

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

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| Date of Meeting: | 15 January 2014 |
| Subject: | Safeguarding Adults Peer Review |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Bernie Flaherty, Director of Adult Social Services |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Barry MacLeod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing |
| Exempt: | No |
| Decision subject to Call-in: | No, as the Recommendation is for noting only |
| Enclosures: | London Borough of Harrow, Adult Safeguarding Sector Led Challenge – feedback presentation |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report briefly sets out some background information about Peer Reviews and why Harrow Adult Services decided to commission one. It provides details about the process of the review, the findings of the Review Team and the next steps.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to note the findings of the Peer Review and the next steps that the Local Safeguarding Adults Board will be considering taking forward in the next year.

Reason: (for recommendation)

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults at risk of significant harm is a key duty for the Council and it is important for the Cabinet to be reassured that local arrangements are fit for purpose.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

Safeguarding adults work is a high priority for the Council evidenced by both the portfolio holder and shadow portfolio holder attending safeguarding board meetings and it is reflected in “cleaner, safer, fairer” agenda – the administration’s priorities for Harrow.

Options considered

There are no options in this report as it is a “for information” item, not a key decision.

Background

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) no longer inspects Councils, other than in-house residential services that councils provide. The expectation is for senior managers and Councillors to ensure that internal processes for continuous learning, quality assurance and improved outcomes for users are in place.

The London Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and Local Government Association work to improve and develop services in the adult social care sector through the London Social Care Partnership. Peer Review is one method that can be applied to support self evaluation and service development.

Safeguarding work within the Adults Division of Community, Health and Wellbeing has a well established quality assurance framework that is committed to continuous improvement and the decision to commission a formal Peer Review in this important area reflects this. The Peer Review Challenge was commissioned by the Council with the full support of the Local Safeguarding Adults Board.

What was the Harrow process?

In order to test and prepare for the formal peer review an external expert panel was set up chaired by Professor Gill Manthorpe, a well known expert

nationally in the field of safeguarding adults. The expert panel took place on 4th and 5th March 2013.

The panel found a strong sense of Adults Safeguarding being given high priority in Harrow. This was evident in the knowledge of senior managers and front line staff. They declared commitment to the subject. They also noted that elected members were reported to take a genuine interest in the safeguarding adults agenda.

The expert panel concluded in their summary that the observations and recommendations made in their report were to be set in the context of an impressive Safeguarding Adults Service.

The overall findings of the expert panel were very positive but there were some recommendations and these were implemented before the formal Peer Review.

The Peer Review Challenge team were in Harrow for 3 days, (18-20 November 2013) and the formal process followed the Local Government Association methodology. The Team that carried it out was:

- Cathy Kerr (Director of Adult and Community Services, LB Richmond)
- Stephen Day (Director of Adult Services, LB Ealing)
- Gill Ford (Head of Performance and Quality Assurance, LB Richmond)
- Mary Stein (Head of Service Transformation, LB Brent)
- Cathie Williams (for London Councils and also the lead for Adult Safeguarding, Local Government Association)

It should be noted that all members of the Team were social care professionals i.e. there were none from the other statutory sectors including the NHS and the Police.

The methodology was:

- completion of a self assessment; reading by the Peer Review Team of the self assessment/evidence portfolio (prior to the 3 days on-site work); and
- interviews/focus groups/observation on site.

The evidence portfolio was extensive and the interviews/focus groups included a wide range of LSAB members and partner organisations across the statutory sectors (NHS, Fire Service, Police) and third sector (Mencap/Age UK Harrow/Mind in Harrow etc). Elected members (the Portfolio holder and shadow portfolio holder); front line staff and relevant managers were also interviewed.

The Safeguarding Adults Peer Review standards

The 8 themes used in the Peer Review have been developed by ADASS; SCIE; NHS Confederation and the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) and from them Harrow identified 3 main areas for examination:

- (i) Supporting Practice;
- (ii) Quality Assurance; and
- (iii) Governance.

Under these main themes there were six specific outcome areas as outlined below and where as part of the self assessment, strengths/achievements and areas for improvement/consideration were identified.

- the council demonstrates improved safeguarding outcomes alongside wider community safety improvements
- the council has fully engaged people who use services in the design of its services
- there is recognised and active leadership by the council on Adult Safeguarding
- the council has robust and effective service delivery that makes safeguarding everybody's business
- services are held accountable through performance measures, including quality measures, towards the outcomes for people in the strategy
- there is multi-agency commitment to safeguarding

The Peer Review Team's findings

The agreement with the LGA and ADASS is that the Peer Review Team will produce a presentation before they finish on-site. This was presented to Harrow on 20th November 2013 and is being presented at the Cabinet meeting by the Peer Review Team. The presentation is relatively brief and therefore the Peer Review Team has agreed that some members will attend the next meeting of the LSAB to explain their findings in more detail and discuss possible next steps that the Board might wish to consider.

