

**Report To:** Partnership Scrutiny Committee  
**Date of Meeting:** 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
**Lead Member / Officer:** Bobby Feeley / Alaw Pierce  
**Report Author:** Nerys Tompsett  
**Title:** Annual Report on Adult Protection in Denbighshire 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

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### **1. What is the report about?**

The annual performance around Adult Protection in compliance with Statutory Guidance.

### **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide information to enable Members to review progress in this key area of work over the last twelve months and to ensure that adult protection policy requirements are part of the organisation's overall approach to service provision and development.

### **3. What are the Recommendations ?**

That Members

- i) consider and comment on the report; and
- ii) acknowledge the important nature of a corporate approach to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults, the responsibility of the Council to view this as a key priority area, and recognise this alongside the commitment and significance given by Denbighshire to Child Protection.

### **4. Report details**

#### **4.1 Background**

- The key policy document in Adult Protection for Denbighshire is the Wales Interim Policy and Procedure for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults which is based on the guidance issued by Welsh Government – 'In Safe Hands'. The North Wales Forum monitors ongoing developments to ensure they are incorporated into current practice.
- In 'Safe Hands' states local authorities have the responsibility for taking the lead role. This does not diminish the role of partner agencies who will still continue to have their respective responsibilities to respond to suspicions, allegations or incidents of abuse as described in these procedures. Partnership working is essential for the protection of vulnerable adults.

- A vulnerable adult is defined in 'In Safe Hands' as a person over 18 years of age who 'is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation'. Abuse is defined as a 'violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'.

#### 4.2 Adult Protection Activity 2010 – 2011

The attached appendices show some of the key data for protection of vulnerable adult work within Denbighshire this year. Please note that whilst we had 244 referrals, many cases are ongoing so data collection is incomplete for those cases.

**Appendix 1** shows the highest group affected by abuse were older people but this should be seen in context that they are the largest group who are in need of services; this figure is very similar to last year. All Wales data from 2010-2011 also show that older women are the most common victims of alleged abuse, which is true in Denbighshire. There is a slight rise in referrals relating to older people with a mental illness (EMI) making them comparable to our referrals for people with a Learning Disability. Perhaps a rationale for this increase could be attributed to an increase to joint training between provider agency staff and social services enabling better recognition towards identifying categories of abuse. However I think we have to also recognise that more people are living longer these days, hence the chances of people developing dementia is increasing.

**Appendix 2** indicates the types of abuse people are experiencing, bearing in mind that often people will experience more than one type of abuse at a time. All Wales data show that physical abuse is the most common form of abuse followed by neglect; here within Denbighshire neglect and physical abuse appear to be equally the highest categories of abuse. We have noticed marked increases in neglect cases from last year's data. There does not appear to be any clear explanation for this.

**Appendix 3** shows where the abuse has occurred. In Wales the majority of abuse occurs in the vulnerable adult's own home. This year in Denbighshire we have shown a slight drop from 39% to 35% of alleged abuse occurring in people's own homes. There is also a decrease in alleged abuse happening in residential homes from 29% last year to 21% in 2011 – 2012 but a rise of 6% within nursing home settings..

**Appendix 4** shows who the people are that are allegedly responsible for abuse. 42 % of allegations concerns independent sector staff, 32% are family and friends.

**Appendix 5** indicates that 27% of cases were admitted or proved; a rise on the previous year's 12%. The number of cases disproved showed a decrease from 19% in the previous year to 15% during this period. Where cases were admitted or proved it enabled positive action to be taken, for example dismissal of a staff member or prosecution. Disproved is also a positive outcome, as we know the vulnerable adult is not at risk. 25 % of cases were inconclusive because there was a lack of sufficient evidence as per the previous year. Actions take place then to protect the vulnerable adult where it is possible. There are some cases which are still ongoing with

protective measures being put into place to ensure the vulnerable adult is protected with their involvement and agreement.

**Appendix 6** shows the outcome for the alleged victim. In over 87.35 % of cases the risks were removed or reduced, as demonstrated in the Performance Indicator. For 23% of referrals no abuse was found an 8% reduction on previous year, which demonstrates perhaps a better understanding of the criteria of abuse, but also providing positive opportunities in these cases by means of recommendations for good practice. In other cases Adult Protection plans were put in place, involving extra services or increased monitoring. In only 4 cases did the alleged victim refused any action usually as result of family dynamics for example a son with drug or alcohol problems who is verbally and/or aggressive to his mother.

**Appendix 7** shows that 11% staff were dismissed or resigned. 4%of perpetrators faced prosecution or received a police caution; this low figure is consistent with all Wales data. 5 informal carers were provided with extra help to try and reduce the stress in the caring situation, which may have led to the allegation. In 30% of cases no abuse was proved, so no action was required. In 20% of cases no action was taken against the alleged abuser, reflecting the difficulties where abuse cannot be proven, particularly when it is a family member. Again this outcome is consistent with all Wales data. However in cases where risks exist, action will have been taken to reduce the risks if the vulnerable adult agrees.

**Case studies** – please additional Appendices

#### 4.3 Training

Denbighshire continues to provide adult protection training to in house staff and all external agencies. Corporate training combining Adult and Child Protection Awareness aimed at those who may have contact with vulnerable children or adults periodically is also on offer.

#### 4.4 Performance Indicators

Every year local authorities provide Welsh Government with statistics for Adult Protection, which are used to produce performance indicators (PI). For 2011 – 2012 the indicator which demonstrates the risk to adults at risk has been removed or reduced was achieved in 87.35 % of cases. This is also an important PI for Denbighshire, as it is one of the overall PI targets selected to show how good Denbighshire is as a whole.

#### 4.5 Developments

- Consultation on the Social Services (Wales) Bill was issued by Welsh Government in March 2012. The outcome of the consultation on this new Bill is expected early 2013. It is envisaged it will provide greater statutory responsibility on all agencies in the working towards the protection of vulnerable adults in Wales. It is anticipated that this bill will work towards placing Adult protection on a more comparable footing to child protection.

- We were exploring the possibility of a joint Adult Protection Committee with Conwy but this has been put on hold pending the outcome of the Social Services Bill consultation.
- A Serious Case Review was carried out in relation to the case of an elderly woman murdered by her husband. The overview report has been completed and a multi-agency action plan is being developed for sign off at the Adult Protection Committee.
- A task and finish group is currently considering options to recommend a model for the future management of adult safeguarding within Denbighshire.

#### 4.6 POVA Action Plan

Denbighshire Adult Protection Committee have developed an Action Plan (please see Appendices).

#### **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The POVA service contributes to the work in relation to the Council's corporate priority to respond to demographic change and their objective to ensure that older people and people with a learning disability are able to live independently for longer. Ensuring that individuals feel safe and protected within their communities contributes to their overall quality of life.

#### **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The service is already featured within existing budgets.

#### **7. What consultations have been carried out?**

Not applicable

#### **8. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

#### **9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

There is a risk that high profile cases can lead to an increase in referrals which would pose a challenge to the POVA team in terms of their capacity to deal with the work in its present structure. This is kept continually under review and the work of the Task & Finish Group will assist in managing future demands.

#### **10. Power to make the Decision**

This report is for information only.