

Assessment of Needs in Adult Care Audit – March 2017

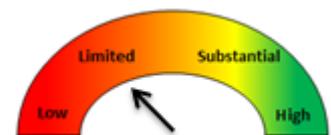
Background and Context

In 2015 the Care Act became law and specified that all people with a care plan should be kept under review to give them the opportunity to reflect on what is working, what is not working and what might need to change within their Care Plan. The Act specifies that plans are kept under review generally. The review process should be person-centered and outcomes focused, as well as accessible and proportionate to the service users' needs.

The Council established systems in Adult Care procedures that allow the proportionate monitoring of care and/or support plans to ensure that user needs are continuing to be met. Adult Care procedures not only follow the statutory guidance issued under the Care Act, but also go further specifying additional timescales:

- All assessment should be completed within twenty eight days
- In all circumstances where support services or interventions have been arranged, practitioners should ensure that checks are made within the first week and no later than two weeks to ensure the initial effectiveness of those interventions
- A first review should take place within 6-8 weeks of support starting, both for new or former service users with new care and support, and for existing service users where new services have been organised. This review should be undertaken by the original assessor/team responsible for the assessment and planning work and may be a light- touch review if appropriate
- Thereafter, people should have a review at least once per year, as a minimum requirement

The performance of Adult Care assessments and reviews is a key control in the management of Safeguarding risk. Safeguarding Adults has at present a limited assurance status in the Strategic risk register



Risk	RAG rating	Recs	
		High	Medium
Activity is managed effectively	Amber	3	3
The quantity or quality of staff is insufficient	Amber	0	1
ICT systems fail to produce the required outputs	Amber	0	1

Executive Summary

Lincolnshire County Council Adult Care has Care Plan review procedures in place to enable compliance with statutory guidance issued under the Care Act 2014. These procedures not only follow the statutory guidance but go beyond by specifying additional timescales to ensure adequate Safeguarding of Adults in Lincolnshire.

Our review, however, identified that there is limited evidence to show that these Adult Care procedures and Care Act statutory guidance requirements are being consistently implemented in practice.

The following areas for improvement have been identified:

Monitoring of reviews performed:

The Care act statutory guidance requires that "The first planned review should be an initial 'light-touch' review of the planning arrangements 6-8 weeks after sign-off of the personal budget and plan".

Adult Care procedures require that "A first review should take place within 6-8 weeks of support starting, both for new or former customers with new care and support, and for existing customers where new services have been arranged". The Adult Care procedures also require that "In all circumstances where support services or interventions have been arranged, practitioners should ensure that checks are made within the first week and no later than two weeks to ensure the initial effectiveness of those interventions"

Adult Care Team do not produce or monitor any reporting information on the performance of these 1-2 week checks of the effectiveness of support arrangements or 6- 8 week planned light-touch reviews. Adult Care consider that these reviews will be performed as part of the default process. We cannot however provide assurance that these checks and reviews are done.

Monitoring of planned 12 months reviews:

The Care Act statutory guidance specifies that "It is the expectation that authorities should conduct a review of the plan no later than every 12 months". Adult Care procedures require that "people should have a review at least once per year, as a minimum requirement".

Adult Care are required to report in their National Data Collections Short and Long Term (SALT) Return the number of planned reviews performed in a financial year. Monitoring of these reviews consists of quarterly Adult Care Performance Reports (ACP reports) - these are not fully capturing the 12 months review requirement from the statutory guidance under the Care Act. Current information doesn't distinguish between different review types and therefore Adult Care Team have limited assurance that all service users are having a planned review no later than every 12 months. Long periods between reviews could cause the service users circumstances and needs to change and could therefore become a safeguarding issue and result in reputational damage to the Council.

