



# Safeguarding Adults Board Conference 2025 Event Summary



# Introduction

The North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board Conference took place on 5 February 2025 at The Baths Hall. Over 160 people attended from across the partnership including leaders at all levels and adults with a lived experience.

This event summary shares a brief overview of the day and reinforces the key messages and take aways from our keynote speakers.

**Please share this information across your agency/ organisation and use it as a means of prompting discussion, sharing learning and improving practice.**



## [3 North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board Conference 2025](#)

### Agenda

9.00am	Arrival and registration
9.30am	<b>Welcome</b> - Darren Johnson
9.45am	<b>Opening address</b> - Kathy Clark, SAB Independent Chair
10.00am	<b>Continued commitment to the importance of communication</b> - Starlight Arts
11.00am	<b>Break</b> - 15 mins
11.15am	<b>Keynote: Exploring discriminatory abuse</b> - Karl Mason, Senior Lecturer Royal Holloway University of London
12.15pm	<b>Being you is not a crime – Hate crime awareness</b> - Adil Khan, Community Safety Unit Manager, Humberside Police
12.45pm	<b>Lunch break and networking</b>
1.45pm	<b>Activity: The importance of professional curiosity</b> - Becky Jackson, Principal Social Worker Adults and Health, North Lincolnshire Council Helen Rose, Head of Adult Safeguarding, North Lincolnshire Council
2.30pm	<b>Partnership approaches to professional curiosity</b> - Michelle Emmerson, Prevention and Development Manager, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Sharon Humberstone, Named Nurse Safeguarding Adults, Humber Health Partnership Jade Hassan, Environmental Health Officer, North Lincolnshire Council
3.00pm	<b>Break</b> – 15mins
3.15pm	<b>Impact of our work</b> - Feedback from those with lived experience of safeguarding
3.30pm	<b>Closing address</b> - Executive Leads
3.45pm	<b>Finish</b>



# Special thanks

We would like to give special thanks to our Experts by Experience who attended on the day, and to people with a lived experience who co-produced the agenda with us.



We would also like to thank Darren Johnson for being our compere for the day. He did an excellent job of introducing the speakers and keeping all professionals in the room engaged and focussed throughout the day.



# Our continued commitment to the importance of communication



We welcomed Starlight Arts to the stage to reinforce the importance of communicating in an accessible and inclusive way. Laura and Rachel shared an overview of using Makaton and discussed how leaders at all levels can contribute to making sure that the people we work with are able to communicate in the best way for them.

# Key messages

Using Makaton breaks down barriers to communication. It can also help with language development and communication with people with English as an additional language.

Leaders can support practitioners to embed Makaton by:

- Creating a shared vision and commitment within their organisation to use Makaton as a tool for inclusion
- Helping staff to understand the value of Makaton
- Ensuring that there is access to training and opportunities to practice Makaton so that staff are confident and competent in using Makaton
- Setting an example by modelling the use of Makaton consistently
- Fostering collaboration by encouraging your team to work together to share ideas, techniques and routines

# Makaton help card

## Safeguarding Adults Board Makaton Help Card



As part of the conference, we launched a Makaton help card which aims to ensure practitioners are aware of the basic signs of Makaton. The help card has been co-produced with Starlight Arts who have identified a number of key signs which all practitioners should be aware of.

Being able to communicate in Makaton means that individuals regardless of their abilities or disabilities can access information and fully participate in conversation, therefore creating a more inclusive environment by addressing any barriers.

Electronic copies can be found on the SAB website here – [Makaton Help Card](#)

# Keynote: Exploring Discriminatory Abuse

Karl Mason, Senior Lecturer Royal Holloway, University of London



Next, we welcomed our keynote speaker, Karl Mason, who provided a presentation on discriminatory abuse.

Karl opened by sharing that this year is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of discriminatory abuse being defined in 'No Secrets' but it still features in less than 1% of safeguarding enquires nationally.

