

Briefing paper for Members of HCSC

Internal Audit Report for Assessment and Care Management - Long term and complex cases within Adult Social Care

Introduction

Members of the HCSC were provided with a briefing paper outlining the context and rationale for the internal audit regarding the management of long term case work within adult social care in November 2013.

This further briefing provides more detail on how the recommendations from the audit are being implemented so that both performance and quality outcomes for services users and carers are improved.

Background

Like other councils Lewisham have undertaken a review of assessment and care management functions as part of a much wider process to redesign adult social care. The review has considered pathways that people follow from their first contact with the council, to the point beyond which they no longer need help.

The costs associated with assessment and care management in Lewisham are 12% of the Adult Social Care budget. A review undertaken by the Audit Commission recommended that no more than 10% of the total budget should be spent on the cost of carrying out the assessment functions.

Adult Social Care has therefore designed, and is in the process of implementing a Care Management system that will reduce the associated costs to the recommended 10% of the overall costs whilst at the same time delivering our statutory requirements.

The new structure strengthens our focus on quality assurance of case work, service quality and safeguarding issues. There are dedicated roles within the structure to provide monitoring and oversight of casework across all assessment teams.

The internal audit of long term and complex case work along with our participation in the 'Making safeguarding personal' programme led by the LGA/ ADASS has provided useful insight into current practice and has influenced the improvement action plan in relation to this area of assessment and case management.

Key Findings of the Audit

In the 20 cases reviewed in the internal audit process these were the issues identified:

- Case allocation, monitoring, supervision and case closure were not supported by formal process or standard documentation.
- Key decisions, supervision actions and case updates were not routinely recorded on the electronic database case file.

- Management tools such as the caseload weighting tool were not used.

Actions taken

There are a range of actions that have been implemented to improve management oversight of social work practice in relation to long term and more complex casework as well as safeguarding casework:

- The implementation of supervision policy that embeds procedures for case allocation, case audit and action and exit plans.
- Every 6 weeks a manager reviews all cases held by each worker.
- to practise 'self audits' of case work on a two weekly basis to review action plans.
- The implementation of a project 'Making Safeguarding Personal' to pilot a new approach to safeguarding practice moving from process oriented to one that is focussed on improving outcomes for people.

Outcomes of the Audit

The proposed care management Quality Assurance system for all teams has been modelled on historical workload data, key performance indicators and information gained from the internal audit of casework.

As well as being more cost effective the new arrangements will take into account the changing demands within adult social care including reablement, preventative services, integrated working, self directed support (SDS), safeguarding and the increasing pressures associated with demographics. There will be dedicated quality assurance roles within the new structure to provide monitoring and oversight of casework across all assessment teams.

Additional scrutiny/oversight of casework is now provided through the newly established Vulnerable Adults Panel, where cases are presented for consideration of funding for services. Action plans can be challenged and changed to ensure the best potential outcome for the individual. Similarly the newly established Multi Agency Safeguarding Conference where safeguarding cases that have been fully investigated are presented for conclusion affords the opportunity to scrutinise decision making and practice.

The audit process has been a useful mechanism to influence how we care manage and assess Service Users on the long term and complex pathway. Participation in the Making Safeguarding Personal programme led by the LGA/ADASS has further provided useful insight into current practice and influenced the improvement plan in relation to this area of assessment and case management.

It has also helped us refine the management oversight and supervision support which is a key function to ensure the balance between meeting the need of Service Users in a timely way, staff 's continuing professional development, and application of our risk management policies and processes.

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