclists pedal much higher **cadences**, 80 rpm - 100 rpm. Obviously, gears play a large role in **cadence** and how it translates into performance.

It's easier to pedal on a low gear, but you'll have to sustain a very high cadence to move quickly. High gears, on the other hand, let you go faster on a lower cadence, but they require you to push harder to pedal. To avoid fatigue and wasted energy, you need to find a good balance and shift gears as needed to maintain the most comfortable cadence.

In relation to our adult safeguarding work, how do we judge if we are working in the most efficient way. Are we currently working in ways which bring us maximum 'performance'? Are we working at the 'right cadence', if you will? This is not always a straightforward question to answer.

NHS Digital has recently published the [Safeguarding Adult Collection \(SAC\) for 2016-17](#) which is a data return made by all local authorities on their adult safeguarding work. The return details adults at risk for whom safeguarding concerns or enquiries (an investigation) was opened during this period.

Using this data we have completed a ['benchmarking' exercise for Norfolk comparing us with the results of 15 other councils](#), (scroll to bottom) known as Norfolk's 'family group' (see below). These are councils considered as having similar characteristics to Norfolk for making comparison. In making this comparison, rates per 100,000 population have been used which tells us the per capita rate, so for example the number of safeguarding concerns per person in that county

Here are couple of points from the benchmark:

- For **safeguarding concerns** received by local authority in 2016-17 per 100,000 of the population **Norfolk had 346**, Suffolk 637 with Somerset (1,239) second from top and North Yorkshire (1,332) at the top. The spread goes from Devon (321) at the bottom to North Yorkshire (1,332) at the top, with the family group average being 687 and the average for England being 687.

Norfolk is ranked the third lowest for safeguarding concerns referrals per 100,000 population of our family group

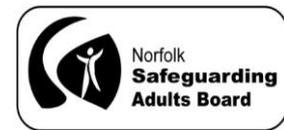
*How best to understand this? Are organisations in other counties more aware of adult safeguarding and so raise more concerns? Or could it be that Norfolk's workforce is well trained to understand what is a concern about abuse and harm and what is a concern better dealt with through other processes, for example quality assurance or contracting?*

I understand that Norfolk does receive more safeguarding concerns but not all of these may have been recorded and so not included in the data return. The local authority safeguarding team are actively looking at this.

- For **safeguarding section 42 enquiries** (a formal safeguarding investigation) commenced during 2016-17, per 100,000 of the population **Norfolk had 226**, placing us below both the family group average (284) and the national average at 306. The range in the family group is interesting: with Worcestershire at the bottom at 61 and East Sussex at 995.

*Is Norfolk in a 'good' place in the family group? Are local authorities using different interpretations of what constitutes a Section 42 enquiry? Again, it's useful to consider how other local authorities are using the statutory guidance.*

- And **conversation rate** (in %) from concern to enquiries, it is of note that Norfolk has the third highest in the family group at 65% with Warwickshire at 11% at the bottom and East Sussex at 100% at the top.



Even though this data may well prompt more questions than answers, it does provide a good opportunity to talk with other safeguarding adults boards to explore how they are working. Are there things we could do differently to raise Norfolk's 'safeguarding cadence'? This in turn can feed into our [map for safeguarding in coming period](#).

And finally, I would like to wish all readers of this blog a happy and restful Christmas. Thank you for all your interest, commitment, enthusiasm and hard work to tackle adult abuse and harm.

Walter Lloyd-Smith  
NSAB Board Manager, 15 December 2017

The family group for Norfolk includes the following councils:

- Cumbria
- Derbyshire
- East Sussex
- Gloucestershire
- Lancashire
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- North Yorkshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Somerset
- Staffordshire
- Suffolk
- Warwickshire
- Worcestershire