

Decisions of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 September 2013

Members Present:-

Councillor Bridget Perry (Chairman)
Councillor Kate Salinger (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alison Cornelius	Councillor Kath McGuirk
Councillor Barry Evangeli	Councillor Brian Salinger
Councillor Brian Gordon	Councillor Agnes Slocombe
Councillor Anne Hutton	Councillor Zakia Zubairi

Also in attendance

Councillor Sachin Rajput - Cabinet Member for Adults
Councillor Reuben Thompstone - Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that:-

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

There were none.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (IF ANY)

There were none.

5. MEMBERS' ITEMS (SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 9) (IF ANY)

There were none.

6. HEALTHWATCH BARNET: ENTER AND VIEW REPORTS

Julie Pal, the Chief Executive of CommUnity Barnet, and Lisa Robbins, HealthWatch Volunteer and Projects Officer presented a report that provided an analysis of the Enter and View reports conducted by CommUnity Barnet since the creation of HealthWatch in April 2012. The report also contained two full Enter and View reports that had been undertaken by volunteers at Kenwood Care Home and Meadowside, both in Finchley.

Ms. Pal drew the Committee's attention to the analysis of the types of recommendations that had been made following Enter and View visits, and advised the Committee that the recommendations made within the reports often focussed around the issues of provision of hand gel, activities and physical access to the establishment. The Committee were also advised that it had been reported that some elderly people who had visited various care homes had reported difficulty in paying for parking with mobile phones. Ms. Pal also noted that an issue that was outside the control of care providers but was often raised was the difficulty that could be faced in getting dentists to visit care homes for small numbers of patients.

Responding to a question from a Member, Ms. Robbins advised the Committee that HealthWatch decides where to conduct Enter and View visits based upon information provided to them from local services such as the Care Quality Commission, AgeUK, and Advocacy in Barnet who believe that an Enter and View visit would be of benefit to that location.

A Member asked how the split between announced and un-announced Enter and View visits was conducted. Ms. Robbins advised the Committee that the majority of visits were announced, and that when conducting an announced visit, HealthWatch would contact the provider being visited and ask them to display a flyer announcing the visit, to increase the number of patient relatives that the volunteers could speak to. Ms. Robbins advised the Committee that a combination of both announced and un-announced visits would be best.

A Member noted that Barnet was a very diverse Borough, and commented on the importance of Care Homes catering for requirements around food, faith and activities.

Members expressed their thanks to the volunteers who conduct Enter and View visits and draft reports.

Referring to the analysis undertaken within the report, Ms. Pal advised the Committee that one issue that had been raised was staff's proficiency with the English language, and noted that language barriers could make it difficult for a resident to explain their needs.

A Member referred to the Fire Drills within the report, and questioned the extent to which residential settings are able to manage a fire drill adequately. Ms. Pal advised the Committee that volunteers would be asked to ensure that fire drills and escape routes are highlighted within reports.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) The Committee note the analysis of the Enter and View reports and note the two most recent Enter and View visit reports;**

- 2) **The Committee note that some visitors have struggled with parking issues when trying to visit relatives and ask that the Cabinet Member for Environment takes this into account with a view to ameliorating the problem.**

7. BARNET MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13 AND SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY 2013-15

The Cabinet Member for Adults presented a report that documented the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board 2012-13 and presented the strategy and work programme for 2013-15.

In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Adults noted that the Safeguarding Adults Board had been strengthened by having the Clinical Commissioning Group and Barnet HealthWatch serving on it, and noted that 85% of people interviewed had said that they felt safe from continuing harm and abuse.

The Cabinet Member for Adults advised the Committee that the Safeguarding Adults was the subject of a Peer Review in March 2013, and that Barnet was the only Borough in London to choose Safeguarding as the topic for Peer Review.

A Member referred to the agencies that are Members of the Safeguarding Adults Board, and questioned if the Board was supported by people from such agencies at an appropriate level. The Cabinet Member advised that they were well supported. A Member questioned if the agencies with Membership of the board contributed to the Board. The Cabinet Member for Adults informed the Committee that those agencies did contribute to some of the costs.

A Member noted the importance of working closely with the Children's Safeguarding Board, and asked questions about how the transitional change would be managed by the boards as they crossed from the remit of the Children's Safeguarding Board to the Adults Safeguarding Board. Karen Jackson, the Adult Social Care Assistant Director advised the Committee that preparation was taken prior to a child reaching 18 to ensure that the transition was seamless.

