



Adult Safeguarding

City of York Council

Internal Audit Report 2014/15

Business Unit: Adult Social Services

Responsible Officer: Acting Assistant Director: Adult Commissioning, Provision & Modernisation

Service Manager: Acting Service Manager Mental Capacity Act & DoLs

Date Issued: 13 May 2015

Status: Final

Reference: 11602/001

	P1	P2	P3
Actions	0	1	3
Overall Audit Opinion	Substantial Assurance		

Summary and Overall Conclusions

Introduction

The Care Act became law in April 2014 and sets out Safeguarding responsibilities in relation to Adults as a statutory responsibility for the first time. It requires Local authorities to be responsible for establishing and running Safeguarding Adults Boards.

Councils with social care responsibilities will be responsible for making enquires where it suspects that an adult in its area

(a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

(b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and

(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. In addition, a recent Supreme Court judgement is expected to significantly increase the number of Deprivation of Liberty cases that the council will have to be involved in.

Objectives and Scope of the Audit

The purpose of this audit was to provide assurance to management that procedures and controls within the system have ensured that:

- The Safeguarding Board is moved onto a statutory footing
- A policy is introduced in relation to serious case reviews
- Relationships with partners and the new duties to co-operate over the supply of information are implemented
- There is a suitable system in place for processing Deprivation of Liberty cases
- There are sufficient resources to complete the increased number Deprivation of Liberty cases

The audit did not include procedures for Statutory Local Authority Deprivation of Liberty cases.

Key Findings

Following the introduction of the Care Act 2014 considerable amounts of work have been put into ensuring that Safeguarding Adults processes in York are robust and fit for purpose. In addition the council has been suitably responsive to the significant additional demands in relation to Deprivation of Liberty cases following on from the Supreme Court judgement.

The Safeguarding Board has developed a constitution and memorandum of understanding between all members to ensure that the statutory board and its members comply with the duties placed upon them by the Care Act, and has developed an assurance framework which has been completed by all members. This enables the partnership to have an overview of how well members are undertaking their Safeguarding Adult responsibilities and respond accordingly.

The council has a policy for serious case reviews which enables a methodology of lessons learned which can be applied to cases which would not reach the threshold. This is being used to enable the partnership to gain learning from incidents which would otherwise not take place

The council has and continues to review and adjust their Safeguarding Adults board in response to the developing guidance and information available regarding the requirements of the Care Act, and approved a policy in relation to serious case reviews. Development of the working relationships between partner organisations on the board has been undertaken. The council has participated in regional and national programmes and developed their process around Making Safeguarding Personal principles, a key part of the Care Act

The main issue raised in the audit is that procedures for processing Deprivation of Liberty cases are heavily reliant on manual inputs, including identifying cases due for review. This is time consuming and there is a greater risk of review dates not being identified, especially given the large increase in the amount of Deprivation of Liberty cases. There is the potential for greater use of IT systems to support the staff and make the processes more robust for the increased number of cases.

The other findings of the audit related to the future development of the Safeguarding Adults board and improvement to the information available on the internet in relation to Safeguarding Adults in York.

Overall Conclusions

It was found that the arrangements for managing risk were good with few weaknesses identified. An effective control environment is in operation, but there is scope for further improvement in the areas identified. Our overall opinion of the controls within the system at the time of the audit was that they provided Substantial Assurance.

1 Process Automation

Issue/Control Weakness

The Deprivation of Liberty (DoL) process could benefit from increased system support

Risk

Staff resources may not be used efficiently, and important dates could be missed

Findings

There are a significant number of forms to be completed across the Deprivation of Liberty assessment process, which is completed by manual input. A DoL assessment only lasts a year, and therefore must be reviewed on an annual basis. Currently all cases are managed manually with spreadsheets to track the progress of the cases and dates for reviews. The manual nature of the process requires significant staff time and means that there is no electronic back up, such as automated reports or reminders to ensure that important dates are not missed, the risk of which has increased due to the vast increased in DoL cases.

Introducing some automation into the process could save staff time and build additional safeguards into the process.

There are now a new set of forms available, which will reduce the number of forms to be completed for each case.

Agreed Action 1.1

A new set of streamlined forms will be introduced and automated within Frameworki, (the electronic case record), triggering the necessary reviews.

