

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Social Work Committee - 18 April 2005

**REPORT ON:** The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Dundee - Audit Report

**REPORT BY:** The Director of Social Work

**REPORT NO:** 243 - 2005

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Social Work Committee of the contents of the report:
- "The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Dundee" - Audit Report
- and agree that an action plan should be developed to take forward the reports findings.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Social Work committee approve the Report "The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Dundee - Audit Report", a summary of which is attached.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This report contributes to policies and procedures which will enhance community safety of people considered to be vulnerable by reason of their disability of individual needs. Measures which enhance the safety of vulnerable adults and protect them from abuse will contribute to their ability to live in their local community.

### **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 6.1 The findings of the Borders Enquiry in 2004 prompted an internal audit of casework files of vulnerable adults with learning disabilities known to DCC Social Work Department. A similar audit has been undertaken by NHS Tayside, DCC Social Work Department, Angus Council and Perth & Kinross Council.

Dundee City Council, Social Work Department commissioned an external audit of practice in relation to adults with learning disabilities to be undertaken by Andrew Reid, external consultant. This audit took account of the findings of the internal case file audit, and interviewed a wide range of professionals working with people with learning disabilities in the city.

The audit consultant commissioned Advocating Together, self-advocacy service to elicit the views of people with learning disabilities regarding potential threats to their safety and issues regarding self-protection.

The outcome of the external audit are contained with the report - "The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Dundee" - Audit Report. The report highlights findings in the areas:

- Self protection
- Practice and procedures
- Organisation, managerial and personal issues
- Training

The report outlined seven recommendations in the section:

The Way Forward which would make a significant contribution to improvements in practice, policy and procedures.

DCC SWD has developed Vulnerable Adult Guidelines in partnership with NHS Tayside, Angus Council and Perth & Kinross Council developed Vulnerable Adults guidelines. Andrew Reid has advised on suggested amendments to the guidelines in line with the findings of the external audit. DCC Social Work Department intends to develop procedures for staff to use in conjunction with the Vulnerable Adults guidelines.

The audit report will be presented to the Health & Local Authority Management Forum, for agreement on the development of an action plan from the findings contained within the report.

It is intended to share the report with professionals, service users' families, service providers and other stakeholders. Events are to be planned for summer 2005.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The audit report has been presented to the Learning Disability Strategic Planning Group and the Health & Local Authority Management Group.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Dundee  
Audit Report by Andrew Reid - 2005.

Alan G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date: 01 April 2005



# **The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Dundee**

## **Audit Report**

NHS and Local Authority Forum  
30 March 2005

# **The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Dundee - Audit Report**

## **General Overview**

Practice is generally good or very good. The staff interviewed were highly motivated and committed, and had very positive attitudes, especially about the culture of joint working in Dundee. A range of areas were identified where procedures, systems and practices could be improved. In most of the issues examined a few staff identified poor performance. In many respects it felt like vulnerable adults work is retracing the developmental steps of child protection and certain areas of criminal justice work and could learn from their experience.

## **Self Protection**

People with learning disabilities who met in the focus groups understood about vulnerability and harm, but associated it mostly with 'stranger danger.' If they were being harmed they would be comfortable about taking this to parents or professional staff but had low expectations of being believed or action being taken.

## **Practice and Procedure**

There needs to be a more formalised, rigorous and consistent approach to risk assessment and the completion of significant event histories and Protection Plans. There are still some issues about confidentiality/information sharing and about rights to independence v. responsibilities for protection in various services, including amongst some voluntary organisations, who may not be sufficiently integrated into the protection system.

## **Organisational, Managerial and Personnel Issues**

At a strategic level, a significant number of health and social work staff wanted the co-location of Community Nursing and Care Management or the establishment of an integrated service. A quality assurance system is needed to ensure that managers know that policies are being implemented, procedures are being followed and standards are being maintained; audit exercises need to become more systematic and routine. At an individual level there are many excellent staff, but also a few people who appear well known for their poor performance. Certain improvements would have significant resource consequences

## **Training**

Specialist staff across all agencies believe they have better attitudes and awareness than non-specialist staff. However, even specialist staff have limited awareness in certain areas - Guardianship, restraint, whistle blowing and case transfers, and also need to work on certain areas of practice, such as direct work between care managers and people with learning disabilities. There needs to be a greater emphasis on multi-agency training and training separately targeted on specialist and non-specialist staff, who need core training in protection work for people of all ages and communication.

## **The Way Forward**

The NHS/Local Authority Forum will wish to take a view about the Audit Report, and may also wish to consider the way forward, including that:

- Following discussion of the Audit Report, joint management groups should use the Report's Proposed Actions as the basis of a 3 year Improvement Programme, not only for Learning Disability Services but also in Mental Health, Addictions, Older People's and other Disability Services;
- There should be wider dissemination and discussion of the Report and Work Programme amongst participating service user and staff groups, and with other agencies, particularly voluntary and private sector service providers;
- There should be agreement on those aspects which require joint management and the monitoring of implementation;
- Consideration should be given to extending the terms of Reference of the Child Protection Committee to include Children and Vulnerable Adults;
- A joint specialist post of Development Officer (Adults Protection) should be established, initially for the three year work programme period;
- The review of the Joint Protocol and Operational Procedures should take account of the findings in the Audit Report;
- Within the 3 year work programme, there should be an independent external review of progress at the mid-point and towards the end of the period.

Andrew Reid

March 2005