NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 April 2009

Update on Safeguarding Issues

Report of the Head of Self Directed Care &Transformation

1.0   Purpose of the report

1.1   To update the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee of developments and potential changes within the safeguarding arena.

2.0   Background

2.1   Adult and Community Services have been reviewing their safeguarding policies, guidance and infrastructure in line with the heightened safeguarding profile nationally. Each local authority will receive a Wellbeing and Choice Inspection by the regulator, Commission of Social Care Inspection (soon to be Care Quality Commission April 2009). All inspections will undertake at least two themes but one will be "safeguarding". The outcomes of these will now contribute to the Comprehensive Area Assessment. NYCC has not yet had notification of when their inspection will take place, but six weeks notice could be issued at any time.

2.2   Every Local Authority is expected through the "No Secrets" guidance to have a Safeguarding Board. Until July 2008 NYCC and York had a joint Board. This has now been dissolved and ACS had an augural board meeting on the 7th of November 2008.

2.3   The personalisation agenda has also raised the profile upon safeguarding issues due to concerns raised nationally that people will be an increased risk of financial abuse / "grooming" if it is well known that they hold their own monies and could be perceived to be vulnerable. Work is being undertaken as part of ACS personalisation agenda and their review of the assessment processes to embed this awareness.

2.4   ACS Management Board have considered good practice solutions from other Local Authorities inspections which have been deemed "good" and also from the CSCI's own research into the overall findings of the inspections to date to assist in our development. Visits to other Local Authorities have been made and "expert" advice in quality assuring our workplan is in situ.

2.5   Presently the "No Secrets" guidance is being consulted upon and ends on the 31st of January 2009. This is significant as a number of considerations are being consulted upon including legislation and the role of the Criminal Justice System. The outcome will have a direct impact upon ACS and its partners.

3.0 Key Areas for good Safeguarding

3.1 The Safeguarding Adults Board is effective and has key senior partners including member involvement. The Board needs to demonstrate strategic leadership whilst ensuring that practice across all the agencies is sound. This has been achieved with senior level of sign up across all partners, including police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

3.2 ACS has a responsibility to ensure that all regulated services, both in-house and external, have access to training and implement good safeguarding processes. A multi agency sub group of the Board is in situ and is presently reviewing the training strategy.

3.3 ACS staff are aware of and follow safeguarding processes when appropriate and there is good decision making and risk management throughout.

3.4 The resources applied to safeguarding are sufficient to provide a robust service and are responsive internally and externally.

3.5 Reporting of safeguarding is embedded within relevant and existing reporting structures. Safeguarding is seen as a community agenda working on prevention as well as protection. Links with Safer Communities and the NYSP need to develop further and this work has been initiated through the Safeguarding Adults Board.

3.6 The public are aware of how to report safeguarding concerns throughout North Yorkshire.

4.0 Directorate Decisions on Way Ahead

4.1 ACS have developed a workplan to ensure that the key areas are systematically achieved.

4.2 We are presently recruiting a Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator who will have a multi agency perspective as well as co-ordinating good practice within ACS. They will manage four safeguarding officers, who are presently in post. This will ensure consistency of thresholds and practice across the county.

4.3 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and consulted upon in 2008, and further work will be commissioned through the new Board. New operational guidance is being written and the consultation will commence in January 2009.

4.4 Ensuring that our requirements for regulated services are met, a quality assurance team is being developed. This is pivotal in ensuring that NYCC are keeping people safe in their own homes as well as in residential/nursing placements.

4.5 Information for the public is being developed and will be distributed to public areas in January 2009. ACS website has been updated both in terms of content and accessibility.

4.6 There are four area safeguarding groups which meet and these will continue and have a reporting requirement into the main Board. The terms of reference and

membership of the group will be reviewed at the next Board meeting -27th February 2009.

4.7   A response to the no secrets consultation is being developed through consultation with staff and partners. Link: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/AdvanceSearchResult/index.htm?searchTerms=no+secrets+consultation

5.0   Key Issues for Members to Note

5.1   An inspection of ACS's safeguarding policies and procedures will take place and ACS portfolio holders are likely to be interviewed as part of the inspection framework. Increased public awareness information and events may create more queries to members.

5.2   The outcome of the No Secrets consultation may require ACS to develop further procedures or change practice, this may have an impact upon existing resources.

6.0   Recommendations

6.1   The Committee is asked to:

   a.   Note the decisions taken by the Directorate and the intended direction of travel
   b.   Receive on-going reports on progress
   c.   Together with officers of the Directorate remain aware and mindful of national developments and best practice.

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Background documents: None