
Meeting: Executive
Date: 15 November 2011
Subject: Local Government Group
Adult Safeguarding Peer Challenge
Report of: Cllr Mrs Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing
Summary: The report provides a summary of the final report of the Local Government Group adult safeguarding peer challenge, July 2011.

Advising Officer: Julie Ogley, Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing
Contact Officer: Stuart Rees, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council
Key Decision No
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)** N/A

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

This report contributes to the Council's priority of creating safer communities.
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Financial:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A specialist safeguarding co-ordinating team operates within available resources. |
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Legal:

2. 'No Secrets' (DoH 2000) provides the statutory framework and guidance for adult safeguarding. This defines "a vulnerable adult" as 'a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. The previous Government published a review of No Secrets with the following key messages for safeguarding:
 - I. safeguarding must be empowering (listening to the victim's voice);
 - II. everyone must help empower individuals so they can retain control and make their choices;
 - III. safeguarding adults is not like child protection – vulnerable adults need to be able to make informed choices;
 - IV. participation/representation of people who lack capacity and the use of the Mental Capacity Act is important.

Risk Management:

3. The Council's overall reputation and performance assessment is at risk if it is not aware of the challenges presented by the performance of its safeguarding responsibilities and the actions taken by the Council to address the areas of concern outlined in this report. The Council's duty is to safeguard the most vulnerable citizens from all forms of abuse. Failure to do so would leave people at risk of discrimination, neglect, physical, sexual, psychological or institutional harm.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. The council's duty is to the safeguarding of all vulnerable citizens from all forms of abuse.
6. All Local Authorities are required to implement a range of equality legislation which requires the Council to:
 - I. Understand issues relating to disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, and sexual orientation.
 - II. Engage with service users, local communities, staff, stakeholders and contractors to identify and implement improvements.
7. Abuse of vulnerable adults can include discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

8. It is therefore vital that all sections of the community know that they are able to report such types of abuse and the council's staff must be trained to be able to recognise and deal with such issues. Central Bedfordshire Council has recently launched specialist equality training for Adult Services staff to help raise awareness of these issues.

Community Safety:

9. The Council's duty is to safeguard its most vulnerable citizens from all forms of abuse. Failure to do so would leave these people at risk of discrimination, neglect, physical, sexual, psychological or institutional harm.

Sustainability:

10. Not Applicable.

Procurement:

11. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive is asked to:

1. **note the final report of the LGG Adult Safeguarding Peer Challenge attached at Appendix A.**

Reason for Recommendation(s): To ensure the outcome of the peer challenge is effectively communicated throughout the Council.

Executive Summary

12. Central Bedfordshire Council requested a peer challenge of its Adult Safeguarding work to be conducted by the Local Government Group. The Council was judged Adequate by the Care Quality Commission in its final Annual Performance Assessment in 2010 and is seeking to demonstrate change and improvements.
13. This report outlines the view of the peer challenge team that there are good foundations upon which the Council can seek to build further developments. The Director for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing and her team have given clear leadership by identifying the importance of good practice and developed processes and procedures to achieve this goal. These processes are good, clear and effective and there is now an understanding of the importance of safeguarding throughout the Directorate and partner organisations. There is clear political leadership and support for the safeguarding agenda. The Adult Safeguarding Board has been well led by the chair who has overseen improved membership and attendance as well as the implementation of previously absent policies and procedures.

14. Future improvements have been identified by the Peer Challenge Team and these include a need to focus on defining and demonstrating improved outcomes with and for people who use services. The Council should seek to involve people in designing services to develop multi-agency working to better integrate a range of personalised responses, investigations or enquiries and to measure the quality and impact of the delivery of the safeguarding agenda. The Council needs to develop joint commissioning with NHS partners and influence future commissioning priorities. The role of the private and voluntary sector could be enhanced and the Think Family initiative could be evaluated and rolled out across the department.

