

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 2 April 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health & Community

SUBJECT: Scrutiny Review of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Service

WARDS Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To follow up recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults service, carried out in 2008.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Executive Board:

- i) endorse the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board, with the exception of 5.4.3 and 5.6.1.**
- ii) Receive a further report on the 2 recommendations identified in 2.0 (i)**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A review of Halton's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults service was commissioned as a joint scrutiny topic between the Safer Halton and Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Boards, and was carried out during 2008. The full report (with its recommendations highlighted) is attached to this report as Appendix A.

3.2 The Report was commissioned because referrals of alleged abuse of vulnerable adults in the category of "older people" received by Halton Borough Council have risen year on year, with Halton having the highest level of referrals in the North-West. The Boards wished to understand the reasons for this and consider if appropriate procedures were in place to safeguard vulnerable adults.

3.3 The scrutiny review addressed a comprehensive range of safeguarding arrangements, addressing policies, systems and processes and both Policy and Performance Boards have endorsed the recommendations of the scrutiny review.

3.4 The group concluded that although the Halton figure for referrals seemed high in comparison to other local authorities, this could not be relied upon as a true like-with-like comparison and therefore

could not be validated. No evidence was found to suggest that levels of abuse are higher in Halton than other areas.

- 3.5 Currently there is no provision within the existing residential and nursing care contracts for Elected Members to undertake lay assessments of residential and nursing care homes. The Council is currently reviewing its residential and nursing care contracts and it is anticipated that this will provide an opportunity to consider recommendation 5.4.3 “Lay assessment of residential and nursing homes, by Members, be considered, taking into account the necessary protocols, training and resource issues that would arise”. It would appear appropriate therefore to put this recommendation on hold until the Council has consulted with Independent Providers.
- 3.6 Since the final scrutiny report was presented to the Policy and Performance Boards, a number of National reviews and investigations have been undertaken for example, a Review of the Safeguarding Procedures for Adults captured in the “No Secrets” Guidance and Lord Lamings review of the “Baby P” case. Councils anticipate changes to existing guidelines and in this context it is recommended that recommendation 5.6.1 – “Full Council to consider if Member representative on the Safeguarding (Adults) Board would be appropriate”, is put on hold.
- 3.7 Halton Borough Council officers responsible for the safeguarding service have followed up on other recommendations made in the report and progress will be reported within the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Adults Board and updates to the Safer Halton Partnership, as well as the two Policy and Performance Boards.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Regular update reports on safeguarding adults are brought to the Safer Halton Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board’s Annual Report is also brought to the Safer Halton and Healthy Halton PPBs, where Members have the opportunity to question and comment on the local strategy, policy and service provision.
- 4.2 As a member of the Safeguarding Adults Board, an elected member would be required to contribute to debate and decisions about the local strategy for safeguarding vulnerable adults. Members would need to consider the interface between this and their other duties and responsibilities and the possible implications of being part of the decision making process.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Lay assessment of residential and nursing homes, by Members, and the preparation needed should it be possible, would have resource implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

None identified.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

These are identified within the Review.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The Scrutiny Review provides a comprehensive overview of the safeguarding vulnerable adults service and actions arising from its recommendations make a significant impact on developments.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Failure to address a range of safeguarding adult issues could expose individuals to abuse.

7.2 The scrutiny report makes recommendations to mitigate risks for vulnerable adults in Halton.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 It is essential that the Council addresses a range of equality issues, in particular those regarding race, gender, sexuality and disability when considering its safeguarding policies.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
No Secrets' is underpinned by Local Authority Circular [LAC] (2000) 7, which constitutes guidance under section 7 of the Local authority Social Services Act of 1970.	Municipal Building Widnes	Dwayne Johnson Strategic Director Health & Community

