

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **25TH JULY 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **ADULT SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update Members on Adult Safeguarding Performance and revised structures.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 This is the annual adult safeguarding report for the year April 2012 to March 2013 in compliance with the Welsh Assembly Government statutory guidance document, 'In Safe Hands'.

2.02 The adult safeguarding process in Wales is the national system in place to protect all vulnerable adult client groups from abuse and to support them to seek treatment and redress in the event that they have been abused. Social Services Departments through the Safeguarding Team take the lead role in coordinating the development of local policy guidance, but all agencies are to *'work cooperatively on the identification, investigation, treatment and prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults'* [In Safe Hands, 2000].

2.03 The Safeguarding Team has undergone significant change in the past year and will continue to evolve as it responds to the forthcoming Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill.

2.04 The new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill includes provisions for a statutory basis for adult protection, a stronger national direction through the establishment of Adult Protection Boards and clearer links between child and adult protection.

2.05 The aim is to ensure that adult safeguarding is given the same status, legal framework and leadership as that for the safeguarding of children.

2.06 The Bill intends to establish a new legal definition of "adults at risk" and of "harm" to replace the terms "vulnerable adult" and "abuse". These are much broader definitions and are likely to result in more

referrals to Social Services for Adults. Alongside this is a new duty to investigate which will also increase workload.

- 2.07 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (including Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) and the amended Mental Health Act 1983 have placed additional statutory duties and responsibilities on the Directorate which are inextricably linked to adult safeguarding considerations.
- 2.08 In light of this background, a pressure bid for adult safeguarding was submitted and agreed by Flintshire County Council for an additional £45,000 for 2012/13 with full year effect of £90,000 for future years.
- 2.09 Two new appointments to the adult safeguarding team have been made in the form of a further Safeguarding Manager, and Adult Safeguarding Social Worker. The larger team will ensure the robust implementation and operation of adult safeguarding policies and procedures, including more consistent application of criteria and decision making.
- 2.10 Safeguarding Team Managers now chair all Safeguarding Strategy Meetings, and the Safeguarding Social Worker is able to support investigations into the impact of alleged abuse or harm on victims.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 **Adult Protection Statistics 2012 – 2013**

The year saw a total of 283 Adult Protection referrals received by Flintshire Social Services for Adults. Of these, 174 progressed to a full investigation and 109 referrals were screened and were dealt with by the relevant Team Manager. This figure compares with 250 cases reported in the year 2011 - 2012. It shows that the trend of annual increase in Adult Protection referrals is continuing, as can be seen in Table 1.

Year	Total Number of Referrals
2012 - 2013	283
2011 - 2012	250
2010 – 2011	212
2009 – 2010	190
2008 – 2009	128
2007 – 2008	141
2006 – 2007	103
2005 – 2006	76
2004 – 2005	40

Table 1: Annual rates of Adult Protection referrals in Flintshire

3.02 **Trends**

The graphs presented at Appendix 1 give a breakdown of numbers, types of referrals and outcomes. The highest number of referrals (44) came from independent providers, followed by referrals generated by

Flintshire social services care managers (34) and then health staff. (26).

- 3.03 As in previous years, women over 65 are most likely to be the alleged victim in Adult Protection referrals. In 2012-2013 there were sixty-five referrals completed relating to women over 65.
- 3.04 This population group makes up the highest proportion of clients of Social Services for Adults.
- 3.05 Nearly half of completed referrals related to individuals where a mental health problem was judged to be their main category of vulnerability.
- 3.06 Allegations received are most likely to be ones of physical abuse, although neglect and emotional / psychological abuse are also significant factors.
- 3.07 In cases where the allegations were proved or admitted, the highest proportion relate to people living in care homes, three times the number of cases where people were living in their own homes in the community.
- 3.08 This does not mean that more abuse happens in care homes, but may indicate that reporting systems are more effective in care home settings (staff training in adult safeguarding pays a large part in this).
- 3.09 At the conclusion of each investigation a record is made of the outcome of the process. In 47 cases the allegations made were either proved, upheld or admitted, but in a further 30 cases the outcome remained inconclusive. In 21 cases allegations of abuse were either disproved or not upheld. In the remainder the allegation was either withdrawn, or likely or unlikely on the balance of probability.
- 3.10 It should be noted that statistics for completed cases will include cases which were referred in 2011/2012 as completed outcomes are reported in the year cases are closed. Similarly outcomes for some cases referred in 2012/13 will be reported in 2013/14 safeguarding report.

Training & Awareness

- 3.11 Over 300 staff from within the Council and in the independent sector have received adult safeguarding training delivered by Social Services for Adults in the year.
- 3.12 The increasing public awareness of adult abuse as an issue, together with continuing training and awareness for staff, has led to an increase in referrals and in changes to the way that adult safeguarding in Flintshire is managed. The Social Services and Wellbeing Bill will further raise the profile and increase responsibilities on Social

Services for Adults for helping to keep adults who are at risk safe from harm.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 Not Applicable.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 Not Applicable

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 Not Applicable.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 Not Applicable.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Not Applicable.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Not Applicable

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Not Applicable.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 - Breakdown of Adult Protection Referrals & Outcomes

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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