Report To:	**Partnerships Scrutiny Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**18 July 2013**
Lead Member/Officer:	**Lead Member for Social Care, Adults and Children's Services/ Head of Adults and Business Services**
Report Authors:	**Service Manager: Specialist Services and Service Manager: Business & Carers**
Title:	**Social Care Matters**

---

1. What is the report about?

This report provides updates for Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on:

1.1 Proposed provisions contained in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill regarding safeguarding and the protection of vulnerable adults.

1.2 Quality Assurance Systems in relation to the provision of Domiciliary Care and Elected Member visits to in-house services.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

Members asked for an update on these areas of work at Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in March 2013.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members consider the report and:

3.1 Recommend that Cabinet agree to change the current arrangements for adult safeguarding, in line with each partner across North Wales, to the preferred option of a Two-tiered North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board. The options appraisal is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Comment on the Quality Assurance Systems that are in place for care services.

4. Report details

<u>Safeguarding</u>

4.1 The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Bill places a requirement upon partners to develop the current adult protection arrangements into an adult safeguarding agenda both locally, regionally and nationally. Currently across North Wales there is a network arrangement for sharing information and peer support and the emerging view is that there is a need to move the adult safeguarding agenda into a robust regional framework.

4.2 Locally, Denbighshire has an Adult Protection Committee which is made up of the local authority, police, health groups, 3rd and independent sectors. They work together to challenge and combat abuse and promote the rights of vulnerable adults. They have a quality monitoring function and regularly review practice and procedure, including

feedback from reports (e.g. Serious Care Reviews), in order to improve services and outcomes for individuals.

4.3 Part 7 of the Bill relating to safeguarding clearly states the requirements for Safeguarding Adult Boards to be developed and sets out the objectives as follows:

a) To protect adults within its areas who:
   - Have needs for care and support (whether or not a local authority is meeting any of those needs), and
   - Are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and

b) To prevent those adults within its area from becoming at risk of abuse and neglect.

4.4 Statutory regulation on Adult Safeguarding Boards will set out the areas in Wales for safeguarding boards (to be referred to as safeguarding board areas). Discussions during consultation has led to the understanding that North Wales will remain one region.

4.5 Preferred Option

Four options have been considered as a model for North Wales and the preferred option is Option 4 – a two tier North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board. This option enables the North Wales Local Authorities to work together in pairs to develop three Adult Safeguarding Boards using the learning from the current Gwynedd and Ynys Mon model. The proposal is for Denbighshire to work with Conwy. However, there are elements of adult safeguarding that could conceivably be carried out on a regional basis, for example training, performance and audit, policy and serious case reviews.

This structure would provide a balance between regional working and being able to work effectively across boundaries whilst continuing to maintain local links.

4.5.1 Weaknesses

- Potential confusion over accountability between regional and sub-regional
- Securing representation at the right level for both regional and sub-regional elements
- Requires strong leadership at each level
- Potential impact on the capacity of senior managers of all agencies – having to attend more meetings than previous

4.5.2 Strengths

- Model is being piloted in children's services and the learning is transferrable
- Duplication is lessened
- Allows for innovation
- Offers the potential to reduce demand on resources – people and financial
- Gwynedd and Ynys Mon have already started on the journey of establishing a joint board and the learning from this is available

4.6 This two-tiered option is favoured as:

- This model allows for structures to be developed in ways which strike an acceptable and well-managed balance between local and regional agendas
- Maintains the ability to be responsive to local issues and practice

- Regional adult safeguarding elements could create a higher profile and increase the North Wales Board's influence regionally and nationally
- This model would be more manageable for the pan-North Wales organisations
- It strengthens the collaborative agenda in North Wales
- Having the same model for adults and children safeguarding boards will bring about equity for both adult and children safeguarding
- Over time, this model could bring the opportunity to merge some common areas of safeguarding practice across children and adult services
- This model can also bring an opportunity for integrated business support to underpin children and adult safeguarding across North Wales.
- Most importantly, this model enables efficiencies to be developed at the same time as improving outcomes for vulnerable adults through an increased capacity to share learning and innovation as well as ensuring a common standard of response for citizens across North Wales.

Domiciliary Care Monitoring

4.7 As Members will recall from the report on monitoring independent care services in January, there are a number of ways that the Council monitors the quality of domiciliary care services. These include feedback from social work teams' reviewing activity, contract visits to providers, feedback from service users and carers, and feedback from CSSIW and 3rd Sector Organisations who work with individuals and carers. The development of a regional contract and Approved Provider List has supported this work.

4.8 Regionally, work is taking place to develop a monitoring framework which can be used by each Local Authority. In the meantime, Denbighshire has developed its own process which is broadly in line with the Regional work (see Appendix 2 for details of this process). The framework has been developed to respond to the requirement for Denbighshire County Council to ensure that services meet the identified outcomes of service users, ensure compliance with the National Minimum Standards and the North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement and specifications. The monitoring framework also aims to recognise good practice and ensure risk and performance is managed appropriately in partnership with Providers and commissioners, who all share the same values by being committed to achieve the best possible quality and value from service provision.

