

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Annual Assurance

Summary

1. This is the third annual report to Health Overview and Scrutiny. The 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 have been defined in 'No Secrets' (Department of Health 2002) and 'Safeguarding Adults' (Department of Health 2005). In 2005 the Association of Directors of Adults Social Services (ADASS) produced guidance and standards for the delivery of Safeguarding responses.
3. These guidance documents will be superseded in April 2015 when the Care Act is implemented, but this annual report covers the activities undertaken during the past year and so the 2005 ADASS standards have been used as the framework for the assurance information provided within Annex A.
4. 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.

5. Operational safeguarding practice is guided by the Multi Agency Safeguarding policy and procedures, which together with a Quick Guide, are available for both the public and professionals at: http://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=36&id=48&Itemid=67
6. Annex B provides an update on the specific actions identified in last year's assurance report to Health Overview and Scrutiny. It also contains information from the York Adult Safeguarding Board Strategic Action plan.
7. Annex C provides the Strategic Action plan agreed by the York Adults Safeguarding Board.
8. Annex D provides the Performance Report on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults activity for 2013-14.
9. From April 2015 the Care Act requires each local authority to:
 - Make enquiries, or ensure others do if it believes an adult is, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. The enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to stop or prevent abuse or neglect and if so by whom,
 - Set up a Safeguarding Adults Board,
 - Arrange where appropriate for an independent advocate to represent and support an adult who is subject to a safeguarding enquiry where the adult has substantial difficulty in being involved in the process and where there is no other appropriate adult to help,
 - Co-operate with each of its relevant partners to protect adults experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.
10. These duties apply to anyone over the age of 18 at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support. The level of needs is irrelevant and the adult does not need to have eligible needs for care and support, or to be receiving any particular service from the local authority for the safeguarding duties to apply.
11. Six key principles will underpin all safeguarding work:

- Empowerment – “I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens”
- Prevention – “I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help”
- Proportionality – “I am sure that the professionals will work for my best interest, as I see them and will only get involved as much as needed”
- Protection – “I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want and to which I am able”
- Partnership – “I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together to get the best result for me”
- Accountability – “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life”

12. Training for all Councillors in respect of Adult Safeguarding will be offered as part of the Councillors’ Training Plan.

Options

13. **Option 1** Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee could confirm they are satisfied with the arrangements for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, based on the current performance and proposed new improvement activity, set out in Annex A, which is already underway.

14. **Option 2** 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.

Analysis

15. Annex A uses the same ADASS standards as last year and confirms that York has the key elements in place to ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded in York. There will be changes needed in the coming year, to ensure the Board can meet the statutory duties and comply with the final guidance from the Care

Act. The Board has established a Task and Finish Sub group to identify and recommend changes needed, by the December 2014 Board meeting.

16. Good progress has been made on the Action Plan outlined to this committee last year, as set out in Annex B.
17. This has been a year of consolidation for the Adults Safeguarding Board after the previous year's changes in both health organisations and in the Police. Our Independent Chair of the Adult Safeguarding Board has been in post for just over a year now, and has made good progress in ensuring our links are strengthened across the city, including with other Strategic boards, and with our neighbouring authorities. Board meetings are well attended, with active engagement of all partners, and with feedback taken at the end of each meeting about 'What Worked Well' and 'Even Better If'. This feedback is included in the minutes of the meeting and is publicly available.
18. The Annual report, published in January 2014, and available on the Board's website (www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk) outlined the key areas of activity of the board. The report covers the whole of the calendar year for 2013 and so some of the activity was reported to this committee in last year's assurance report.
 - Monitoring progress on the development of a Place of Safety (Section 136 Suite) in York
 - Development of new protocol on domestic homicides, between the Community Safety Board, Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards
 - The review of our multi agency policy and procedures
 - Implementation of the ADASS National Safeguarding Adults Competency Framework
 - Implementation of the recommendations following the Winterbourne View review and concordat
 - Engagement with the University of York Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) project looking at Safeguarding Adults and Personal Budgets
 - Establishment of a new sexual assault referral centre in York

- Regular reviews of the progress made on the strategic action plan, on the delivery of multi agency training, and of performance information from the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults (AVA) return

19. Operationally the safeguarding activity in the City has increased over the last year, with nearly 50% more referrals received and investigations completed.

20. This has stretched the capacity of the team, and there have been times when both management action and investigations have taken longer than we would wish. Management capacity was increased as planned, by increasing the Assistant Service Manager post to become full time (through the re-use of existing resources)

21. Work is now underway to review processes to be as streamlined as possible and ensure we use the resources we have in the most effective way possible. This is being undertaken with support from regional colleagues through the Sector Led Improvement programme. Whilst this work is done a temporary additional care manager post has been added to the establishment to ensure that investigations can be allocated.

22. Performance issues to be addressed over the coming year will be:

- Understanding and addressing the reasons for the high number of 'No further action under safeguarding' in cases where allegations have been substantiated
- Reducing the number of 'not known' whether individual have capacity to make choices in respect of the safeguarding processes

23. Other areas for action in the coming year will be:

- Task and Finish Group to identify and make recommendations for the operation of the Adult Safeguarding Board in light of Care Act
- Agree shared understanding of thresholds for safeguarding investigations with partners
- Review the Serious Case Review Protocol and develop a Lessons Learned protocol

- Maintain the links with other Strategic Boards and develop further joint work
- Annual review of multi agency procedures and internal procedures
- Continue to work to the LGA Making Safeguarding Personal programme at Bronze level.
- Review the Adult Safeguarding website and information available for the public

Council Plan

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

Implications

Financial

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

Human Resources (HR)

26. There are no HR implications.

Equalities

27. 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.

Legal

28. There are no legal implications.

Crime and Disorder

29. All of the issues and actions relating to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults contribute to the Safer Communities agenda. Specifically Safeguarding has strong links with the Domestic Violence agenda and to Hate Crime. The Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board, and the Council's lead officer for safeguarding have both joined the new Domestic Violence Strategy Board.

Information Technology (IT)

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

Property

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

Risk Management

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

Recommendation

33. 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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Report Approved

Wards Affected: All

19/6/2014

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes:

Annex A: Adult Safeguarding Assurance Questions

Annex B: Action Plan Update

Annex C: Adult Safeguarding Board Strategic Action Plan 2014-17

Annex D: CYC Performance report 2013-14

Annex E: Acronyms