

**REPORT OF THE HEALTH & ADULTS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**SAFEGUARDING ADULTS IN BIRMINGHAM: ROLE OF COUNCILLORS
AND THE CARE QUALITY COMMISSION**

1. BIRMINGHAM CONTEXT

- 1.1 Birmingham City Council has the statutory lead for safeguarding adults who are vulnerable to abuse within its area but adult safeguarding should be of concern to the whole community. Councils are charged with the lead role in the development, implementation and co-ordination of multi-agency policies, procedures and protocols to ensure that people thought to be at risk of abuse are helped to stay safe and are treated with dignity and respect. However the delivery of safeguarding is a multi-agency responsibility across key agencies including Social Care, Health and the Police.
- 1.2 The governance of this shared responsibility lies with the Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) which has been in operation since 2007 to ensure that all partner agencies work together to safeguard vulnerable people.
- 1.3 As the lead agency for safeguarding, Birmingham City Council Adults and Communities is performance managed by the Care Quality Commission.

2. SAFEGUARDING VISION FOR BIRMINGHAM

- 2.1 BSAB which includes Birmingham City Council and 12 other bodies, has a Safeguarding Vision for Birmingham: *'To promote and protect individual human rights, independence and wellbeing and secure assurance that the person thought to be at risk stays safe, are effectively safeguarded against abuse, neglect, discrimination, embarrassment or poor treatment, are treated with dignity and respect and enjoy a high quality of life.'*
- 2.2 It is supported in its work by a number of sub-groups focussing eg. on developing communication materials, training programmes and guidance for anyone who works with or cares for someone who might be vulnerable to abuse.

3. PROMOTING AWARENESS

- 3.1 Over several years a key aspect of the local safeguarding adults' strategy has been to promote awareness amongst staff and the public to be vigilant to identifying and reporting abuse when it occurs. All initial referrals are taken within the local social work teams and where immediate or serious risks are reported these are treated as urgent and immediate steps are taken to protect individuals.

- 3.2 On 12th September 2011 the BSAB launched a publicity campaign which will last for 8 weeks, calling on members of the public to be the 'Eyes and Ears' of people in Birmingham who may be suffering from some form of adult abuse. The aim of the campaign material is to make people who either see or hear about suspected adult abuse taking place to actually report it.
- 3.3 A new Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board website which is separate from the City Council website was launched in August 2011: www.bsab.org and contains the full range of contact numbers for people to report a safeguarding alert.
- 3.4 Data is kept on the safeguarding work undertaken with vulnerable people in Birmingham. The following table shows the numbers of adult safeguarding cases processed during each of the last two years, split by category of service user. These may only represent a fraction of all the abuse that occurs in Birmingham, because we cannot know how many cases of abuse remain undetected.

	<u>2009/10</u>		<u>2010/11</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%
Older Adults	1106	47%	1304	51%
Learning Disabilities	777	33%	678	27%
Physical Disabilities	129	5%	269	11%
Mental Health	329	14%	254	10%
Vulnerable Adults	16	1%	30	1%
Substance Misuse	6	0%	10	0%
Overall Total	2363		2545	

- 3.5 It is important that elected members understand what constitutes abuse, who might be vulnerable to it and what the role of members should be in both preventing abuse and in protecting people where abuse is suspected or known.
- 3.6 Abuse is a violation of an individual's human rights by any other person or persons. It may be a single act or repeated acts. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm or exploitation of the person subject to it.
- 3.7 In Birmingham we define a vulnerable adult as a person who:
- is 18 or over;
 - is or may be in need of community care services because of frailty, learning or physical or sensory disabilities or mental health issues;
 - is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or take steps to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.

3.8 Abuse can be broadly categorised under the following headings:

- Physical eg. hitting, pushing, scalding, pinching, kicking, misuse of medicines, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- Sexual eg. rape and sexual assault, sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or could not consent to, or was pressured into consenting to.
- Emotional eg. threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, bullying, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or being prevented/withdrawn from receiving services or supportive networks.
- Financial eg. theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect and Acts of Omission eg. not meeting appropriate medical or physical care needs or withholding the necessities of life such as food, heating and medicines which causes the person to suffer.
- Discriminatory eg. any abuse or harassment because of a person's race, gender, sexuality, disability or age.
- Institutional eg. abuse as a result of persistently poor care or a rigid and oppressive regime in a care setting.

4. ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

4.1 Councillors are in a good position to become aware of abuse: you may see signs of it when in your ward, hear about it in your advice surgeries, or be told about it at any time by individual electors. Each Councillor has a responsibility to become and remain aware of the signs of abuse, to find out how to report it and to take responsibility for raising concerns as soon as they arise.

4.1 **If you become aware of probable or actual abuse of an individual adult, you should ring and notify the appropriate Adults and Communities Directorate social work team.** Their contact details are:

Older Adults	303 1234
Learning Disabilities	303 2202
Physical Disabilities	303 3335
Visual Impairment	464 9455
Mental Health South Birmingham	678 2830
Mental Health East & North Birmingham	685 7832
Mental Health Heart of Birmingham	685 7628
Emergency Duty Team	675 4806
(out of hours only, for matters too urgent to wait until the next working day)	
West Midlands Police (non-emergency)	0345 113 5000
(if you think a crime has been committed)	

5. ROLE OF THE CARE QUALITY COMMISSION

- 5.1 The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is responsible for regulating all health and social care providers for adults in England. Regulation aims at preventing abuse of service users and ensuring that the quality of care is good.
- 5.2 However, it is important that we all play our part. In carrying out their role in ensuring that services meet essential standards of quality and safety and that people's dignity and rights are respected, the CQC rely on working with and gathering information and knowledge from many sources. Anyone who might see or become aware of safeguarding issues relating to a specific site or provider organisation should tell the CQC as soon as possible as well as raising their concern with the appropriate social work team so that actions can be taken to investigate and improve the quality of care for vulnerable adults.
- 5.3 **If you become aware of probable or actual abuse in a health or care site by a health or care provider organisation, which might affect more than one adult service user now or in the future, you should notify the Care Quality Commission.** Ring 03000 616161 or e-mail enquiries@cqc.org.uk or enter details on their website at www.cqc.org.uk.
- 5.4 Today the CQC has a stall with leaflets and further information set up in the Names Room. There is also a stall giving information on the current 'Eyes and Ears' campaign and how to report it. So if you would like to find out more please visit the stalls and talk with the staff members running them.

MOTION

That the City Council, recognising the important role of the Adults and Communities Directorate and the Care Quality Commission in preventing abuse of service users in Birmingham, calls on all Members to be vigilant in identifying and reporting potential or suspected abuse of vulnerable adults.