

MEETING:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	24TH JANUARY 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	ADULT SAFEGUARDING IN HEREFORDSHIRE
PORTFOLIO AREA:	OLDER PEOPLE AND SOCIAL CARE, ADULTS

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To inform the Committee on the latest position on adult safeguarding within Herefordshire.

Recommendation

THAT the committee note progress on adult safeguarding in Herefordshire.

Key Points Summary

- Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board is continuing to develop both its internal governance structures and role with regard to performance management of providers
- There have been some areas with a need to improve which have been supported through various means locally and action plans have been agreed with providers which will be monitored closely throughout the coming year.
- Public and Professional information with regard to safeguarding in the form of training and leaflet distribution has been undertaken with a positive response (as can be seen by the increase in referrals to Adult Social Care and an increase in the demands for safeguarding training).
- Referrals to Adult Social Care have increased over the past year which, although positive, has placed increased pressure on the Team.
- Multi agency Risk Assessment Conferences are functioning well in Herefordshire.

Alternative Options

- 1 None.

Introduction and Background

- 2 The Care Quality Commission (formerly Commission for Social Care Inspection) raised concerns with Herefordshire Council in January 2009 which highlighted failings related Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults in Herefordshire. An action plan was agreed between the Care Quality Commission, Adult Social Care Commissioners and Adult Social Care

Providers. Work has been undertaken to address those concerns. This paper provides details of those processes which have been implemented to improve the quality of adult safeguarding work in Herefordshire.

Key Considerations

3.1 A Vision for Adult Social Care Capable Communities and active Citizens

In November 2010 the Department of Health published the above report which set out the overarching principals for adult social care and gives the context for future reforms. The document reinforces the Government's commitment to the local community being part of the safeguarding framework, playing its part in preventing, recognising and reporting neglect and abuse. The personalisation agenda whereby people make informed choices regarding the care they receive and are supported in maintaining choice and control in their lives is fundamental to people maintaining their autonomy. However, the safeguarding needs can not be lost. There will be an even greater need in future to balance safeguarding against a person's rights to make decisions about how they live their lives.

3.2 Herefordshire Safeguarding Adult Board

This Board provides the multi agency strategic leadership for safeguarding adults, it's work increasingly dovetails with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that robust safeguarding process are in place across Herefordshire which adequately safeguard people from cradle to grave.

Over the past 6 months the Board's governance has been strengthened with clear terms of reference being agreed for the Board and its sub groups giving clarity about accountability and remit. Participation in the Board has extended to include a broader range of agencies including representation from the 3rd sector.

The Board's functions include:

- Multi agency policies and processes (A sub group of the Board has been developed to further develop policies and processes with a safeguarding framework being agreed and made available for all to access via an internet site and on the Council and NHS Herefordshire intranet sites www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/SocialCare/SAFEGUARDING_FRAMEWORK).
- Training strategies and delivery (A sub group of the Board has been developed to further develop the safeguarding adults multi agency training strategy which is underpinned by multi agency training delivery).
- Strategic planning (A review of the commissioning of care homes and nursing homes is being undertaken with details given below)
- Developing inter agency relationships (The extension of the membership and the formation of 4 sub groups has supported the "safeguarding everybody's business" aim)
- Public and professional awareness (A leaflet "Everybody's Business Adult Safeguarding vigilant communities contribute to prevention of adult abuse" has been developed by the Herefordshire Safeguarding adults Board and 2000 have been distributed to both professionals and members of the public)
- Performance management and Quality Assurance (A sub group of the Board has been developed to scrutinise practice across agencies and a quarterly performance report is now presented to the Board)

- Member agency compliance (A multi agency yearly audit plan has been developed which will enable managers and practitioners to review and improve practice)

3.3 Developing Quality Concerns Processes

The Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Framework, details how all safeguarding concerns within provider services must be processed. However, a Quality Concerns Process is being developed to support a process for care and nursing homes whereby early intervention can take place to support homes when quality issues are identified and, by doing so, lessen the risk of safeguarding issues arising.

