

MEETING:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	14 DECEMBER 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROGRESS REPORT ON ADULT SAFEGUARDING IN HEREFORDSHIRE
PORTFOLIO AREA:	OLDER PEOPLE AND SOCIAL CARE, ADULTS

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To update members on the progress made since the Adult Safeguarding Board adopted the improvement programme and to set out next steps..

Recommendation

THAT (a) the committee note progress on improvement programme for adult safeguarding;

Key Points Summary

The consultation on the review of 'No Secrets' raised the profile of Adult Safeguarding with users and carers actively contributing to the review and key messages from vulnerable adults themselves were:

- Safeguarding must be built on empowerment – or listening to the victim's voice. Without this, safeguarding is experienced as safety at the expense of other qualities of life, such as self determination and the right to family life.
- Everyone must help to empower individuals but safeguarding decisions should be taken by the individual concerned. People wanted help with options, information and support. However, they wanted to retain control and make their own choices.
- Safeguarding Adults is not like child protection. Adults do not want to be treated like children and do not want a system that is designed for children.
- The participation / representation of people who lack capacity is also important.

It is unlikely England will follow Scotland and place adult safeguarding on a statutory footing similar to children's services in the near future. However, serious case reviews such as the one following the murder of Steven Hoskins and concerns in Leicester about the lack of co-ordinated response to the difficulties experienced by Fiona Pilkington and her family has raised national awareness of the importance of Adult Safeguarding partnerships and the need for communities to be aware of the needs of vulnerable adults.

The recent assessment of local authorities in England gave safeguarding a high profile with emphasis on the responsibilities of Councils to ensure a high quality of care for vulnerable adults in the public and independent sector. The importance of strategic leadership and development of robust adult safeguarding partnerships were highlighted as central to robust, safe adult safeguarding systems.

Herefordshire has placed significant emphasis on safeguarding as a key priority. As Chair of the Adult Safeguarding Board, Dr Ian Williams has promoted the profile of an improvement programme designed to put in place what is identified as necessary to achieve the highest standards.

Key Themes

The following is a summary of the key areas of development as identified by the Board

1.1 Building relationships

Strong, trust-based relationships based on a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities form the foundation for effective partnerships. Herefordshire is placing considerable investment in establishing strong partnerships. We have growing evidence that relationships with key partners such as CQC and Police are improving and are becoming more sophisticated.

The Board has undertaken a core assessment across stake holder representatives which will inform future partnership priorities. The assessment was part of a programme of seminars designed to raise the profile of Adult Safeguarding across Herefordshire. They were well attended, with more than 21 organisations represented at both senior manager and practitioner level.

The programme also ran a local conference entitled 'Hereford The Bigger Picture' on 11th November. Over 120 people from across the partnership attended.

It was evaluated as excellent / very good by attendees who welcomed the recognition Herefordshire was giving to this important area by hosting a local event chaired by Sue Doheny, Director of Quality and Clinical Governance with opening remarks by Councillor O Barnett.

1.2 Review of policy, practice and procedure

The Board is currently undertaking a review of the policy and procedure framework which establishes the context, process and practice for joint working across the County.

The review is addressing new areas for development, with an emphasis on an integrated policy approach, seeking to align strategic priorities such as personalisation, commissioning of quality services, development of community-based services with Safeguarding.

A review of the Safeguarding process has resulted in a new stream-lined, outcome focused process which is currently being introduced with new performance measures designed to ensure transparent performance information is available in a routine and consistent manner.

The new framework will be web based ensuring greater accessibility, and at the same time make it easier to keep up to date.

1.3 Training / staff development

It is essential that the workforce is equipped to respond effectively to Safeguarding matters in a timely, person-centred manner. This requires a comprehensive training strategy, fully owned and updated by the Adult Safeguarding Board.

A standing multi-agency, training sub-group has been established and has developed a competency framework against which training needs can be audited on a regular basis. Results of the audits will be used to inform the training programme on an annual basis. Financial implications for the partnership will be contained within the draft proposal and presented to the Board in January.

