

By: Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director, Families and Social Care

To: Adult Social Care and Public Health Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 30 March 2012

Subject: **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS – QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THRESHOLD ASSESSMENTS**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report presents the programme of audits commissioned recently by Families and Social Care. The recommendations made following the audits have been incorporated into the FSC safeguarding action plan which is being implemented by the Directorate.

Introduction

1. (1) The Adult Safeguarding Unit has undertaken a programme of audits since December 2010. The audit programme has focused on Families and Social Care (adult social care) and the Kent and Medway Partnership Trust (KMPT).

Context

2. (1) In March 2009 Adult Social Care in Kent, including KMPT, were inspected by CQC/CSCI under the Independence, Wellbeing and Choice Inspection programme. In regard to Safeguarding, Adult Social Care in Kent was assessed as 'Good'.

(2) An inspection action plan, agreed with CQC, was fully implemented. At the time of the Inspection and after, the Directorate went through a period of major change in order to establish a structure to deliver Self Directed Support.

(3) Families and Social Care take the lead on investigating allegations of abuse to vulnerable people. This is a highly important function in relation to adult safeguarding. Two years on from the Independence, Wellbeing and Choice Inspection, Families and Social Care (FSC) commissioned a programme of audits which focused on safeguarding investigations. This focused on two major areas of activity:

- Safeguarding Investigations in Adult Social Care in Kent County Council (FSC).
- Safeguarding investigations in Kent and Medway Partnership Trust.

(4) FSC felt it was important to undertake audits as a matter of good practice and because the Care Quality Commission no longer inspect Councils as Commissioners of adult social care on an annual basis. Councils are expected to monitor their own performance.

(5) Safeguarding is a high priority for Families and Social Care and the programme of audits over the past year has demonstrated progressive improvements in the practice and quality of case work. However it is essential we do not get complacent and continue to monitor the quality of practice closely.

(6) Along with the audit programme, the Adult Safeguarding Unit has implemented several quality assurance initiatives to continue to drive improvements. These include a focus on safeguarding training and supervision, implementation of the Quality in Care Framework, LEAN Review of safeguarding processes and a focus on Mental Capacity Act issues.

Programme of Audits – Families and Social Care (Adult Social Care)

3. (1) At the beginning of the programme of audits it was noted that all clients had been safeguarded. The audits raised issues regarding the quality of recording risk assessments and the complexities of the safeguarding process which on examination could be made simpler.

(2) As a response to this an action plan was developed to address these issues, including improved risk assessment training and a full revision of the safeguarding process using LEAN methodology. As a result of this review, the safeguarding alert process has been streamlined and improved with an increased focus on risk assessments and recording. This has been reflected in later audits which have identified pieces of case work as Excellent.

(3) The audit action plan has been refreshed in light of these audits with a focus on other areas of practice and continues to be monitored by the Adult Safeguarding Unit.

Next Steps for Families and Social Care

4. (1) In discussion with the Corporate Director we are exploring the possibility of a Peer Review, likely to be undertaken by another Local Authority similar to Kent. We anticipate that the review could cover:

- (a) Practice and strategic issues within the Local Authority.
- (b) Training.
- (c) Multi-agency arrangements.
- (d) Safeguarding arrangements in respect of providers.

(2) Other key areas which will be followed up in the next few months include:

- (a) Continuation of the practice audit programme and initiatives to improve practice.
- (b) Continued focus on closure of cases.

- (c) Ongoing review of the new safeguarding documentation following the LEAN review.
- (d) Implementation of the Adult Social Care element of the Central Referral Unit.
- (e) Commissioning of further Adult Safeguarding Training, especially Level 3 – Investigators Guide.

Programme of Audits Kent and Medway Partnership Trust (KMPT)

5. (1) At the beginning of the programme of audits it was noted that all clients had been safeguarded. The audits raised issues about the process of recording risk assessments on case files and the interface between safeguarding and the Care Programme Approach.

(2) As a result of these audits internal workshops have been held with Assistant Directors and Service Managers to focus on improving the management of case work and all safeguarding alerts are monitored and tracked by the KMPT Adult Safeguarding Unit. The KMPT Programme Board received regular safeguarding updates.

(3) An Improvement Plan was put in place by KMPT which has been updated to incorporate recommendations made following the audits.

Next Steps for KMPT

6. (1) The KMPT Improvement Plan has been updated in light of the findings of the audits and will continue to be monitored on a regular basis by the KMPT Programme Board. A further practice audit has been commissioned to take place in the Summer of 2012.

Conclusion

7. (1) In conclusion, the adult social care audits have evidenced an improvement in practice. Given the high priority of adult safeguarding, it is recommended that Members continue to receive updates to ensure that progress in Adult Social Care has been sustained and that the audit action plans are having the desired impact.

Recommendations

8. (1) Members of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to NOTE and COMMENT on the report.

Nick Sherlock
Head of Adult Safeguarding
01622 696175 (7000 6175)
nick.sherlock@kent.gov.uk

Background documents: None