

# Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

## Adult Social Care

### **Priority Area: Safeguarding across the wider community**

#### **Why this is a priority:**

Safety from harm and exploitation is one of our most basic needs. Being or feeling unsafe undermines our relationships and self-belief. "Safeguarding" is a range of activity aimed at upholding an adult's fundamental right to be safe. It is of particular importance for people who, because of their situation or circumstances, are unable to keep themselves safe. (Department of Health 2010)

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights places a duty on Local Authority Social Services to provide 'necessary safeguarding intervention' to a vulnerable adult proportionate to the level of risk. Failure to intervene may result in a breach of article 8 by the Local Authority.

Locally in Blackburn with Darwen, the simple terminology of 'adult at risk' has been adopted in policy. Adults at risk are those who:

- are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests,
- are at risk of harm, and
- because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

An adult is at risk of harm if:

- another person's conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or
- the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.

Communication about adult safeguarding to the wider community is vital, given the fact that the majority of care providers are outside of Local Authority control and a high proportion of abuse takes place in people's own homes and sometimes from their own family, particularly regarding financial abuse. Therefore effective engagement and raising awareness of safeguarding concerns to the public, service users, carers and families is crucial to support their role as an 'alerter' and to share the message in local communities that "safeguarding adults is everybody's business".

Blackburn with Darwen introduced a Safeguarding Adults Team in March 2010 and this team is the first point of contact for all safeguarding referrals (alerts) made to the Local Authority. The procedures have been drawn up in line with the Department of Health's "No Secrets" guidance 2000. Abuse is defined as "a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or people." Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts over time. It may be physical, psychological, institutional, an act of neglect, financial or sexual exploitation and result in significant harm to an individual.

The Safeguarding Team consists of a Team Manager and five Social Workers supported by a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding Officer and two admin staff. The team reports to the Safeguarding Adults Lead and Head of Service, Community Commissioning. Alerts are received directly into the team by a Duty Officer and screened with the Team Manager. A strategy discussion or meeting will be held to decide the next course of action such as further information gathering, investigation and joint working with appropriate agencies such as Police, Health, Housing, Probation and Care Trust Plus colleagues. The purpose of an investigation is to ascertain whether abuse has occurred and to protect the vulnerable adult. Investigating Officers will gather information from a variety of sources. This may include carrying out interviews, holding meetings and accessing relevant documentation. An investigation may conclude with a case conference chaired by a Senior Manager and the implementation of a protection plan.

### **Previous arrangements:**

The Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) is a partnership Board, made up of senior officer representation from agencies across Blackburn with Darwen.

Reporting directly to the Local Safeguarding Adults Board is a partnership communications committee that is responsible for engagement and raising awareness of safeguarding issues. This focuses on both adults and children.

This committee has been involved in various events, including supporting the 50 plus partnership, elder abuse day, a local self neglect conference and local stalls throughout the Borough to raise awareness of safeguarding support services.

In addition to this the independent website for Blackburn with Darwen also provides support to service users and their families - <http://www.yoursupportyourchoice.org.uk/>

Safeguarding the health and well-being of service users and carers is a central theme and in the strategic commissioning, procurement and monitoring of the wide range of services delivered across Blackburn with Darwen. In 2012 approximately £40M is invested annually in support to the most vulnerable citizens of Blackburn with Darwen.

Robust procurement processes scrutinise and analyse the ethos, values and practice of incoming providers, actively involving service users in the selection process. The Dignity Code has recently been adopted by the Council and will be embedded in the Quality Review of all Providers. The Blackburn with Darwen Quality Assurance Scheme provides the opportunity to undertake in-depth scrutiny of provider practice. Alongside this a range active provider development programmes and an emerging Workforce Development strategy maintains the focus of continuous improvement.

Blackburn with Darwen has a very close working relationship with the Care Quality Commission, the health and social care regulator. This has led to the development of a number of integrated safeguarding processes across health and social care, ensuring a joined up and integrated approach. Routine and regular communication and joint planning allied with an integrated approach to monitoring and managing safeguarding and quality issues means an effective and proactive approach to safeguarding in Blackburn with Darwen.

The key challenge to ensure that safeguarding is everyone's business continues to be at the forefront of commissioning, procurement and monitoring activity. As personalised support services continue to be developed and the potential for communities to be key partners in neighbourhood development is realised then a new focus on community safeguarding will be required.

Raising awareness of adult safeguarding has also been promoted through e-learning and multi-agency safeguarding training coordinated by the LSAB.

### **Where do we want to be?**

Fundamentally communication and engagement with service users and their families is vital for shared responsibilities and effective safeguarding arrangements. The following improvements and approaches will enable stronger engagement and communication to the following groups:

- Practitioners

- Service users
- Members of the public

This is particularly important with respect to the new statutory guidance that will be emerging in the autumn requiring a legally formed Adult Safeguarding Board.

1. The communications and engagement strategy for safeguarding adults requires revisiting to ensure a corporate and partner responsibility for acknowledge and plans monitored.
2. Strengthen multi-agency communication and awareness of safeguarding by commissioning an LSAB website.
3. Enhance the current e-learning portal and corporate induction for all council staff and members.
4. Strengthen member involvement – community leaders with corporate responsibility for vulnerable adults in the Borough.
5. Identify and develop safeguarding champions

**Support/scrutiny required:**

- Commitment and sign up to adult safeguarding communications corporately from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.
- Community leaders with responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- Active engagement in developing a community based approach to safeguarding.
- Working across pan-Lancashire to ensure co-ordination of key messages and themes.
- Identify the best communication methods to reach members of the public.