

## Vulnerable Groups

### Adult Safeguarding

Revised: 2014

#### Introduction

Every day across the UK some 'adults at risk' will experience some kind of abuse, ill treatment or neglect. The process of helping those adults to keep themselves safe or putting in place plans to help protect people who cannot protect themselves, is called 'adult safeguarding'. This is a shared responsibility for a number of statutory agencies including the council.

An adult at risk is someone over the age of 18 who needs care or support to help them live an independent life.

West Berkshire Council is an active and influential member of the West of Berkshire [Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board \(SAPB\)](#); a multi-agency management committee established to co-ordinate and oversee 'safeguarding adults' work across West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham.

West Berkshire Council is the lead agency for adult safeguarding work across the Council district. The council works with statutory, private and voluntary sector organisations to promote awareness of the safeguarding agenda and review the multi-agency Adult Safeguarding policy and good practice manual.

Adult abuse can happen anywhere at any time; it can happen to people in their own home, or in a care setting or hospital. Whilst anyone can be a potential abuser, it is more often the case that it is someone who is known to the adult at risk.

Abuse can take many forms:

- **Physical Abuse:** examples of this are being hit or injured on purpose, restraining someone inappropriately.
- **Emotional Abuse:** such as, intimidation, threats, humiliation, extortion, racial, verbal or psychological abuse
- **Sexual Abuse:** i.e. involvement in a sexual activity which is unwanted or not understood, unwanted sexual attention.
- **Neglect:** examples of this are, not providing food, clothing, attention or care. Withholding of aids or equipment (continence, walking, hearing, glasses), putting someone at risk of infection, failure to provide access to appropriate health or social care.
- **Financial Abuse:** such as, the theft or misuse of money, property or personal possessions. Pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.

- **Discriminatory Abuse:** i.e. treating people differently or worse than you would want to be treated because they are older, more frail, confused or otherwise vulnerable.

## What do we know?

### **West Berkshire performance in 2012/2013 (based on AVA statutory reporting)**

Currently there are no national performance targets for Safeguarding Adults however there is a national data set which has undergone some revision for 13/14 in line with a whole scale change to the reporting requirements for Adult Social Care due to come into effect in April 2014.

Data comes from the [provisional statutory AVA \(Abuse of Vulnerable Adults\) return for 2012/13](#) and Safeguarding AVA Comparator Report 2012/13 released in September. There are 16 LAs in the comparator group including ourselves.

### **Volume of Episodes for Safeguarding Adults**

The number of alerts per 100,000 population aged 18 and over was 529 and this is above the average rate for England and our comparator group (approximately 450 per 100,000 population). A comparatively high number of alerts may indicate good awareness of safeguarding procedures within the community.

The volume of alert, referrals and completed cases continues to increase. Overall, alert/referral/completed referral episodes increased by 67% (1008 episodes this year compared to 605 in 2011/12). High numbers of alerts indicate good awareness of safeguarding procedures within the community and increased vigilance across agencies, external providers and the public to report abuse.

### **Repeat Referrals**

Referrals are classed as repeat referrals when they involve a separate incident about the same vulnerable adult during the same reporting period.

Our repeat referral rate of 9.9% is below that of our comparator group (14.5%) and the England average (17.5%) indicating safeguarding measures put in place are appropriate. A high rate may indicate that safeguarding measures previously put in place are not working, so a local target of 10% or below was set for 2012/13 and this was achieved.

### **Referrals from Individuals Not Known to WBC**

There continues to be an improvement in the number of individuals referred to Safeguarding that were not known to WBC Adult Social Care at the time of the referral (22% this year compared to 20% in the previous year).

### **Referrals by Referrers/Source of Referral (who reported the alleged abuse)**

The number reported by self, family, friends and neighbours has increased this year (27% compared to 25% last year). This is the highest in our comparator group (12.4%) and far higher than the England average (11%). This indicates good awareness of safeguarding procedures within the community.

24% of referrals were referred by Health staff and 10% from Police/Housing, an improvement on last year which indicates good partnership working between these organisations and West Berkshire.

### **Referrals by Alleged Abuse Type and Multiple Abuse**

Referrals reporting alleged institutional abuse and psychological abuse have increased.

### **Acceptance of Protection Plans**

2 % of protection plans were declined which is the lowest in our comparator group and indicates that appropriate plans are being offered and the vulnerable adult is being effectively engaged in the safeguarding process.

### **Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework.**

Two measures relevant to safeguarding are included in the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework. These are both recorded from the Adult Social Care annual Survey and are provided as a percentage of total respondents to the survey. They ask whether the service user feels safe and whether the services received help to make the service user feel safe and secure.

In the 2012 /13 survey, just over 58% of Service Users in West Berkshire feel safe, which is a lower proportion compared to national averages, although an increase locally from 2011 / 12. *However it is acknowledged that that the outcome questions within the survey often relate to much more than what social care contributes and is influenced by wider community and environmental factors.*

Approximately 84% of Service Users in West Berkshire feel that the services they receive help them to feel safe and secure, which is a higher proportion than the national and South East Region averages for both adults and older people.

### **What is the data telling us?**

Challenges for the Safeguarding team remain around the increase in volume and complexity of referrals, increasing numbers of individuals whose capacity is to be determined under MCA, applications for DOLs. Alongside this there is considerable work ongoing with Providers to understand their responsibilities and be able to recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Despite the challenges faced, Adult Safeguarding continues to be a priority for the Council. Clear progress has been made through the full review and revision of local Safeguarding procedures to ensure that delivery remains effective. There has been a renewed focus on accurate data acquisition to provide robust management information; the further development of effective partnership working to ensure that safeguarding principles and practice are fully understood, including increased awareness in relation to Mental Capacity.

## **Recommendations for consideration**

The West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board publishes an annual report: this includes a development plan, which highlights the key actions required by agencies represented on the board. The implementation of the development plan is monitored by the board throughout the year and reported on in the following year's annual report.

## **National and local strategies**

[The Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Policy and Good Practice Manual](#) is a pan-Berkshire policy that provides members of the public with a guide to identifying abuse and how to report it. It also provides health and social care practitioners with a wealth of guidance and knowledge regarding safeguarding processes, legislation relating to safeguarding and information regarding how and when to share information.

In 2013 it is expected there will be legislation arising from the Health and Social Care Reforms that will put Safeguarding Adults Partnership Boards on a statutory footing in line with arrangements for child protection. Changes arising from this will represent a major piece of work for the Board and its members, but is seen as a very positive move forward in the important work of keeping people safe.

## **Other chapters you might be interested in**

Safeguarding Children and Young People

If you have any questions about this chapter, please contact Public Health and Wellbeing Team on [publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk) or 01635 503437