Overall the findings were very positive.

Highlights

Practice

They found that there is impressive safeguarding adults practice which is overseen by strong leadership and commitment by senior officers and elected members.

There is also a real strength in the practice at all levels with a range of forums/activities in place to develop the skills of staff and clear evidence of a learning cycle.

They also found that staff are giving high priority to placing users at the centre of the safeguarding process and to working with them to achieve the outcomes they want.

They also noted that the LSAB has produced good literature and that other materials and awareness raising activities have also had a positive impact.

Governance

The LSAB is well established with a high level of commitment from most partners. There is also strong leadership from the Council with evidence of inter department working practices, including strong links with Children's Safeguarding and wider community safety work.

There is also evidence of innovative activities that reach some citizens who would not otherwise get any support.

Quality Assurance

There is evidence of the Council proactively seeking feedback from service users and acting on the feedback. There is evidence that there is an effective learning loop from the practice through audit response and review. There is also a broad and innovative system of risk management in place.

Recommendations

Practice

The Peer Review Team said that gaining access to justice for victims in Harrow (in common with the national picture) is a challenging experience, and we must continue to do what we can to make it easy for people to report issues.

They found that getting through the "front door" of Access Harrow can be difficult.

They advised the board to consider how it exerts a preventative function to ensure people are not harmed by poor health, care or police responses.

Governance

They asked the Council to consider how it brings strategic leadership and commitment from key partners into owning safeguarding (rather than seeing it as Council business they are helping with).

They received reports that the Council's IT system is slow – staff mentioned the lack of secure e-mail to share confidential information with partners and difficulty with scanning and printing facilities.

Quality Assurance

They identified scope to address care quality issues more systematically. This would involve partnership work between NHS Commissioners, CQC, the Quality Surveillance Group, along with the council. This will encourage Providers to engage more proactively with their own learning and development

They identified a need for more focus on outcomes in reporting to the LSAB assisted by systematically capturing the outcomes that people wanted and whether they have been achieved.

Conclusion

In conclusion the Peer Review Team stated that they found an openness to try new approaches and that the Council is in a strong position for the challenges that are coming and to continue the journey. The general view was that the service was “good, moving to great” and the partnership was well positioned to deal with the changes coming along in safeguarding adults work in the future.

Next Steps

It is important to note that some of the recommendations had already been identified by the LSAB and work is underway e.g. a new template for capturing partner data for presentation at Board meetings; a quarterly meeting with Access Harrow to discuss the pathway for safeguarding adults alerts; a legal update Best Practice Forum held on 10th December 2013 as part of ongoing sessions to further develop staff’s understanding of relevant legislation and a new Prevention Strategy will be considered by the LSAB at its March 2014 meeting. Some of the recommendations relate to the function of the LSAB and the Board had already agreed to some independent challenge at its next annual review day in June 2014. This will provide an opportunity for further debate about membership, ownership and effectiveness.

Legal Implications

There is currently no statutory obligation placed upon local authorities to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board, but the Care Bill 2013, when it receives Royal Assent and becomes a statute, will introduce a duty to do so. The Care Bill will also consolidate community care legislation and introduce a duty to promote well being as well as a duty to make enquiries inter alia, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications associated with the areas for consideration, however resource implications will be kept under review in progressing the next steps and if any increased costs are identified as a result, these will need to be contained within the overall budget envelope where possible.

Performance Issues

This report relates to performance in that one of the areas chosen by Harrow for external review was “services are held accountable through performance measures, including quality measures, towards the outcomes for people in the strategy”.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

Safeguarding adults work is included in both the Council and NHS Clinical Commissioning Group’s risk registers with actions agreed to mitigate the highlighted issues. The completion of the Peer Review has been identified as one key way of ensuring that risks are reduced and local arrangements are as effective as possible.

Equalities implications

There is no decision for an EqIA to address, however the LSAB carefully tracks relevant statistics to ensure that alerts are arising from all sections of the local community and where there are low numbers has agreed to target its awareness raising campaigns etc.

Corporate Priorities

Protection of some of the most vulnerable adults in the borough is a priority for the administration. Much of the work of the LSAB is in partnership with wider community safety initiatives e.g. door step crime, distraction burglary and domestic violence.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

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|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Name: Donna Edwards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: 10 December 2013 | | |
| Name: Sharon Clarke | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Monitoring Officer |
| Date: 10 December 2013 | | |

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
Strategic
Commissioning

Date: 10 December 2013

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Corporate Director
(Environment &
Enterprise)

Date: 10 December 2013

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Visva Sathasivam (Assistant Director Adult Social Care)
Tel: 0208 736 6012

Background Papers: None.

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

*(Call-in does not apply as the
recommendation is for noting only)*