3.4 Adult Social Care commissioning

Quality Schedule

NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council (NHS/HC) have a duty to ensure all services commissioned by or on behalf of the organisation provide high quality care for the residents of Herefordshire. The NHS/HC Integrated Commissioning Team have therefore developed a quality schedule which is included in each adult social care/health contract whether the service is provided by a statutory provider (such as Hereford Hospitals NHS trust) or an independent provider (such as a care/nursing home).

The schedule lays down expectations of service delivery from providers and a process whereby these expectations will be monitored by Integrated Commissioning.

Reviewing Contracts/Contract Monitoring

To support the monitoring of the quality schedule the Integrated Commissioning Team conducts 3 levels of assurance visits to selected providers:

- Visits to randomly selected Providers to assure NHS Herefordshire/Herefordshire Council that the services provided meet the expectations dictated in the quality schedule
- Visits to those Providers where concerns regarding the level of care provided have been expressed by either members of the public or by staff
- Requested visits to those Providers who wish to demonstrate to NHS Herefordshire/Herefordshire Council that the services they are providing are of a high quality

The visits allow services to demonstrate quality processes and will identify areas of good practice and any areas where improvements need to be made. Should any concerns arise during the course of an assurance visit a more detailed visit is undertaken.

Following each visit a report is submitted to the relevant provider and, should there be any areas for development, an action plan is requested the progress of which is then monitored.

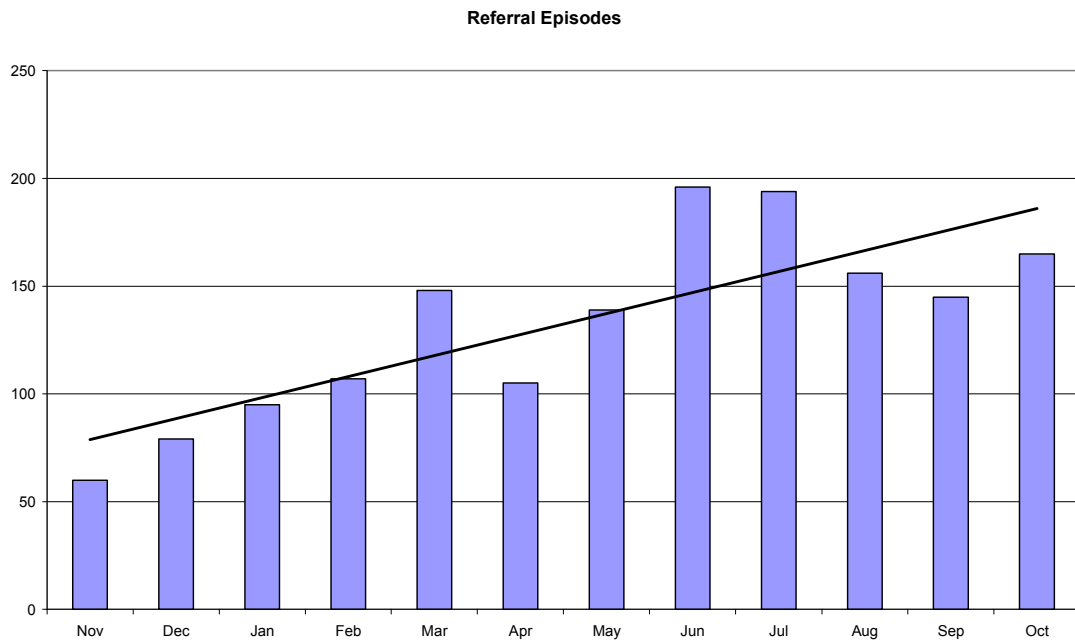
3.5 Provider's Forum.

All care homes/nursing homes are invited to a quarterly meeting with commissioning to share information and receive support regarding the processes in place for commissioning quality care. Safeguarding is now a standard item within this forum.