He shared an overview of his research findings and discussed how practitioners can identify and respond to discriminatory abuse effectively.

He stressed that we all have a responsibility to make sure that we remove barriers so that those with protected characteristics can access social care.

# Key messages

- We may not always be aware that people have protected characteristics so Making Safeguarding Personal is key. Doing identity work can be a challenge but if it is not done, it can leave people not feeling safe after intervention
- Effective responses to discriminatory abuse go further than just removing the risk, we must ensure that people's lives are better as a result of intervention. We need to support victims so that they are able to manage and navigate their own world
- Often discrimination is something that people internalise so allowing the victim to seek restitution allows people to move on from it better
- Discriminatory abuse often links to wider community issues such as anti-social behaviour, cuckooing, mate crime. To better identify discriminatory abuse, we must ask 'why?'. Are they experiencing another form of abuse because of a protected characteristic or because they are different in some other way?
- Discriminatory abuse has specific dynamics in the same way that domestic abuse or institutional abuse has. In the same way that physical abuse in a relationship can be a form of domestic abuse, physical abuse can be a form of discriminatory abuse where there is an intent to harm because of a protected characteristic



# Key messages

- In tackling discriminatory abuse, we must raise the perpetrator's consciousness of the impact they are having on the victim
- Shame and humiliation is often a barrier to reporting. Practitioners must ensure that you work with people to make them feel that you are a safe person and that you are able to empathise even if you can never fully understand their experiences
- Sometimes practitioners may feel uncomfortable asking about the motive behind types of abuse because of a perceived taboo or the personal nature of discrimination and protected characteristics. We can overcome this by thinking in advance about how you would start a conversation around this
- We cannot see discriminatory abuse as 'noise' which distracts from assessments. We cannot make safeguarding personal if we ignore people's real-life experiences
- We must also think contextually about discriminatory abuse. Research suggests that others with similar shared characteristics will worry if they hear another person 'like me' has been targeted, so individual safeguarding will not always be adequate. We need to think about how we can work with local communities to ensure people are safe in their homes and communities

# Being you is not a crime: Hate crime awareness

Adil Khan, Community Safety Manager Humberside Police



Following on from some of the key themes discussed as part of the keynote, Adil Khan gave an overview of hate crime and Humberside Police's approach to tackling it.

As part of the presentation, Adil shared a video which has been created by Humberside Police which aims to raise awareness of hate crime and the impact on people who experience it. This video can be viewed on YouTube - [https://youtu.be/5OhlcyVk\\_XA](https://youtu.be/5OhlcyVk_XA)