The process of monitoring assessments completed within 28 days:

Lincolnshire County Council Adult Care procedures require that assessments are completed within 28 days after the targeted start date. The statutory guidance under the Care Act issued from the Department of Health specifies that the assessment process starts when the local authorities begin to collect information about the person, which is earlier than the used targeted start date. This could lead to possible misunderstanding of what this 28 days monitoring check actually shows. Our review also identified some anomalies with the data used for this indicator. This gives cause for concern over the quality of this data and renders the monitoring of this data open to error and manipulation and the 28 days monitoring open to misinterpretation.

Our findings around the monitoring and the quality of the performance data detailed above have resulted in a Limited Assurance opinion.

The attached action plan is intended to provide Adult Care with recommendations on how to further strengthen the processes in place, the monitoring and compliance with statutory guidance for reviews/reassessments of current and new service users' needs.

Recommendations	Number	Implementation Date
HIGH	3	July 2017
MEDIUM	5	N/A

Quality of Carers' Workforce Learning & Development Audit January 2018

Background and Context

Lincolnshire's Carers Service is delivered by two providers bringing together the prevention and the assessment and eligibility function.

From April 2015 Serco has provided a telephone carers service as part of the commissioned Lincolnshire County Council customer service centre. Serco provides signposting, information & advice and statutory telephone assessment, plan and review services.

Carers FIRST provides a telephone carers service offering specialist and tailored information and advice for carers. They deliver services in communities and acute hospitals. They provide universal services for example benefits checks, support groups plus the statutory assessment and support planning. The contract commenced in June 2016.

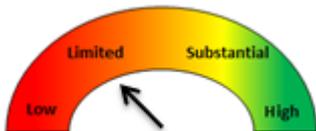
The Care Act 2014 introduced new legal rights for carers for support. The Children and Families Act 2014 also entitles parent carers and young carers to an assessment of their needs. There is a shift to seeing carers as people with their own rights to lead a life with choice and control; achieving emotional and physical wellbeing, access to work, education and social activities.

Carers have a legal entitlement for support that puts carers on the same footing as the people for whom they care.

Limited Assurance

Our critical review or assessment on the activity gives us a limited level of confidence on service delivery arrangements, management of risks, and operation of controls and / or performance.

The controls to manage the key risks were found not always to be operating or are inadequate. Therefore, the controls evaluated are unlikely to give a reasonable level of confidence (assurance) that the risks are being managed effectively. It is unlikely that the activity will achieve its objectives.



Risk	RAG rating	Recs	
		High	Medium
Inefficient safeguarding training provided	Medium	0	1
Inefficient assessment training provided as detailed by Care Act	Medium	0	1
Inadequate supervision arrangements re verifying quality of work	Medium	0	1
Inadequate quality assurance process	Medium	1	0
Total		1	0

Executive Summary

Our review found inconsistencies between standards of practice and record keeping at the providers. As such assurance overall is limited. Our most significant findings are:

We established that while training and development had taken place it was difficult to evidence the actual attendance and completion by each employee, although this was better at one provider. There is an opportunity here for both providers to review and strengthen their current procedures and processes, to enable them to give the Council greater reassurance.

The Council has a quality assurance framework in place, however the framework needs to be extended and embedded into both providers, to ensure that the quality assurance framework works pro-actively. Both providers need to develop their current processes and procedures, this will then give the Council full assurance on the quality of the Carers Assessments they complete.

There was little evidence found on the supervision of assessments completed by assessors. We found no evidence to confirm that employees were being shadowed by a supervisor whilst completing the assessments to ensure assessors remain impartial.

We would recommend that both Providers review their current supervisory procedures in documenting supervisory activity taking place.

We would like to acknowledge that following our testing and feedback work has already been carried out to address the above findings. A revised contract has been agreed with one provider, and is in place along with additional staff employed. Team Leaders and Locality Managers to implement supervisory and Quality Assurance checks. The Council are currently in the process of working with and revising the contract with other provider.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all parties for the time and help they have afforded to us during the audit.

Recommendations	Number	Implementation Date
HIGH	3	July 2017
MEDIUM	5	N/A

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