Priority

2

Responsible Officer

Acting Group Manager/
MCA DoLS Lead
Professional

Timescale

August 2015

2 Adult Safeguarding Board website

Issue/Control Weakness

The Adult safeguarding website is out of date

Risk

The website does not serve the purpose of providing the people of York with information relating to safeguarding adults

Findings

The council has a Safeguarding Adults website, www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk separate from the main council website. Information relating to recent meetings of the Safeguarding Adults Board was not available on the website, with the most recent available being September and December 2013 despite quarterly meetings being held.

There has been a difficulty in keeping the website up to date, and it may well be beneficial for the service to consider what arrangements for making up to date Safeguarding Adults information more easily available on the internet, including whether the Safeguarding Adults website could be brought onto the main council website without losing the prominence of the information. This would also boost the amount of Safeguarding Adults information available on the main council site.

Agreed Action 2.1

The decision has now been made to move to the CYC website.

Better information advice and guidance for safeguarding placed on connect to support (Adult social care's advice information and guidance web portal). All information on safeguarding website has been reviewed. Refreshed public facing information has been agreed.

Priority

3

Responsible Officer

Interim Assistant Director

Timescale

May 2015

3 Future development

Issue/Control Weakness

There are potential areas for future development for the arrangements for Safeguarding Adults

Risk

The authority may not build on work completed and fully comply with the best practice set out in the Care Act 2014

Findings

There is a current multi agency policy in place that covers procedures for inter agency working. In addition, the board recently undertook some work on the thresholds at which organisations contact the other organisations involved in the safeguarding board.

It cannot be expected that new and reinforced procedures that were discussed by the board in late 2014 and developed in response to the Care Act 2014 would be fully embedded by the point of the audit, and the board is continuing to respond to developing information relating to the Care Act. The organisations that work together in safeguarding cases were in the process of developing a Quality Assurance framework, for which there is also national guidance, that should allow the board to assess the effectiveness of the arrangements within the organisations, and identify issues that occur,

The Care Act 2014 requires that there is a clear understanding between partners when other organisations need to be notified or involved and what role they have. Under the Care Act Safeguarding Adults Boards have a responsibility to assist, such as by establishing roles, how organisations will be held to account and identifying mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation and impact of policies.

It is suggested that there is potential for the Adult Safeguarding Board to further develop its procedures in relation to integrating the strategic plans of the board into the operational procedures of the service, and future plans could include reference to this.

Agreed Action 3.1

Safeguarding procedures have been redrafted in line with care act regulations and emerging policies from other SABs. These need to be consulted and agreed upon and implemented

Priority

3

Responsible Officer

Approved Social Worker

Timescale

April 2015

Agreed Action 3.2

Healthwatch have been commissioned to support the development of a co-produced public facing strategic plan embodying care act principles from 2016 onwards

Priority

3

Responsible OfficerInterim Assistant
Director**Timescale**

April 2016

Audit Opinions and Priorities for Actions

Audit Opinions

Audit work is based on sampling transactions to test the operation of systems. It cannot guarantee the elimination of fraud or error. Our opinion is based on the risks we identify at the time of the audit.

Our overall audit opinion is based on 5 grades of opinion, as set out below.

Opinion	Assessment of internal control
High Assurance	Overall, very good management of risk. An effective control environment appears to be in operation.
Substantial Assurance	Overall, good management of risk with few weaknesses identified. An effective control environment is in operation but there is scope for further improvement in the areas identified.
Reasonable Assurance	Overall, satisfactory management of risk with a number of weaknesses identified. An acceptable control environment is in operation but there are a number of improvements that could be made.
Limited Assurance	Overall, poor management of risk with significant control weaknesses in key areas and major improvements required before an effective control environment will be in operation.
No Assurance	Overall, there is a fundamental failure in control and risks are not being effectively managed. A number of key areas require substantial improvement to protect the system from error and abuse.

Priorities for Actions

Priority 1	A fundamental system weakness, which presents unacceptable risk to the system objectives and requires urgent attention by management.
Priority 2	A significant system weakness, whose impact or frequency presents risks to the system objectives, which needs to be addressed by management.
Priority 3	The system objectives are not exposed to significant risk, but the issue merits attention by management.

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