3.6 Performance Management

Adult Safeguarding Referrals

Safeguarding referrals to Adult Social Care have increased rapidly since November 2009 when 52 referrals were made until 152 referrals in October 2010. A peak of referrals took place in June/July 2010 when the rates were between 190 and 200 referrals.



Within October 55 of the 140 referrals were accepted for a safeguarding investigation. Not all referrals may need to be progressed through the safeguarding processes to be addressed, some may be better progressed through other routes such as a locality team, the MARAC (Multy Agency Risk assessment Conference) route for some domestic abuse cases or by the Care Quality concerns process for those cases which arise due to poor quality of care in a care home setting.

The red columns below represent the referral episodes received by the Adult Safeguarding Team. As is clear the workload of this Team is large and growing steadily. To support the Team in effectively screening the numbers of referrals received discussions have taken place regarding increasing the numbers of Customer Support Officers s within the Team. Work is being undertaken across West Mercia police, Adult Mental Health and Adult social Care to enable some adults with complex needs to have a jointly shared care plan in order that a coordinated response may be made when the individual is seen by a member of staff from either of the 3 agencies.

3.7 MARAC

A MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a local, multi agency victim-focused meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic abuse between different agencies including: police, criminal justice, health, child protection, adult social care, housing, IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisers) as well as other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

A safety plan for each victim is then created. Herefordshire MARAC reviews approximately 50 cases per quarter and has recently received a quality assurance visit from CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) which is a national charity who advocate a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. CAADA produced a positive report following the visit saying *“there appeared to be effective research and information sharing at the Hereford MARAC. It was clear that most agencies had researched cases and appeared willing to share information with their partners. The voice of the victim was kept central to the process by effective use of the information”*. It is envisaged that a further CAADA visit will take place soon. Victims of domestic abuse who are going through the criminal justice system in order that the perpetrator of the violence is convicted are supported by an Independent Domestic Violence advisor. Approximately 25 adults receive such support each quarter.

3.8 Adult Social Care Inspection

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. In August 2010 the CQC inspected adult social care in respect of safeguarding adults and increased choice and control for older people. Two inspectors and an Expert by Experience visited Herefordshire for two weeks in August and September 2010 and interviewed a selection of staff, service users, carers and partner agencies to assess how well Herefordshire was delivering certain aspects of social care. The full CQC report was published by CQC on 26th November 2010, with the outcome that Herefordshire received adequate for both safeguarding adults and increased choice and control with an uncertain as to the Council's capacity to improve.

The report stated that:

- The Council made it easy to contact someone when people had concerns about abuse towards a vulnerable person.
- Messages about community responsibility for reporting concerns were having an impact, there were good signs of people recognising and reporting poor practice.
- A programme of core safeguarding training and briefings was available to staff and volunteers in social care to improve awareness of safeguarding.
- The Council worked closely with local health partners to improve the quality of care.
- Citizens benefited from some universally available preventative services.

To improve outcomes in respect of safeguarding the report recommended that the Council and partners should:

- Urgently ensure that the awareness of risk thresholds and the implementation of investigation and protection plans are strengthened across the partnership.
- Urgently ensure sound arrangements for protecting peoples' rights through fully implementing and monitoring the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act.
- Ensure the adult safeguarding board delivers effective leadership to all partner agencies in setting out and performance managing minimum standards of practice
- Ensure that practitioners and managers in all agencies are competent for their roles in safeguarding.

- Ensure that victims of alerts have an effective voice and role in safeguarding investigations and in oversight of safeguarding arrangements.
- Increase their focus on harassment and anti-social behaviour towards all vulnerable groups and ensure that victims benefit from multi agency responsiveness

Herefordshire Council and its partners have developed an action plan to address the recommendations which is underpinned by regular audits undertaken by or on behalf of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adult Board.

Community Impact

4 Not applicable to this report.

Financial Implications

5 Not applicable to this report.

Risk Management

6 Not applicable to this report.

Background Papers

7 None identified.