

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 DECEMBER 2012

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

1. Safeguarding

All Councillors share responsibility for Safeguarding, and Scrutiny Members in particular must ensure that arrangements for safeguarding of communities, particularly for vulnerable adults, are effective. We do this by reviewing the Annual Report of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Board, which oversees arrangements for adult safeguarding in the County.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of safeguarding, sets out the priorities for the coming year, reviews national and local developments, details work plan progress and provides an analysis of referrals received. We made time in our November meeting to give it the attention it warrants.

The Board's recently appointed Chairman, Jonathan Phillips, was in attendance. His prime duty is to ensure that the main statutory bodies work well together. As a former Director of Adult Services, Jonathan brings experience and knowledge to his role.

He highlighted the key priorities of the Board, which included:

- Getting governance arrangements right so that the Board can respond to challenges and work together with health partners, including the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups for North Yorkshire.
- Improving understanding of, and responding to, quality and performance issues.
- Reviewing the findings of serious case reviews, like those of Winterbourne View and Mid-Staffordshire. The lessons learned should be engrained in practice, so that all partners promote the importance of dignity and wellbeing.
- Ensuring appropriate training plans are in place for all statutory partners and volunteers.

Jonathan has been in post for six months. His initial observations about the performance data were interesting. Figures show a lower number of referrals from younger adults with physical disabilities. North Yorkshire has more repeat referrals than some comparator authorities. There are fewer referrals from neighbours and the wider community, and a greater proportion from professionals. More analysis is needed before definitive conclusions are drawn, and we may review the data again.

It is clear that measures are being taken to ensure high standards of adult protection across all agencies, particularly for those who need support. The

Board is made up of partners at senior level in their organisations so there is good reason to be confident that any appropriate action will be taken.

The Board has assessed its priorities effectively and produced an action plan to deliver them. There is good balance between investment and practice, prevention and raising awareness.

The Committee believes that there is strong evidence of clear overall vision for safeguarding in the County.

2. Complex Needs Placements

Expenditure on Out of County Placements for people with complex needs, especially for those with a learning disability, is a significant part of the HAS budget. In January 2012 the Committee identified this as an area to monitor and review.

A 2011 report to the Committee had highlighted the disadvantages and risks associated with these placements, in particular the difficulties for both families and assessment staff to maintain contact and to monitor the quality of care. There is also the problem of high cost. The Committee had supported plans for a robust programme to assess the current position, monitor placements and encourage the development of local services. At our November meeting we reviewed the current position and progress made.

Approximately 240 individuals with learning disability are in residential care, and, of those 111 are in a placement costing over £1,000 per week. A further 330 are in supported living accommodation, whose costs are being reviewed.

Making changes on this scale in a very sensitive area is a significant undertaking. A complex needs team has been set up to assess priority cases. Brokers are in place in each area to negotiate the cost of new placements and to undertake a best value exercise. All of this work has now been completed.

At the same time, efforts are being made to encourage the market to increase the availability of service options in the County. This will reduce the need to go outside the County, and should improve the options for those who return to the County.

We believe that the arrangements for reducing the number of out of County placements are now in place and are being followed appropriately, and that this approach takes account of budget and service constraints within a realistic timescale.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR DON MACKENZIE

Chairman

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall

NORTHALLERTON

December 2012