Immediate training priorities have been addressed such as risk assessment, Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberties training. The next phase will ensure lead managers and investigating officers are fully equipped to implement the new process.

1.4 Developing a Safeguarding Strategy

In order to ensure a strategic approach to Safeguarding is taken across the Partnership, it has been proposed that the Board develops and implements a strategy designed to ensure it's vision and strategic objectives are fully implemented. This strategy will be presented to Scrutiny Committee, once the detailed implementation planning is completed. It will address the broader picture including prevention and early intervention and alignment with the key strategic priorities such as Children's Services, MAPPA, MARIC and personalisation.

Wider public awareness of adult safeguarding is being prioritised commencing with the development of accessible public information including a user developed DVD.

Users and Carers will need to be engaged in the strategy development. This has commenced with a focus group with carers but will require more active involvement in coming months.

1.5 Board Subgroup Development

We have prioritised areas for sub groups in the first instance. These are:

- Financial abuse (*Time-limited*)

- Young people and safe-services/fulfilled lives (*Time-limited*)
- Quality assurance (*Permanent*)
- Prevention and early intervention (including profile information, DVD, leaflets). (*Ongoing*)

Each subgroup will have nominated a chair and terms of reference. We have identified interested parties and agreed the sub-group programme commences in January.

1.6 Improving standards

Significant improvements have been achieved in the following areas:

- Joint work with CQC on zero rated homes or where there are serious quality concerns in order to address short falls by supportive or corrective action.
- Improved consistency in thresholds for investigation by ensuring more effective screening. A screening officer now offers one point of access. This is now reducing the numbers of inappropriate referrals to other key partners such as the police.
- Some evidence that response times are improving and investigations are now more focused on more serious incidence of harm.
- Use of a screening risk tool improving reliability of decision making.
- Re-designed recording and monitoring on frameworki system will be launched on 14th December providing whole system monitoring information for the first time.

1.7 Quality Assurance

Significant changes are being introduced and these need to be monitored carefully. To this end a programme of audit and routine performance reporting is being developed. This will be reported on a regular basis to the Scrutiny Committee, commencing early 2010.

1.8 Information management

- 103 safeguarding referrals have been recorded since the implementation of the 'one point of access'.
- 37 (35.92%) safeguarding referrals were screened out.
- 66 (64.08%) safeguarding referrals were sent for further investigation.
- The number of investigations that have resulted in a 'protection conference' has not been tabulated as the current structure of frameworki for safeguarding (pre-updated frameworki) is unable to accurately store this information. However, for reference, an actual safeguarding conference is rare. If one of these has occurred, it is considered likely to have been recorded as an additional strategy meeting as ambiguity exists in differentiating between the two. The new process will address this short fall.

- It must be noted that the number of 'screen outs' decreased by mid October 2009 at a time when new safeguarding parameters for measuring the criteria for what constitutes 'safeguarding' were put in place.
- The decrease in 'screen outs' since mid October would indicate that the single point of access has facilitated new thresholds within referrals. We now have a far greater understanding of the throughput of referrals and the nature and levels of abuse.

1.9 Capacity building

As we produce accurate monitoring information it is likely we will begin to capture capacity shortfalls in both the numbers and skills of staff able to respond to safeguarding. Any shortfalls will be identified and reported to the Adult Safeguarding Board on a quarterly basis.

Summary and Conclusions

The first phase of the improvement programme has delivered some demonstrable improvements but it is important to recognise that, as adult safeguarding increases its national profile and as local investment in awareness raising produces results, the improvement journey must keep pace with public expectation.

Risks associated with an increase in the numbers of frail older people, a greater number of younger people with complex needs, living independently will need to be managed. These risks need to be considered within the context of greater expectations of vulnerable adults who will expect high quality services and safer communities, enabling them to live fulfilled lives through greater choice and control. Effective safeguarding systems and a proactive approach to prevention is an essential feature in the context of future adult social care.

Investment in the 3 year strategy will enable Herefordshire safeguarding partnership keep pace with the national safeguarding agenda.