

MAYOR AND CABINET		
Report Title	London Wide Agreement on Cross Borough Placements in "Hostels"	
Key Decision	Yes	Item No. 11
Ward	All	
Contributors	Executive Director for Community Services	
Class	Part 1	Date: 10 February 2010

1. Purpose

This report updates the Mayor on the work being undertaken to address issues relating to cross borough placements of vulnerable adults and plans for a London wide service level agreement in relation to information sharing.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Department of Health and Home Office guidance document issued under Section 7 of the Local Authorities Social Services Act 1970, 'No Secrets' defines a vulnerable adult as a person "who is or may be in need of community care by reason of mental or other disability: and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".
- 2.2 The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) cross-boundary protocol for safeguarding vulnerable adults is an agreement stating that, although the commissioners of a service retain responsibility for the wellbeing of an individual placed 'out of area', any 'Safeguarding Procedures' in relation to abuse taking place in the host area should be managed by the host authority according to its local multi-agency procedures.
- 2.3 The work undertaken in Lewisham to support the safeguarding of vulnerable adults links directly to a number of priorities. The Sustainable Communities Strategy identifies two key priorities covering this area of work. Safer - where people feel safe and are able to live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse and Healthy, Active and Enjoyable - where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being.

3. Recommendations

The Mayor is recommended to:

- i. Note the progress made in relation to the development of London wide information sharing protocols,
- ii. Endorse and promote with all London authorities a London wide protocol for placing adults in hostels outside of Lewisham borough,
- iii. Refer this update to Healthier Communities Select Committee (HCSC) for their further consideration.

4. Background

4.1 On 23 September 2009 the HCSC discussed the absence of London wide protocols on making cross borough placements in hostels and noted that this may have a negative impact on the quality of life of both the individuals living in those hostels and the local community.

4.2 On 4 November 2009 the Mayor received details of the HCSC views and asked officers to prepare further information with which he could respond.

4.3 Terminology

For the purposes of this report the term hostels is used as this is effectively the provision to which this report refers. Provisions that are effectively operating as hostels can be described and advertised as Bed and Breakfasts or Hotels.

5. London Protocols

5.1 Under the Association of Directors of Adults Social Services protocols, local authorities have host responsibility to co-ordinate a response to any concerns regarding abuse of vulnerable adults living in the borough.

5.2 Lewisham statutory services do not place or commission places for vulnerable adults in all the hostels within Lewisham. Some of the hostels where there had been concerns are largely used by other authorities

5.3 There is no independent regulatory authority for hostels with entry, inspection and enforcement powers to support the work of local authority and health staff in responding to concerns.

5.4 The combination of 5.1 to 5.3 means that in some cases there is

- Limited or no information on the individuals placed in these establishments,
- No powers to access this information
- No powers to ensure that recommendations arising from safeguarding adult concerns are implemented.

- 5.5 Local Authority performance in relation to safeguarding adults is measured on its ability to respond effectively irrespective of the situation. The set of circumstances described above restricts the ability of statutory authorities to effectively undertake this work.
- 5.6 The Safeguarding Adult Committee asked that this be raised as a pan London concern at the pan London safeguarding adult leads meeting, with a suggestion that a pan London protocol is put in place .
- 5.7 These discussions have now taken place and as a conclusion London wide safeguarding leads agreed that such a proposal could have significant positive impact, and should be included in the pan London procedure
- 5.8 Healthier Communities Select Committee acknowledged that any agreement would need to be ratified by all London authorities and in view of that the Mayor should be asked to offer his support endorsing and promoting the establishment of protocols across all London authorities.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 Officers from the London Borough of Lewisham have recommended that the protocol below be adopted as part of the Pan London Safeguarding Adult Procedures. These procedures, which are currently near finalisation, will be considered for adoption by all London Safeguarding Adult boards, with a view to London wide adoption by autumn.
- i Full information on any risks presented by an individual is made known to the hostel manager /owner prior to placement. This would be so that an appropriate risk assessment could be undertaken and an informed decision made on offering a place.
 - ii. A record of the contact person or team from the placing authority be kept for each individual placed in a hostel. This information would be made available to the host authority on request.
 - iii. All staff working in statutory services in placing authorities would have a duty to fully cooperate with host authorities undertaking specific work to safeguard vulnerable adults ..

7. Financial implications

There are financial implications to the placement of clients in the borough by other local authorities in terms of social work time, safeguarding investigations and, potentially, ongoing support costs. Better exchange of information will be expected to reduce these costs by allowing the processes to be better managed.

8. Legal implications

At this time there are no particular legal implications arising from this report, and more detailed consideration will be necessary concerning resource and service implications when the protocols are finalised and presented for adoption by the Council

9. Crime and disorder implications

The HCSC are of the view that a cross London protocol would have a positive impact on the ability of agencies to work in partnership in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

10. Equalities implications

The successful implementation of a London wide protocol covering the placement of vulnerable adults in hostels could have positive implications for the quality of life of :

- Adults with learning disabilities
- Adults with mental health problems
- Adults with Physical Disabilities
- Adults that present a potential risk
- Adults (mainly women) fleeing domestic violence
- Children at risk (mainly accompanying women fleeing domestic violence)

11. Environmental implications

The HCSC are of the view that improved management of the placement of individuals in hostels across London would have a positive impact on the environment.

12. Conclusion

The Healthier Communities Select Committee are aware that work to safeguard adults who are vulnerable does not currently have statutory status. Committee members are of the view that securing the commitment of London Borough leaders to implementing the suggested pan London approach to cross borough placements in hostels is necessary to ensure these measures are put in place.

Background documents

- 1. Annual Report of Safeguarding Committee - Jane Gregory**
- 2. Mayor and cabinet report 4 November 2009**

For further information regarding this report please contact Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People on ext 49569