Background

15. Central Bedfordshire Council is one of seven Councils who received an 'adequate' rating by the Care Quality Commission for 2009/10 Adult Social Care Performance. This assessment process by the Care Quality Commission ceased and has been replaced by a sector led approach to improvement.
16. The legacy Council, Bedfordshire County Council, had its safeguarding arrangements inspected in 2008 and was rated as adequate with uncertain prospects for improvement. It was therefore agreed with regional colleagues that as one of the seven adequate Councils, Central Bedfordshire would commission a Peer Challenge. This would provide an independent view of progress made, and, would contribute to the Council's evidence to the national sector led Improvement Board to demonstrate its considerable progress.

The Challenge Process

17. The peer challenge team was made up of senior representatives from local authorities and NHS bodies. The team was on-site from 27 June – 1 July 2011. The programme included activities designed to enable members of the team to meet and talk to a range of internal and external stakeholders. These activities included:
 - I. interviews and discussions with councillors, officers and partners;
 - II. focus groups with managers, practitioners, frontline staff and people using services/carers;
 - III. reading documents provided by the council, including a self-assessment of progress, strengths and areas for improvement against the LG Group standards for adult safeguarding.
18. The recommendations of the peer challenge team are set out under the main themes of the adult safeguarding standards:
 - I. Outcomes and people's experience of safeguarding
 - II. Leadership
 - III. Strategy and commissioning
 - IV. Service delivery and effective practice
 - V. Performance and resource management
 - VI. Working together – Safeguarding Adults Board

Findings of the Peer Challenge

19. The peer challenge identified a number of strengths in each area. These included:
 - I. The main focus of the Adult Safeguarding Board has been the development of processes (policies and procedures) which is a good foundation for improving outcomes for individuals.
 - II. The safeguarding team have designed a process to ascertain the experiences of the safeguarding process of people who use services.
 - III. The Director and her team are very visible and respected, demonstrating clear drive and determination to achieve success for Adult Social Care. There is a lot of evidence of leadership of safeguarding at all levels of the department. .
 - IV. The department understands the strategic necessity for engaging all partners including provider organisations.
 - V. The Council's commissioning and contracting activities have required safeguarding to be a core component of externally provided services.
 - VI. The safeguarding process is good, sound and embedded in the front line. Service providers and staff understand safeguarding processes and know what to do.
 - VII. Since its inception the Council has focused on systems and processes to ensure it delivers an effective service in adult social care including: frequent supervision, competency framework, training, auditing of case files and Safeguarding Team co-ordination and monitoring of processes.
 - VIII. All the key partners at a senior level are present at the Adult Safeguarding Board showing a high level of commitment.

20. The peer challenge also identified a number of areas for improvement in each area. These included:
 - I. The Council should adopt a more coherent approach to involving people who use services and carers in defining the outcomes they want from safeguarding interventions.
 - II. There needs to be more systematic use of advocacy services, including Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCA), to ensure the real experience of people who use services are communicated and their rights upheld.
 - III. The department needs to articulate its vision and further develop collaborative whole sector local leadership for safeguarding.

- IV. The Council now needs to dovetail safeguarding with community safety, wider wellbeing strategies and prevention.
- V. All partners need to pull together to ensure that joint commissioning is resilient at a time of change and is able to safeguard people.
- VI. Use the opportunities to develop safeguarding through the Think Family approach.
- VII. Safeguarding data could be used more effectively to inform and influence practice.
- VIII. Now that the foundations have been laid there is an opportunity to work together as partners to develop a more strategic approach.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 21. The outcome of the peer challenge was positive and demonstrated progress; there remain crucial areas for improvement. In order to ensure that there are robust actions to address the areas for improvement arising from the peer challenge, an action register has been developed. The actions require ownership from a number of stakeholders and both this report and the action register will be presented to the Bedford and Central Bedfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board who will monitor progress.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Final Report: Adult Safeguarding Peer Challenge Central Bedfordshire Council July 2011

Background Papers:

None