West of Berkshire
Safeguarding Adults Board
Reading, West Berkshire & Wokingham

Reading Borough Council Safeguarding Achievements 2020/2021

Operational Teams

The Adult Safeguarding Team continues to undertake the screening process for all the safeguarding concerns for Reading Borough Council and the Locality Teams undertake most of the section 42 enquiries.

There remains in place a robust oversight of all section 42 enquiries by managers.

There have been bite size learning events with managers regarding key aspects of the safeguarding process where it has been identified through consultation with managers that they felt the necessity for greater clarity.

Service Development

Hoarding and Self Neglect

Adult Social Care during the COVID Pandemic noted that individuals who needed help to address their hoarding and self-neglect were reported when their situation had often become acute. The challenges for all professionals during the pandemic were that because of reduced interaction in the community these cases were not identified until a later stage. The impact of hoarding and self-neglect can be significant and risks which are associated with the condition may include:

- Delays in hospital discharge and associated additional costs of 'bed-blocking'.
- Fire hazards.
- Poor physical and mental health.
- The potential for safeguarding concerns to be raised.
- The potential for individuals presenting on multiple occasions to services – the revolving door scenario.

This created ongoing challenges for all agencies working alongside Adult Social Care, which resulted in reaching an agreement to produce a hoarding and self-neglect local procedure and pathway for the residents of Reading Borough Council.

Adult Social Care identified that there were opportunities to apply for a hoarding grant and were successful in securing funding of £58,030 from the Social Impact

Voluntary and Community Grant. The grant which Reading Borough Council have been awarded will be used to develop a multi-agency hoarding and self-neglect procedure and pathway.

Aims of the Project:

- Provide practical and emotional support to people who hoard/self-neglect.
- Research to identify how best to support people with self-neglect or hoarding tendencies in the community and ensure interventions and support meet longer term needs.
- Establish a multi-agency network to provide a joint and joined-up approach
- Establish integrated pathways and a multiagency "panel" with safeguarding leads to support with risk management and interventions.
- Set up a framework in collaboration with participating agencies and using service users views and experiences of service users involved.
- Educate statutory and voluntary agencies on hoarding and self-neglect, raise awareness and impact on wellbeing.

Expected benefits for the target group

- Promoted independence and support for a group of people who often refuse support and are hard to engage.
- Increase access to services to support mental wellbeing, reduce social isolation and stigma.
- Increased access to community and health services
- Prevent crisis and hospital admissions through preventative work
- Enabling people to stay healthy and active in their community and at home

Research aims

To use qualitative research methods to gain an understanding of the service users experience of our service. This will guide future service development for this group.

The funding identified will include:

- Lead Practitioner for 9 months to run the project .
- Specialist training and service development support will be offered from Hoarding UK.
- Development of "Train the Trainer" in order to ensure a consistent high level of expertise in this area of work.
- Workshops to review the existing Hoarding pathways and services with all agencies across Reading.
- Development of a Reading hoarding and self-neglect procedure/pathway for all partner agencies involved in delivering services in Reading.
- Focus groups with service users to understand how Reading Borough Council can support them through the process, what worked well and changes they feel would be beneficial in their journey.

Section 42 provider enquiry template

There was in existence a section 42 provider enquiry template that was primarily being used for GP's to respond to Adult Social Care with information to assist in the section 42 enquiry. A staff survey highlighted that it was not being consistently used across the service and feedback demonstrated the need for clarity regarding the content of the document and which external professionals should be completing the form.

A review of the safeguarding process highlighted the need for consistency of approach to gathering information from providers as part of the section 42 enquiry. The inconsistency of approach resulted in lack of accountability by some providers, difficulties in identifying the feedback by providers in Mosaic with defined outcomes and the learning. Unclear timeframes for the enquiry to be completed which resulted in some drift. All of this resulted in the need to ensure that a coherent and consistent approach to all section 42 enquiries was adopted across all provider organisations.

The decision about how best to approach an enquiry is made by the Local Authority. Under Section 45 of the Care Act, any professional or organisation asked to co-operate in the enquiry has a duty to do so.

Where the approach involves another professional or organisation making enquiries, the Local Authority remains the lead agency, with responsibility for monitoring progress of enquiries made by others and coordinating the safeguarding process.

- The specific enquiries to be made
- Who has been allocated which enquiry?
- The timeframe within which the enquiry must be made

A group of Safeguarding Leads worked together to update the template, and this culminated in the relaunch in November 2020 of the Section 42 enquiry provider template.

A review took place in the Spring of 2021 regarding the implementation and use of the template. Feedback from staff and providers was positive and the template is now consistently used.

Safeguarding Concerns – working alongside partners

An audit of Safeguarding Concerns being sent to the Safeguarding Team was undertaken by the Safeguarding Senior Manager. It identified several themes in respect of the interpretation of Care and Support needs, what constitutes a safeguarding concern and appropriate pathways for individuals who are experiencing a mental health episode. This work sat alongside the launch of the West Berkshire Safeguarding Guidance document which supports professionals in making decisions to refer a safeguarding concern to the appropriate Safeguarding Team.

A programme of work was identified to address these issues with external partners, and this resulted in working alongside Thames Valley Police to address the emerging themes.

Over a 2-day period auditing of TVP safeguarding concerns took place which identified a total of 15 safeguarding concerns that Thames Valley Police had sent to the team which clearly demonstrated that the two agencies needed to work closely together to ensure that the right professionals received the right information at the right time. It was a collaborative approach and has resulted in the development of a Power Point presentation by the police for police officers to enhance their knowledge and skills in respect of adult safeguarding. This will be implemented over the coming months with input from the managers within the Safeguarding Team.