A Member questioned what approach was taken when a person needed help but did not want to engage with authorities. Ms. Jackson advised the Committee that the Authority would try to signpost those in need but who didn't want to engage with statutory services ensuring that they had capacity to make that decision.

A Member commented on the cultural diversity of the Borough, and advised that the cultural background of a person could stop them from seeking help.

Referring to the statistics within the report identifying the people who caused harm to adults in need of Safeguarding, the Committee raised concern that paid carers were the largest group at 40% that caused harm. The Committee noted that whilst the report identified the majority of paid workers referred to as working in the care home sector, not all paid carers are trained. Members commented that any kind of harm being caused to those being cared for was unacceptable.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) The Committee note the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2012-13;**
- 2) The Committee notes the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy and Work Programme 2013-15;**
- 3) The Committee endorse the continued improvement of multi-agency approaches to safeguarding Barnet residents with the involvement from the Council, NHS Barnet Health Trusts, the Police voluntary sector, service user forums, and faith and community groups.**

8. TACKLING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE & GROOMING

The Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families presented a report that set out the actions that the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board is undertaking to tackle childhood sexual abuse within the Borough. The report also outlined the details of a Task and Finish Group that had been convened by The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board to review the prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation with the Borough. In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families advised the Committee that it could be difficult to find out information about the perpetrators of such abuse as they could be multiple and entirely unknown to the victim.

A Member noted the number of high profile cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation within the media, and questioned whether the number was increasing, or awareness of the issue was increasing. Ann Graham, the Children's Social Care Assistant Director advised that it appeared that awareness was increasing in this area and that a report by the Children's Commissioner suggested that the issue was more prevalent today.

A Member noted that a disproportionate number of people who were victims of child sexual exploitation were disaffected young people, and questioned what more the Council could do to protect the people to whom it was corporate parents to. The Children's Social Care Assistant Director advised the Committee that the children in care are seen alone by their social workers and individual action is taken to address their concerns. The children's social care service works closely with the police where there are concerns regarding harm to a child. All care plans for children in care are closely monitored and reviewed regularly.

Nicola Francis, the Family Services Director, advised the Committee that a benefit of the Task and Finish Group involving the Police means that work would be evidence based, and noted the Police interest as having driven intelligence.

Members of the Committee advised that it would be beneficial for the Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board to have representatives working on the Task and Finish Group from the Corporate Parent Advisory Panel, those who had a background of abuse, and School Governors. The Children's Social Care Assistant Director advised the Committee that she would pass on this request to the Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Committee note the contents of the report;**
- 2) The Committee request to receive an item at a future meeting that reviews the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub;**
- 3) The Committee ask that the Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board consider ways to involve the following groups in the Task and Finish Group that will review the prevalence of sexual exploitation within the Borough: people who have a background of abuse, Members of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel, and School Governors.**
- 4) The Committee request the Task and Finish Group to report back to a future meeting of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

9. WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN

The Children's Social Care Assistant Director introduced a report that detailed revised guidance to the "Working Together to Safeguard Children" guidance that was issued by the Department for Education. Mrs. Graham advised the Committee that the update guidance could be split into four main categories, which were: Assessments, Partnership Working, Local Children's Safeguarding Boards, and Serious Case Reviews.

Mrs. Graham advised the Committee that the Assessments part of the guidance was focused around tightening up the approach, such as through inter-agency early help assessments such as the Common Assessment Framework.

RESOLVED that:-

The Committee note the statutory guidance contained within the revised national guidance of "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2013 and note the actions taken by Barnet to adhere to this guidance.

10. ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Advanced Notice of Executive Decisions.

Members expressed dissatisfaction that the "Safeguarding in Barnet" report scheduled to go to the Cabinet on 24 September 2013 had not come to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee for pre-decision scrutiny. Following discussion, the Committee advised that they would like to receive the report following Cabinet on 24 September 2013 in order to conduct post-decision scrutiny.

A Member commented that the Advanced Notification of "Amendments to Housing Allocations Scheme and the introduction of a placements Policy" could have Safeguarding issues. The Committee noted that this item had been called-in to a special meeting of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 September 2013.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) The Committee request to receive a copy of the "Safeguarding in Barnet" report scheduled to go to the Cabinet on 24 September 2013 for post decision scrutiny at a future meeting;**

2) The Committee note the Advanced Notice of Executive Decisions.

11. SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme as set out in the report.

The Committee considered the list of items to be allocated within the Forward Work Programme and gave instruction as to when they should be received.

RESOLVED that:-

The Committee note the Forward Work Programme.

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

13. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

14. MEMBER VISITS

RESOLVED that:-

The Committee note the exempt information.

15. ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm