

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD (CROYDON)</b> <b>11 September 2014</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Annual Report of the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board.</b>
<b>BOARD SPONSOR:</b>	<b>Hannah Miller, Executive Director of Adult Services, Health &amp; Housing &amp; Deputy Chief Executive, Croydon Council</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:**

Part of Croydon Council's Corporate Plan is to protect vulnerable people. This report details the work carried out by social work staff in investigating concerns regarding the abuse of vulnerable adults. It also sets out the preventative agenda which is being pursued through joint working arrangements between the Council, the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group, Croydon Health Services, the Police and voluntary agencies.

Both the investigation of abuse and the preventative work supports another key Corporate priority of encouraging people to take responsibility in order to understand better how to protect themselves and to become more resilient. The report refers to the shift in practice, led by Making Safeguarding Personal, to move away from a paternalistic approach to safeguarding adults at risk, to ensuring the full involvement of the individual and/or their representative in considering issues of safety and a positive approach to risk taking and risk management.

The report evidences a strong strategic partnership across all agencies, both statutory and voluntary, with regard to the support, wellbeing and empowerment of adults at risk.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

n/a

**FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:** This is not a key decision

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 The health and wellbeing board is asked to note and comment on the content of the annual report. The report is being brought to the board as the safeguarding of adults at risk is an important area of work which the council resources. Quality and safety is identified as an improvement area in the joint health and wellbeing strategy. The work of the Safeguarding Adults Board will be placed on a statutory footing under the Care Act. The Annual Report of the Safeguarding Adults Board is signed off by the safeguarding board.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Annual Report of the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board provides an overview of the work being carried out by Croydon Council and partner agencies with regard to preventative work. This is aimed at improving the safety and wellbeing of adults who are at risk of harm, as well as carrying out enquiries when harm may have occurred. The report sets out the business plan of the Board and the progress being made in achieving its aims. It highlights the importance of joint working and the complexity and challenges of some of the issues which are being addressed on a daily basis by Council staff and by other agencies to support people at risk of harm and to make people safer in the community.
- 2.2 The Board is a partnership of statutory and non-statutory agencies. Its aim is to work to enable people who need help and support to retain independence, wellbeing and choice and to access their right to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect. This Annual Report reflects the work of the partnership in seeking to realise this aim. It provides an overview of the shared work plan developed for improving the effectiveness of safeguarding adults work; the achievements across the partnership and aspirations for the coming year.
- 2.2 With the implementation of the Care Act in 2015, the Safeguarding Adults Board will become a statutory body and must include key statutory agencies, the Council, Health services and Police. Croydon Council has been proactive in already establishing a Safeguarding Board along these lines which has been operational for 12 years.

## **3. DETAIL**

- 3.1 This year's annual safeguarding report focuses on the Safeguarding Board's two year business plan, 2013- 2015 and the progress made to date across the safeguarding partnership. The business plan covers eight key areas of focus with achievements and challenges highlighted in the report.
- 3.2 The report highlights the current work of the safeguarding social work teams to ensure that service users, their wishes and desired outcomes remain at the heart of each and every safeguarding enquiry and that there is a proportionate balancing of positive risk taking and safety. At the core it is important that in making people safe we do not make their live less meaningful by overzealous or disproportionate plans to protect them or by unhelpful interventions in family life.
- 3.3 The prevention of harm also means there needs to be robust work with independent and private providers of care to ensure their services meet a desired standard. The report describes the ongoing work to provide monitoring, training and advice to Croydon's many private care providers who support Croydon residents and residents from other Local Authorities in residential and nursing homes and people living in their own home with the support of domiciliary care. This includes the work of the Care Support Team and of

commissioners who strive to ensure that care is provided in a caring, dignified, safe and empowering way.

- 3.4 Of particular note is the ongoing joint work to strengthen the partnership between agencies with regard to intervening in cases of harm and in order to reduce and prevent incidences of harm. The report also emphasises the partnership focus on robust staff recruitment, development and training to ensure a well-supported workforce. Only people who possess the right values and commitment should be selected to work with people who are vulnerable. They in turn should expect support from their organisation to carry out what at times may be a physically and emotionally demanding job, but one, that with the right approach, can also be extremely rewarding. The Dignity in Care agenda lies at the heart of this philosophy. Recent publicity of incidences of poor practice and at times criminal abuse in care services highlights the real importance of getting this right.
- 3.5 Helping people who are in need of services to lead safe and meaningful lives also requires a clear focus on their own expectations, hopes and wishes. The report highlights the work around Making Safeguarding Personal and what has been done during the past year to make this a reality for people. As a result of Making Safeguarding Personal some key changes have occurred:
- Safeguarding meetings are held at the adult at risk's home when this is the preferred choice.
  - The adult at risk or their representative is invited to all meetings, including the initial strategy meeting to agree how the matter should be taken forward.
  - Making sure we find out what the adult at risk wants to happen rather than following a set process.
  - More use of advocacy services for adults at risk.
  - Enabling people to exert real choice even when there is some degree of risk remaining – there is no point making someone safe if in doing so, we restrict their life so much that they are miserable as a consequence.
  - Seeking feedback at the end of the safeguarding process to check that what we have done has made a positive difference to the person at the centre of it all.
- 3.6 The report also includes information about the outcomes from an external file audit of safeguarding adults work carried out by Tony Benton, independent auditor with extensive experience of regulatory work, on behalf of the Council's Adult Social Care Service in partnership with relevant agencies. This builds on an audit of the previous year and demonstrates continuous improvement as well as identifying areas for further development. The audit concluded that: 'safeguarding practice is safe, secure and 'solid' within a largely traditional safeguarding paradigm' and the report gives details of areas for development and progress being made, which fits well with the Making Safeguarding Personal work already underway.
- 3.7 Mention is also made of the application of the Mental Capacity Act as it relates to people who may lack capacity to make important decisions for themselves. This is a complex subject and work is ongoing across the partnership to strengthen practice to meet this challenge. It is vitally important that all people working with adults at risk are able to support people to make their own

decisions as far as possible. Included is some of the ongoing work being done to strengthen practice in this area.

- 3.8 The report presents statistical data from safeguarding investigations during the past year and what this may tell us about how well we are protecting people from harm. We have seen a small rise in the number of safeguarding investigations carried out, from 858 investigations in 2012/13 to 882 investigations during 2013/14. In total there were 1406 safeguarding concerns raised and which were considered through initial fact finding, of which 882 progressed to a full safeguarding investigation. This represents increasing recognition of abuse and willingness to report it. As well as the work of the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board to raise awareness of abuse across the community, it is likely that recent television programmes highlighting abuse have also contributed to an increasing refusal to tolerate harm towards people at risk.
- 3.9 The data shows that the people most at risk of harm in the younger age ranges (18 to 64) are people with a learning disability. This group makes up a significant proportion of younger adults who are likely to be at risk or harm. 220 safeguarding investigations were carried out for younger adults with learning disability compared with 191 investigations for all the other groups of people at risk, (such as physical disability, mental health issues, substance abuse). As people age, health and mental capacity may deteriorate leaving the older age groups more at risk of harm. Overall there were 530 abuse investigations carried out for physically disabled or frail people of all ages compared with 225 investigations for people with a learning disability across all ages.
- 3.10 The statistics show us that there is still a discrepancy in the numbers of reported abuse cases for white citizens compared with black and minority ethnic citizens. This may reflect that Croydon's older population is less ethnically diverse than amongst the younger age groups but it is also likely to be the result of the barriers that may still exist for some minority groups in recognising abuse and having the confidence to report it. The report gives an example of joint work between Adult Social Services, the BME forum and other voluntary sector organisations to raise awareness and confidence around adult safeguarding within BME communities.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 This report is on behalf of the Safeguarding Adults Board. It contains reports and submissions from partner agencies and has been circulated for comment and amendment. Notably there are reports from Croydon Health Services, Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group, South London and Maudsley NHS and the Metropolitan Police as well as reports from the voluntary sector. The Board's business plan, which lies at the heart of this report, was developed as a collaborative exercise by Board members.
- 4.2 The report will be available on the Croydon Council website alongside earlier years' reports.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 5.1 The report deals with two protected groups – older age and disability. It also breaks down data in terms of ethnic groups.
- 5.2 The report demonstrates that there are still some inequalities in terms of adult safeguarding activity and ethnic groupings. There is a higher number of safeguarding enquiries carried out for the white population compared with other ethnic groups. The inequalities are in part explained by the demographics of Croydon which are likely to have a higher proportion of white citizens amongst the older age groups who are represented in much of the safeguarding activity. However we also know that many people are not confident in recognising abuse and may not have the confidence to report it to statutory bodies and may be concerned about the consequences if they do report abuse. We know that people from ethnic minority groups may be especially disadvantaged in reporting abuse for these reasons. For some people there may be language barriers or cultural barriers at work.
- 5.3 The report indicates that work is ongoing to reduce inequalities that may derive from certain groups feeling less confident or able to recognise and report abuse and gives the example of training sessions jointly led between the Adult Social Services safeguarding coordinator and the community worker in the BME forum.

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**APPENDIX: Annual Report** (available online:  
<http://egeprapwv01lc.lbcbau.croydon.net/akscroydon/images/att4151.pdf>)

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None