

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Assurance

Summary

1. This report outlines the arrangements in place to ensure that City of York Council is able to discharge its responsibilities to keep vulnerable adults within the City protected from violence and abuse, whilst maintaining their independence and well-being. Health Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider whether the Council can be assured that these arrangements are satisfactory and effective.

Background

2. Safeguarding Adults responsibilities are defined in 'No Secrets' (Department of Health 2002) and 'Safeguarding Adults' (Department of Health 2005). The guidance relates to the multi-agency responses made to a person aged 18 years or over: *'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'*.
3. The Council has responsibilities as the Lead Agency for the partnership response within the city including the operation of the multi agency Safeguarding Adults Board, and as a service provider and commissioner.
4. Responsibilities include both ensuring that anyone who may be at risk of abuse is protected and supported, and to reduce the likelihood of abuse of vulnerable adults within the community.

5. In 2005 the Association of Directors of Adults Social Services produced guidance and standards for the delivery of Safeguarding responses. These standards have been used as the framework for the assurance information provided within Annex A.
6. One of the standards requires partner agencies to assure themselves of the safeguarding arrangements within their organisation on an annual basis. This report is intended to enable that to happen within the Council. Other partner organisations will report through their own governance arrangements.
7. Operational safeguarding practice is guided by the Multi Agency Safeguarding policy and procedures, which together with a Quick Guide, are available at http://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=36&id=48&Itemid=67
8. Last year (2011-12) the Council recorded 690 'Alerts', where someone had concerns about potential abuse of a vulnerable person, of which 211 were considered to be 'Referrals' which required investigation.
9. Annex B provides the Performance Report on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults activity, submitted to the Safeguarding Board in June 2012.

Options

10. **Option 1** Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee could identify areas where they believe further assurance is needed for the Council to be confident that it is undertaking its responsibilities on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults satisfactorily.
11. **Option 2** Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee could confirm they are satisfied with the arrangements for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults with the planned improvements already identified and part of the Boards Strategic plan and Council Service plans.

Analysis

12. The areas identified for action and improvement, through the Assurance Framework and the Performance Report are listed below. They will be reflected in the Safeguarding Board's work plan for 2012-13:

- Widen Safeguarding Board membership to include representation from the Voluntary Sector.
- Ensure links to Strategic Boards for Health and Wellbeing and Community Safety are maintained and developed.
- Reduce the need for safeguarding investigations about challenging behaviour in residential settings through improved quality of care, shared intelligence with health commissioners and support to care providers to manage challenging behaviour.
- Introduce the national competency framework for relevant staff.
- Explore and understand the number of referrals from health settings with health colleagues in both NHS and independent sector.
- Work with Drug and Alcohol Commissioners to develop awareness of Safeguarding procedures in Drug and Alcohol services
- Improve performance on the number of Protection Plans agreed with customers.
- Continue to develop understanding of York Safeguarding issues, including relatively high referrals for those with Learning Disabilities

13. The following actions are additionally already contained within the Service Plan for Adults Assessment and Safeguarding Service.

- Improve feedback arrangements for customers who have experienced a safeguarding investigation to inform policy and procedures reviews.
- Maintain and improve information for York residents on Safeguarding.
- Implement new operational procedures for City of York Council to ensure consistent practice with Multi Agency procedures.

- Ensure that those customers using Direct Payments are supported to protect themselves from abuse by participating in national research.
- Monitor more closely the decisions where alerts are not responded to as a referral with an investigation.

Council Plan

14. The proposals within this report relate to the Council Plan priority to ensure those who are most vulnerable are protected.

Implications

Financial

15. There are no financial implications to this report. Safeguarding activity is undertaken within agreed budgets.

Human Resources (HR)

16. There are no HR implications.

Equalities

17. Safeguarding activity is important to all protected communities of interest. The performance report indicates a relatively high number of referrals in respect of people with a learning disability.
18. The Safeguarding Board has agreed this needs further work to understand the nature of the risks for this customer group, and preventive action that may be required.

Legal

19. There are no legal implications.

Crime and Disorder

20. All of the issues and actions relating to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults contribute to the Safer Communities agenda.

Information Technology (IT)

21. There are no IT issues relating to this report.

Property

22. There are no property issues relating to this report.

Risk Management

23. The recommendations within this report do not present any risks which need to be monitored.

Recommendation

24. No specific recommendation is made, as the purpose of this report is to allow Health Overview and Scrutiny to determine if they are assured of the arrangements for Adult Safeguarding within the Council.

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Wards Affected:

All

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Background Papers:

Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work

Association of Directors of Adult Social Services 2005

Annexes:

Annex A: Adult Safeguarding Assurance Questions

Annex B: Safeguarding Performance Report 2011-12