

Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date 5 th April 2011	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No. 9.1
Report of: Acting Joint Service Head Scrutiny and Equalities		Title: Safeguarding Adults at Risk - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group		
Originating Officer(s): Mohammed Ahad Scrutiny Policy Officer		Ward(s) affected: All		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report submits the report and recommendations of the Safeguarding Adults at risk Working Group for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Agree the draft report and the recommendations contained in it.
- 2.2 Authorise the Service Head for Scrutiny and Equalities to amend the draft report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Scrutiny Lead for Safe and Supportive.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972 (AS AMENDED) SECTION 100D

LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Background paper	Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection
None	N/A

3. Background

- 3.1 A Working Group was established in July 2010 to look at how the Council and partners can continue to safeguard adults at risk of abuse considering a period of efficiency savings in the public sector. The safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse has been a priority of the Council for many years. The Council has one of the top Adult Social Services in the country. However, when the review commenced, safeguarding adult's services was rated by the Quality Care Commission as 'serving people adequately'. With this and changes in central government policies, particularly with the introduction of the personalisation agenda, it was thought that this review would be a useful area to explore.
- 3.2 As the safeguarding of adults at risk is wide ranging the working group decided to focus on the 4 key areas of access to services, financial abuse, commissioning and partnership working. The key aims and objectives for the review were:
- To review the borough's current approach to adults at risk;
 - To review and evaluate access to support that was available for adults at risk;
 - To identify potential gaps in partnership working internally between Council departments and also between partners;
 - To consider how the Council commissions care services and how these are monitored
- 3.3 The Working Group undertook various meetings including hearing evidence from the Council Officers, the Metropolitan Police, MIND, Disability Coalition Tower Hamlets and the Independent Chair of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adults Board. The Working also visited the Sonali Gardens day care centre and Toynbee Hall as part of their evidence gathering to greater understand the current work being delivered to safeguard adults.
- 3.4 A number of recommendations have been put forward by the Working Group. It was felt that users needed to be more involved in service planning and should be a part of the Safeguarding Adults Board. It was acknowledged that there was a need to preserve advocacy work in the current period of efficiency savings and in particular, this was coupled with greater training be given to adults at risk on what constitutes abuse so they are aware and know if they are being abused. With a low number of self referrals we have also recommended that an independent point of contact be set up for adults who find it difficult to disclose abuse.
- 3.5 The report with recommendations is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.6 Once agreed, the Working Groups report will be submitted to Cabinet for a response to the recommendations.

4. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

- 4.1 The Council is required by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions. It is consistent with the Constitution and the statutory framework for the Executive to provide a response.
- 4.2 The report makes a number of recommendations in relation to safeguarding adults. The law on adult social care would benefit from reform to: consolidate the many existing statutes; clarify the safeguarding responsibilities of local authorities; establish a duty to make enquiries and take appropriate action in adult protection cases; and place the status of adult safeguarding boards on a statutory footing. That said, there is sufficient existing statutory provision that the recommendations the subject of the report are capable of being carried out within the Council's functions. If the Executive agreed with the recommendations, it would be for officers to ensure the Council's functions are not exceeded.

5. Comments of the Directorate Financial Officer

- 5.1 This report describes the analysis and recommendations of the Safeguarding Adults at risk Working Group.
- 5.2 Recent government announcements about funding reductions to the Council in 2010-11 and for the next four years will affect any recommendations agreed and any additional costs that arise from the recommendations must be contained within directorate revenue budgets. Specifically, recommendation R2 requests additional funding for an advocacy programme and R7 describes additional training for staff. Consequently, officers will be obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made.

6. One Tower Hamlets consideration

- 6.1 Safeguarding adults at risk including those that are seen as vulnerable is a key priority for the Council when reducing inequalities. The Community Plan states that *'Services will ensure everyone, particularly the vulnerable, are protected from risk of harm and enabled to live a full and independent life' and protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm and neglect'*.
- 6.2 The Strategic plan 2010/11 includes the following three priority areas which are all linked to this report and its recommendations:
- Empower older and vulnerable people and support families
 - Further strengthen arrangements across the Council and the Partnership to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, harm and neglect
 - Improve access to preventative services for vulnerable adults, reducing use of institutional care and reliance on care managed services

Specific recommendation from the report relating to One Tower Hamlets include having service user representation on the Safeguarding Adults Board and undertaking a mapping analysis to explore if the Council is meeting the needs of hard to reach communities, in particular BME groups and people with mental health and/or physical or learning disabilities.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the Working Group's report or recommendations.