

Health and Wellbeing Board

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Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report

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Purpose of the Report

1. The report is to provide information about the current position of the County Durham Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) achievements in 2012/13 and plans for 2013/14.

Background

Safeguarding in its current context

2. Ongoing financial challenges facing Public Sector organisations have impacted on the operating environment for both Durham County Council and its partner agencies. Despite this it is encouraging to note that membership and commitment to the SAB has not diminished and in line with current moves to transform services and the way we work, its work continues to move forward and achieve positive outcomes for vulnerable service users.
3. The Care Bill, due to be implemented in 2015, places SAB's on a statutory footing. This will give the Board a clear basis in law for the first time and will strengthen the existing arrangements that have been in place in County Durham for several years. The Bill requires the police and NHS to remain as members and for a safeguarding plan and annual report of that plan to be published. It will also strengthen the local authority's position in making enquiries when responding to concerns about abuse and neglect as it will require organisations to share information and to contribute to Safeguarding Adults Reviews to learn lessons in the most serious cases.
4. Safeguarding referrals have stabilised following an 88% rise the previous year in line with national trends. The introduction of the new alert classification has meant that a sizeable number of referrals that do not require the procedures to be invoked are now addressed in a more direct manner by care co-ordination and social work as part of routine case work. The annual safeguarding audit has again revealed a continued steady improvement in recording and decision making practices.

Achievements During The Year 2012 / 2013

5. The Board has continued to drive practice improvements throughout the year. There has been a major reformatting of the Policy and Procedures with a view to making them more 'user friendly' and easier to navigate.

6. The new Risk Threshold Tool has been embedded into practice. Links have been forged with the Prison Service with a view to introducing more formal safeguarding processes for prison establishments and there has been considerable engagement with the two Clinical Commissioning Groups in County Durham.
7. The Safeguarding Adults Board has built on the success of the two previous regional radio campaigns by running a County Durham based campaign over a ten week period. Social Care Direct has since found reference being made to the campaign when members of the public are making referrals.
8. A volunteer has been recruited to assist in awareness events and to obtain views about safeguarding adults processes from service users and carers. The Communication and Engagement Sub Group has also been successful in securing representation from the People's Parliament to bring a service user perspective to the group.
9. The merger of the Communications & Engagement and Training Sub Groups functions has enabled more efficient use of participants' time and has eliminated duplication that was evident between the two groups previously.
10. For the second year running the attendance at SAB training events has been in excess of 5,000 participants and there has been greater engagement from NHS organisations in its delivery.
11. We have continued to monitor key milestones in the safeguarding process, maintaining percentage targets for initial strategies and investigations. In addition to this there has been a focus on repeat referrals with a view to identifying root causes and improving safeguarding responses.
12. Significant improvements have been made in obtaining user/carer feedback. Two pilot surveys have been introduced, one in collaboration with the Adult Care exit survey and the other as a stand-alone survey asking specific questions regarding the safeguarding process. Both have produced some positive results. Both surveys will be subject to continuous improvement and refinement and outcomes will be reviewed by the Board on a 6 monthly basis.

Key Actions for 2013 / 2014

13. There are a number of initiatives that the Safeguarding Adults Board will take forward in the coming year. Following a major reformatting of the policy and procedures, there will be consultation with key partners prior to publication to ensure that they are fit for purpose. We also plan to develop a tripartite agreement with Local Authority, Police and the Crown Prosecutions Service to provide a witness support, preparation and profiling protocol. There will be work undertaken to improve the use of the NHS Safeguard Incident Reporting and Management System (SIRMS) as well as monitoring of local progress and actions in relation to Winterbourne View and mid Staffordshire NHS Trust reviews. Preparation for the implementation of the Care Bill will also commence.
14. There will be a continued focus on the promotion of adult safeguarding in the community and the development of awareness sessions for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Governing Bodies to identify corporate responsibilities in relation to adult and children's safeguarding. Collaboration is also planned with local universities to ensure student nurses have experience of

working with the CCG safeguarding team and the development of a training package to support the introduction of witness support, preparation and profiling for vulnerable witnesses.

Perspectives of the Key Partners

15. The key partners on the Safeguarding Adults Board have continued to develop their systems and practices to ensure that they fulfil their obligation and demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding adults.

Conclusion

16. As the profile of safeguarding adults has risen, so has the demand. The Safeguarding Adults Board has continued to provide a comprehensive service to the people of County Durham in a challenging financial climate that has impacted on all of the partner agencies. The improvements that we have made to the service this year will continue into next year with a greater focus on prevention and early intervention.

Recommendations

17. It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board:
 - Receive the annual report (attached as Appendix 2) and note the ongoing developments achieved in this important area of work.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - Ongoing pressure on public service finance will challenge all agencies to consider how best to respond to the safeguarding agenda.

Staffing - The Safeguarding Lead Officer team is now in place and there is continuous evaluation taking place as to how they are coping with the high volume of referrals. The introduction of a new 'Risk Threshold' tool has seen a number of low level referrals reclassified as alerts which has seen a number of reports diverted away for the lead officer team to more standard care coordination and care management.

Risk – Ongoing funding contributions are required from multi agency partners to ensure safeguarding interventions continue to be effective.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - Adult safeguarding is intrinsically linked and this is covered in the SAB policy and procedures

Accommodation – No pertinent issues

Crime and Disorder - Adult safeguarding is intrinsically linked and this is covered in the SAB policy and procedures.

Human Rights – Adult safeguarding is intrinsically linked and this is covered in the SAB policy and procedures.

Consultation - Report available for all partner agencies and members of the public.

Procurement – No pertinent issues.

Disability Issues – The needs of disabled people are reflected within the SAB policy and procedures.

Legal Implications – The draft Care and Support Bill (July 2013) identifies new operational requirements for Safeguarding Adults Boards.