4.9 To test the process, this framework has been used for one trial monitoring event. A questionnaire has been left and some will be posted to care workers. Questionnaires will also be sent to some service users and carers whilst others will be asked the questions over the telephone. During this conversation, if any concerns are raised, spot checks will be offered and arranged as appropriate. This first trial event has been carried out with a large provider that has historically been in the forefront of new and improved ways of working. Working with them has been useful to test, develop and amend the process. This particular provider, for instance, carries out its own spot checks, in agreement with the service user, to ensure that care is provided on time and appropriately.

4.10 The next step is to roll this process out to all domiciliary providers. In preparation, self-assessment questionnaires have been sent out to approximately 20 providers and, while the responses so far received have not given rise to any areas of concern, we are not relying on this information alone. CSSIW reports have been checked alongside these self-assessments as have the feedback forms completed by staff who carry out

the care reviews. All of this information will be used to inform the contract monitoring response.

4.11 No annual monitoring event is sufficient to ensure quality services. It is essential that on-going and continuous monitoring takes place. In Denbighshire, this on-going work is carried out by the Community Care Officers (CCO) who are carrying out the care reviews. They complete feedback forms to inform the Contracts Team both of good and bad practice. During the next few months, the CCO team will join with the Contracts Team to further improve the communication and joint working and to drive up quality.

4.12 Concerns have been raised about the possibility of carers feeling unable to complain. This could be about both the quality of services provided to the person they care for and the level of services provided and whether those meet their own needs. It has been decided to enhance the role of the Carer's Assessors, increasing the work commissioned with NEWCIS to allow for more on-going work with Carers. With permission from the Carer and from the Service User, this role will also be able to undertake spot checks where appropriate to monitor quality of service delivery.

4.13 The issue of using spot-checks more widely than in 4.11 above has been carefully considered and the view of the Department, based on a number of ethical and practical considerations, including research of how Flintshire have managed their process, as well as feedback from elected Members and 3rd Sector Organisations on the level of concern, is that this is not an option that we should take forward at this time. However, if the work undertaken by NEWCIS shows that there is widespread concern on quality, this issue will be reconsidered.

Member Visits

4.14 Between January 2013 and April 2013 the In House Provider visits report was reviewed and modified to meet the requirements of In House establishments and Community Living schemes. The first visit under this new approach has now taken place to a Community Living Scheme. The positive feedback reported that residents were treated with dignity and respect, living in a safe and secure environment, with a high standard of furnishings and fitting within the home.

4.15 Three further visits have been arranged for July. The remainder of the visits will be arranged for September onwards through discussions with the relevant Elected Members.

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

Both of these areas of work directly contribute to the corporate priority to protect vulnerable people and enable them to remain living independently.

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

6.1 Safeguarding

This model will initially be developed using existing regional capacity. A bid has been made to the Regional Collaboration Fund which includes a project management post to support this development. If successful, this funding will be available for 3 years however, the preferred model does provide the opportunity to merge some common areas of safeguarding practice across children and adult which has the potential to lead

to an integrated business support function to underpin adult and children safeguarding across North Wales.

6.2 Domiciliary Care Monitoring

The process is being implemented using existing staffing resources and by combining the Contracts and Review Team. The Denbighshire Contracts Team is extremely small in number and it is possible that the current staffing levels will be insufficient to deliver the quality of monitoring that is required. This will be reviewed after the changes have been fully implemented and the monitoring evaluated.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

The EqIA (attached at Appendix 3) for the Safeguarding Board concluded that there would by a positive impact through standardising practice across North Wales, raising the profile of adult safeguarding and providing robust governance under which the Board will conduct its business.

8. What consultations have been carried out?

8.1 Safeguarding

Involvement of senior Social Care officers and other North Wales Organisations, e.g. Police, BCU, in agreeing preferred option.

8.2 Domiciliary Care Monitoring

Domiciliary Care Providers have been involved in the development of the process. It has been informed by Regional work that includes the six Local Authorities and Health colleagues. Combining the Contracts and Review Team has been the subject of consultation with all Operational Teams within Adult Services.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

If the regional funding bid succeeds, the cost of implementing the proposed safeguarding arrangements should be contained within the funding available. If the bid is unsuccessful the business case should be reviewed to assess whether there is merit in developing the project using existing resources. The position with regard to potential efficiencies should be reviewed as the project develops. Proposals to develop the contract monitoring function are noted. Capacity may be created within the monitoring function in future if national and regional procurement projects develop successfully and include social care contracts within their remit.

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

The arrangements outlined in this report regarding quality assurance systems for care services are designed to mitigate against the risks that care and support provided to people who use services and their carers are not of high quality.

10. Power to make the Decision

Arrangements for managing the protection of vulnerable adults are set out in In Safe Hands (2000), a guidance document from Welsh Government. This places duties on Local Authorities and relevant partners to investigate and monitor adult protection issues.

Article 6.3.4(b) of the Council's Constitution stipulates scrutiny's role with respect to the performance of Council Services, whilst Article 6.3.4(ch) states that scrutiny may make recommendations to Cabinet arising out of the outcomes of the scrutiny process.

Contact Officers:

Service Manager: Specialist Services	Tel: 01824 706636
Service Manager: Business & Carers	Tel: 01824 706556