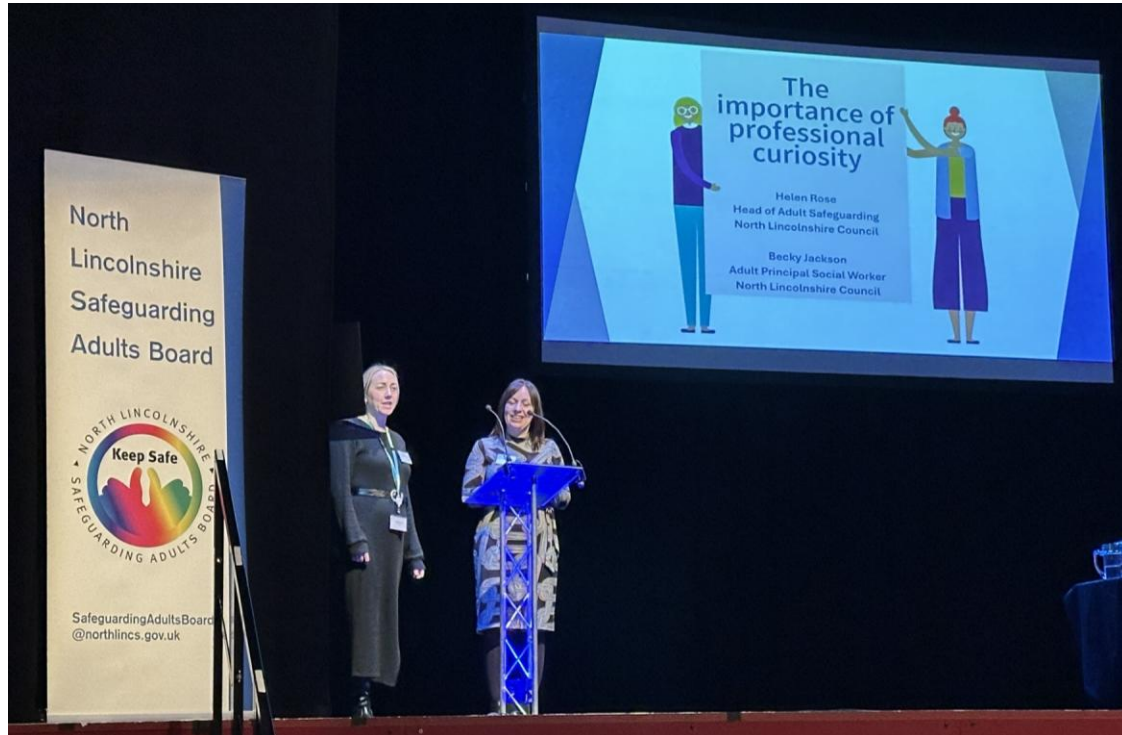
# Key messages

- Hate crime is applicable to 5 of the protected characteristics – race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity. Since the case of Miller vs the Court of Protection, police can only record a hate crime if there is evidence of hostility so relying on a person's perception that there has been a hate incident is not permissible. Despite this, Humberside Police do consider vulnerability as a whole and will ensure that support is provided where it may not meet the threshold to be recorded as a crime
- Many people who experience hate crime may not report it as they 'accept' it as part of their normal day to day life. Some people may think that the police cannot do anything about it or that it is not worth reporting. This is something that partners are working hard to try and change
- Many people do not have the confidence to come forward and report a hate crime. It is important that practitioners support and encourage people to report the hate crime so that action can be taken
- There are a number of ways to report hate crime including by phone or online. There are also a number of third party reporting centres across North Lincolnshire including Ongo, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Crosby One
- Police community cohesion officers are in place to engage with local communities to develop relationships and to ensure that they feel that their voices are being heard

# The importance of professional curiosity

Helen Rose, Head of Adult Safeguarding, North Lincolnshire Council

Becky Jackson, Adult Principal Social Worker, North Lincolnshire Council



After the lunch break, Helen and Becky took to the stage to discuss the importance of professional curiosity.

A scenario of a real-life case in North Lincolnshire was shared with the audience who were asked to feedback on what happens next. This exercise aimed to make practitioners think about what they would do differently if working in a professionally curious way.

An animation by Siobhan Maclean and Wendy Roberts was shared to launch our professional curiosity help card. The video can be found here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEdNGbnvzRs>



# Key messages

- Professional curiosity is a key skill requiring us to consider and explore what is happening in the person's life rather than making assumptions or accepting information at face value
- It is important to have an understanding about people's situation, their strengths, their circle of support, significant people in a person's life and who/what influences them. Having the confidence to ask difficult questions will support us to understand and manage risks with the person. People rarely disclose abuse directly to practitioners so the earlier we identify it, the more able we are to respond and make a difference
- Professional curiosity is not something that can or should be turned on and off or used at particular times. Rather, it could be seen as a way of life, a way of professional practice and a way of being
- Some conversation starters may include:
  - *Can you tell me more about...?*
  - *Help me understand how I might be able to support you...?*
  - *I'm curious about...*
  - *Gosh, that's tricky, what did you want to try next?*

