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Building a centre of excellence in Safeguarding

Laura Richardson| 24th November | Safeguarding Adults: Its everybody's business

Where we came from

- In 2019 West Sussex identified that we were on course to see an increase of approximately 72% of safeguarding referrals into the Local Authority.

- A review of the types of referrals being received noted that the vast majority were not referrals regarding risk of abuse/neglect, or experiencing abuse or neglect.

- Due to demand pressure there were often delays in referrals being reviewed and responded to

- The conversion rate from referral to enquiry was low.

- A significant number of referrals were being submitted by the emergency services

- Partner agencies were feeding back to the Safeguarding Adults Board, that they weren't receiving feedback; being involved in safeguarding enquiries and felt that responses from the Local Authority could be inconsistent.

A different approach

- A new way of working was piloted: -
  - Single point of referral access
    - An web based online safeguarding referral was developed

- Development of a threshold document

  - Useful guidance for partner agencies about what may or may not be considered to be a safeguarding matter
    - Now a Sussex wide Safeguarding Adults Board guidance document

- Online guidance and links for Safeguarding
  - A 'tile' was developed for all Safeguarding Adult matters, so partner agencies, can access guidance/general information 24 hours a day

- Safeguarding Hub
  - Dedicated team to respond to all safeguarding referrals received countywide
  - Professionals line

- 2 new Safeguarding Adults Board's Subgroups
  - Multi Agency Risk Meeting (MARM)
  - Quality Assurance Safeguarding Information Group (QASIG)

What difference did this make?

- We were able to separate safeguarding referrals from other types of referrals sent incorrectly

  - The conversion rate from referrals to enquiries therefore increased and were in line with the national average.

- We were able to respond rapidly to people at risk and put in place appropriate interventions

  - Immediate person centred/strength based safeguarding plans

- Referrals which weren't safeguarding matters were re-directed to the right place, so individuals got the support they needed in the right way

- Improved working relationships with partner agencies
  - all referrers received feedback on the safeguarding referral that they submitted

However the most important difference was the impact for the people who we were contacting and supporting

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Ongoing Challenges

- Volume of demand increasing
  - Increase level of referrals since lockdowns have ended
  - Economic pressures and the links with abuse and neglect

- Services are reducing support in line with reductions in the resources they have available.
  - Less resources available for preventative work or for safeguarding interventions.

- Safeguarding pathway being used when its not the appropriate route
  - A risk isn't always ‘safeguarding’
  - Its not a route to have someone’s needs prioritised.

- In most cases, ‘professionals’ who are referring to the Local Authority do not tell or engage the person that a referral is being made and why they are concerned
  - Making safeguarding personal, doesn’t start with the Local Authority, it starts with the person who recognises something may not be right

- Any referral is only as good as the information that it contains
  - There is often an assumption that other professionals know history or relevant information and they don't
  - The more information that's known, the better the decisions that can be made

What can we take from this?

- One way and one way only, isn't the right way.
  - We need to consider all options available to the person when working with them and with any risk.

- The need to work creatively and use a strengths-based approach
  - Resilience; working with the person on how they want to resolve the situation; how can their community support them?

- Meaningful engagement before, during and after with the person you are concerned about
  - Talk with the person; hear their voice and give meaning and respect to their views. If there is a barrier, let people know and how that could be resolved