It is the intention of the managers involved with this collaboration to undertake further audits at the end of the year examine what differences there have been with the quality of the safeguarding concern post the workshops, and to continue to support police officers to understand their role in referring a safeguarding concern to Reading Borough Council.

Mental Capacity Act Training

A review of the Mental Capacity Act Training took place, which included the themes that had arisen from Safeguarding Adult Reviews across West Berkshire. In addition, feedback from staff and managers identified the necessity to implement further training to support their professional practice. It was identified as level 2 and level 3 training.

The learning outcomes for level 2 training were as follows:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of capacity and incapacity
- Understand the importance of the key concepts in the context of the relevant safeguards of the mental capacity act
- Understand and apply the key principles of supporting individuals to make decisions
- Understand the requirement for undertaking formal assessments

Level 3 training leads on from level 2 training and is an opportunity for staff to come together and discuss in detail how they have applied the learning from level 2 training by using case studies.

The learning outcomes for level 3 training is as follows:

Demonstrate through case studies the learning from the level 2 training including the following aspects

- Who the Mental Capacity Act concerns?
- The Mental Capacity Act code of practice
- The five core principles of the Mental Capacity Act
- When and how to assess mental capacity
- How to make decisions in a person's best interests
- The importance of keeping good records
- What can be done within the law?
- When and how to use restraint

Mental Capacity Act Champions (MCA)

It was also identified that in order to maintain a good level of knowledge and skills within the service it was helpful to identify staff who would be willing to become MCA champions and and apply the principles of the Mental Capacity Act. Only staff who attended the training would be asked if they would be willing to undertake the role of an MCA champion.

The objective of the MCA champion role is to promote the correct and effective application of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) across Adult Social Care

The intention is that there will be at least one MCA Champion for each team .

MCA champions would be asked to undertake the following:

- Providing a source of basic advice of MCA to colleaugues within Adult Social care

The Champions are not expected to provide legal expertise or to advise on complex matters but would be able to support colleagues in relation to matters such as:

- The general issues relating to MCA
- Promoting awareness of MCA in their team
- How to locate the MCA resources on the intranet
- Discuss in teams meeting any MCA updates
- Support other staff with guidnace on completion of the MCA assessment
- Who to contact for more detailed advice (ie DoLS lead, Legal Services Team.

Safeguarding Consultation document

The safeguarding consultation process and document was launched at the beginning of 2021. The document is completed by a manager within the Safeguarding Team. It is an internal recording tool and has been developed in order to ensure there is consistency in the approach to recording safeguarding consultations with staff across the service. In such situations it is a crucial recording tool which is well structured in order to ensure readability, to allow analysis and the practitioner's overview of the safeguarding concern and to follow the principles of evidence-based content. The safeguarding consultation document is recorded in accordance with the following recording principles:

- Completeness: all information relevant to the consultation and the adult's circumstances is documented.
- Openness: any adult may request access to their file at any time
- Accuracy: all content is accurate - facts are distinguished from opinion

The safeguarding consultation document once completed is placed within the IT system and as a stand-alone document is useful to all practitioners who are involved with the service user and will assist in feedback to referrers and evidence of actions that may need to be taken to support the individual.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews

There have been no Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR's) for Reading Borough Council over the past 12 months.

Adult Social Care have reviewed their internal processes regarding SAR's and have developed robust SAR actions plans which meet internal quality assurance standards. Reading Borough Council existing SAR action plans are continually reviewed through the Adult Social Care Quality Board to ensure continued improvement in any learning.

Safeguarding training plans are reviewed to ensure mandatory training encompasses the priorities of the Safeguarding Adult Board and remain responsive to emerging findings from SARs.

Internal briefings have taken place with all staff regarding the learning from SARs across West Berkshire which not only raise awareness.

Unexpected/Suspicious death process

Significant work has been undertaken across Reading Borough Council to produce procedures and support tools for all staff in implementing a robust approach to Unexpected/Suspicious deaths. It was identified as an area of work that could be challenging with what was lack of clarity regarding what constitutes an Unexpected/Suspicious death. This lack of clarity resulted in limited adherence to the Local Authorities statutory responsibilities within the Safeguarding process to consider transferrable risks. It also highlighted a risk regarding the Local Authorities statutory responsibility regarding the criteria for Adult Safeguarding Reviews which can arise from deaths of this nature. The clarity offered is as follows:

When an adult has died in unexpected/suspicious circumstances the following criteria must be applied:

- There is a suspicion, or it is known, that abuse, or neglect was a contributory factor in their death, and

- The abuse or neglect was caused by a third party.

Several workshops took place with managers to launch the procedures and templates and to facilitate an opportunity to discuss in detail the practical aspects of the process and to allow them time to understand their responsibilities as a manager.

Reading Borough Council have implemented an action log of all Unexpected/Suspicious deaths which is overseen by the Safeguarding Locality Manager. Its function is to capture all the vital information and actions taken. It also highlights emerging themes which are addressed through task and finish groups.

The action log is brought to the Adult Social Care Quality Board to be reviewed and identify any action required.

Adult Social Care Case recording system

Our IT system has an online digital case management system which is easy for practitioners to use and quickly takes you to where you need to be in the person's journey. It simplifies how you record and monitor pathways and aligns your data with data from other services to save time and minimise risks. It has all the workflows and forms you need to adopt proven practices and meet statutory requirements.

An internal review of Reading Borough Council IT system identified the need to update the safeguarding pathway to support the work of all staff who undertake this statutory safeguarding work. The review also incorporated the themes from Safeguarding Adult Reviews specifically linked to working alongside commissioning colleagues and providers. The review included the views of managers and staff not only from Adult Social Care but from colleagues within the Performance Team and identified key areas to be addressed. There have been significant changes made to the safeguarding pathway and this work remains ongoing.