Fiona Bateman has been appointed the new independent chair of the Sutton Safeguarding Adults Board in succession to Deborah Klée and will chair her first meeting of the SSAB on 15 October. Along with Roger Quemby of Speak Up Sutton I went to an introductory meeting with Fiona on 12 September to discuss how the SSAB might develop in the future in the light of the Peer Review carried out earlier this year. Fiona wants to renew the various sub-groups of the board and set up a number of task and finish groups to improve the functioning of the board and better ensure the achievement of its strategic priorities.

I will be participating as a member of the reconstituted Community Engagement sub-group which held its first meeting on 23 September under the chairmanship of Alison Navarro. This initial meeting was to establish the sub-group’s terms of reference, purpose and membership and to decide its priorities. I drew the group’s attention to the definition adopted by the Manchester Safeguarding Adults Board:

Engagement is about the active participation of stakeholders in the development of services and as partners in their own health and care. This involves engaging the community and service users in problem solving. It is focusing more on listening to what others need and then incorporating that into what the board and its various partners do – whether that is a policy, a project, business operations or the services on offer.

There was recognition that it was desirable to strengthen carer and service user representation on the sub-group and we will be taking this further.

I am also a member of a newly established Task and Finish group on Financial Abuse which is one of the most commonly reported forms of abuse within the London Borough of Sutton. Reported incidence of this form of abuse is on the increase, though increased awareness and higher levels of reporting may explain (to some extent) the apparent rise, though much of this type of abuse can go undetected. Unfortunately the first meeting of this Task and Finish group has been postponed on a number of occasions, most recently because some members have been preoccupied in dealing with the emergency situation arising from the
Worcester Park fire. Statistics available from Kent show that 58% of recorded financial abuse cases occurred in people’s homes and we will need to establish comparable data for Sutton relating to the victims, the perpetrators and the types of financial abuse occurring locally. Obviously the objective of the group will be to provide better support for people at risk of financial abuse, to increase awareness of the various forms this type of abuse can take and how they can be confronted. I will report back to the Carers Forum on further developments.

The Annual Conference of the Sutton Safeguarding Adults Board will be held on Tuesday 19 November at the Holy Trinity Church, Wallington. Informal carers and service users are welcome to attend though there is a booking procedure. The conference will cover a range of topics including:

- Liberty Protection Safeguards – implications for local health and social care systems
- Transitional safeguarding
- Safeguarding adults at risk from online fraud

Workshops will include:

- Safeguarding Adults Reviews
- Hate crime awareness
- Coercion and control
- Suicide prevention

Significant outcomes emerging from the Conference will be reported back to the Carers Forum.

Brian Dear
24 September 2019