

## **Cabinet – 15 December 2011**

### **7. Scrutiny Report: Safeguarding Adults**

#### **Response of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care**

*Taking all the steps that we can to safeguard adults in Worcestershire is an important responsibility of the County Council. It is a responsibility that we share with a range of other organisations locally, and is coordinated through the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board. I welcome the piece of work that has been undertaken by the Adult Care and Well-being Panel both as an examination of what is in place at the moment, and as a means of further raising the profile of adult safeguarding. Overall the recommendations being made in the report will strengthen the role of the Panel in holding Adult and Community Services to account, and challenging the wider work with partner organisations across the county. This can only be in the best interests of vulnerable adults in Worcestershire.*

##### **Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that the Directorate monitor its capacity for dealing with referrals, look at the feedback procedures and resources available for them and report back to the Panel.**

**As part of future safeguarding discussions with the Director, we would like to look at whether there may be ways to improve sharing of referral information across partners.**

*The report rightly identifies the marked increase in referrals that has taken place over the last few years. There is some evidence that this may have levelled off in the current year, but nevertheless the Directorate will continue to monitor this and its capacity for responding in an appropriate way. As identified later, the Directorate will report to the Panel twice a year about its safeguarding work and will cover this area in its report.*

*The adult protection procedures will be reviewed to ensure that feedback on the outcome of investigations is provided to referrers unless there are particular reasons, such as an on-going police enquiry, which prevent this. The safeguarding training modules will be updated to ensure staff cover this aspect of the work.*

##### **Recommendation 2**

**We recommend that the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board's annual report is presented to Council each year, to facilitate greater access and awareness raising to all councillors.**

*I am happy to support this recommendation subject to the availability of the Chair of WSAB whose report this is.*

### **Recommendation 3**

**We understand that a review of the WSAB's membership is in progress. We recommend that the WSAB membership includes representation from a housing provider.**

**As part of future dialogue with the Independent Chair of the WSAB, we will discuss the best way to facilitate effective awareness by this Panel of the WSAB's work, for example, it may be useful for a member of this Panel to have a role on the WSAB.**

*I understand that WSAB will give consideration to including a suitable representative from a local housing provider organisation and I would welcome the suggestion for further discussion between the Panel and the Chair of WSAB about the best ways of enabling effective awareness of the Panel of the work of WSAB.*

### **Recommendation 4**

**We recommend member development on adult safeguarding to ensure members are aware of their role in this area. We also recommend that members are provided with lists of care homes in their divisions.**

*I agree with the recommendation for member development on adult safeguarding. Sessions for members have been run previously by staff from Adult and Community Services, and I will ask the Safeguarding Lead to run at least one session a year covering the role of members and the latest developments locally.*

*The Care Quality Commission has provided a list of care homes registered in Worcestershire. This will be split into divisions and then circulated to members.*

### **Recommendation 5**

**District Councillors also have a part to play and we recommend that the WSAB communications strategy includes District Councillors.**

*The fact that District Councillors have a part to play is agreed and it will be important to ensure that they are included in WSAB's communications strategy which is currently being revised. I would expect the independent Chair of WSAB to take this recommendation forward.*

### **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that serious case reviews impacting on Worcestershire residents are considered by the Panel.**

**We suggest that the Director of Adult and Community Services includes what ACS is doing in response to a serious case review in his regular updates to the Panel, focusing on lessons learned. The Panel could also discuss the response of partners when it meets the WSAB Chair.**

*This is a helpful suggestion that will enable members to look in more detail at situations where things have gone wrong. As the recommendation rightly makes plain, the Director of Adult and Community Services will be able to report on the implications for his Directorate, and separately the WSAB chair will be able to comment on wider lessons learnt and the response of other relevant organisations in Worcestershire.*

### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend that closer working between the Panel and the Care Quality Commission and LINk/Healthwatch is developed. Details of how this can be done should be discussed with those bodies.**

*Opportunities for the Panel to work more closely with the Care Quality Commission and LINk/Healthwatch would be welcomed. I am aware that the Chair of the Panel has met with the regional CQC representative, and it would be helpful if the new Healthwatch organisation were to develop an active involvement with adult safeguarding issues and adult social care more generally.*

### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend that councillors' monitoring of adult safeguarding should continue to be facilitated and developed through the Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel.**

*The Panel has considered in detail the suggestion made for establishing a Corporate Care Board. I support the conclusion that it has reached that the most effective and efficient way of enabling councillor's monitoring of adult safeguarding is through strengthening the role of the Panel as proposed in the report.*

### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that the Panel meet twice a year with the Chairman of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) to ensure a two-way dialogue is developed. These discussions should include WSAB's annual report, and update on issues, performance, and his views on how well ACS is carrying out its role.**

*It is good to note that the Chair of WASB has already met with the Panel on a number of occasions, and the process of developing a dialogue is underway. This can only be a good thing, and I am happy for him to report to the Panel his independent perspective on how well ACS is carrying out its role. The only note of caution I would sound is that the post is funded for 15 days work a year, so there would need to be a balance with the other requirements of his role.*

### **Recommendation 10**

**We recommend that the Council's Director and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care reports to this Panel twice a year on ACS work on safeguarding.**

*I would be very happy for the Director and myself to attend the Panel twice a year to report on the Directorate's work on safeguarding.*

### **Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that adult safeguarding is threaded through all the Council's relevant strategies and activities, including the new Health and Well-being Board, to ensure a co-ordinated approach and maintain awareness. This will be particularly important as the Council moves towards becoming a commissioning-based authority.**

*Again this is a helpful recommendation. As the relevant Cabinet Member, I want to make sure that adult safeguarding issues are addressed by the Council effectively and consistently throughout its work. The Director and safeguarding staff in ACS are equally committed to making this happen, and I believe that the chair and members of this Panel also have an important role in maintaining awareness and challenging practice.*

P Gretton  
December 2011