# Professional curiosity help card



**Head** - like you're in over your head? don't worry, reflect and ask supervision. Share your concerns and sense check.

**Eyes** - what have you seen, what do you observe? Also think about what you can't see, and why?

**Right in front of your nose** - sometimes we don't see the things right in front of us!

**Be noisy with good intention!**

**Shoulders** - what information do you hold? You don't need to shoulder full responsibility by yourself.

**Take a partnership approach to sharing risk.**

**Arm's length** - are you being kept at arm's length? If you are, think about why that might be!

**Get a head start** - plan and be prepared!



**Hair raising issues** - always think (to and fro), don't take things at face value.

**All ears** - remember that actively listening is not the same as just hearing someone!

**Mouth** - use all your communication skills to build trusting relationships - be honest with people.

**Long arm of the law** - legal literacy is important! Be clear of the legal framework and how can they support the person and you.

**Listen to your gut instinct** - notice when something isn't right.

**If all your feet in a situation, take things one step at a time, don't go rushing in.**

**Understand and always remember who and what is at the heart of the matter.**

Be curious about what is going on around you.  
Listen with your whole body, from the top of your head to the tips of your toes.

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**Top tips**

## Professional curiosity

This card is based on Siobhan Maclean and Wendy Roberts' animation relating to professional curiosity. The full animation can be found on YouTube via the link or QR code below:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Caz\\_\\_XXBks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Caz__XXBks)



Further information can also be found on the Safeguarding Adults Board website: [www.northlincsab.co.uk](http://www.northlincsab.co.uk).



We also launched a professional curiosity help card which acts as a prompt to practitioners.

To be professionally curious, you should listen with your whole body, from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. Using the gingerbread analogy, practitioners can use the card to remember the key things to think about when speaking to and supporting people.

Electronic copies can be found on the SAB website here – [Professional Curiosity Help Card](#)

# Partnership approaches to professional curiosity

Michelle Emmerson, Prevention and Development Manager, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service

Sharon Humberstone, Named Nurse for Safeguarding Adults, Humber Health Partnership

Jade Hassan, Environmental Health Officer, North Lincolnshire Council



Michelle, Sharon and Jade continued the discussion around professional curiosity by sharing how practitioners in their sector may be able to use professional curiosity. They shared a number of local case studies to illustrate how professional curiosity could be used to support people better

# Key messages

- Professional curiosity is a fundamental aspect of working together to keeping people safe
- Staff should be encouraged to ‘think outside the box’ and not always take things at face value no matter whether staff are responding to an incident or are on a home visit
- Instead of accepting non-engagement, think about the reasons why someone may be reluctant to accept support
- Call on the support of the partnership – consider whether other agencies have information which could add further context
- Take time to find a space to have an honest conversation about why you are worried and what the person would like to happen



# The impact of our work

## Video



## Safeguarding Adults Board Conference 2025



## Feedback from people with a lived experience of safeguarding



To close our conference, we shared the views of people with a lived experience of safeguarding in North Lincolnshire.

Their views are a reminder of the impact that our work has on people's lives.

The video is available on YouTube - [NL Safeguarding Adults Board - YouTube](#)

# Reflections from our Independent Chair and Executive Leads

Opening and closing the event was our Independent Chair and SAB Executive Leads. They reinforced our ambition to enable and support people to be themselves and for them to be safe and feel safe in their homes and communities.

They shared our joint commitment to break down barriers for those who struggle to communicate by improving our knowledge and use of Makaton.

Finally, they also shared their commitment to being more aware of discriminatory abuse and hate crime and to be more explorative around people who live with protected characteristics. It was emphasised that practitioners in North Lincolnshire have the right values and skills to have difficult conversations and leaders will continue to support them to work in a professionally curious way.

**The final words of the day was a reminder to partners to be continually professionally curious and to Ask, Listen and Act on what people with a lived experience tell us.**



All conference materials including the programme,  
presentations and electronic copies of resources shared  
as part of the day are available on our website



[www.northlincssab.co.uk](http://www.northlincssab.co.uk)

