

**CWOP/10/11**

**Policy & Scrutiny Committee** Community Wellbeing and Older People

**Date** 10 March 2011

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### **Safeguarding Adults from Exploitation (SAFE) Team Update for the period October 2010 - March 2011**

The SAFE Project became operational in July 2009 with the remit of identifying, locating and supporting vulnerable people in North East Essex who had previously been resident in institutional care settings. The team still undertakes work of this nature, but has also evolved to become a specialist resource to coordinate investigations into institutional abuse throughout Essex.

SAFE is now a mainstream team, fully integrated into the Adult Safeguards Unit. Whilst based at County Hall, the team now has a county wide remit and is currently identifying homes of multi-occupancy across the county.

Other local authorities, (Norfolk, Birmingham, Hampshire and Hounslow) as part of the development of their adult safeguarding, have recently visited Essex and expressed interest in the concept of SAFE. We have also been invited to address the national Action on Elder Abuse conference in March, to promote the unique role and function of SAFE as a model of good practice.

The following summarises the priorities and work undertaken by SAFE since the ASU annual report- November 2011.

#### **Institutional Safeguards / Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) work**

As a county resource, under the umbrella of the Adult Safeguards Unit, SAFE is able to help relieve the pressure on locality teams when there is a significant case of institutional abuse. This is in line with the Institutional Abuse protocol. SAFE does not replace the locality team, but assists as a temporary additional resource. It also offers a consistent process and understanding within one environment, so minimising the feeling

of oppressive intervention for the provider from a number of professionals. This approach stimulates working together to improve the service user experience.

There has been no large scale transfer of residents from a care home since April 2010 and SAFE continues to work proactively with providers to improve standards.

Since the Annual Report, SAFE has had direct involvement with locality teams in regards to 9 major Institutional safeguard investigations.

SAFE has continued with ongoing cases of complex work with homes of multiple occupancy (HMOs) in the North East of the county and is also undertaking similar work in other localities.

SAFE also has the capacity to assist in exceptional and unusual safeguarding cases such as a recent incident of bullying, harassment and discrimination carried out on Facebook and which has resulted in charges being brought by the Police.

Since November 2010 SAFE has been actively engaged in 22 cases of individual safeguarding incidents investigated. 46 monitoring visits to care homes have been undertaken by SAFE Practitioners, to ensure that actions and changes have been implemented by the care homes.

### **Improving Practice - Current priorities**

SAFE has undertaken 14 visits to locality teams across Essex to raise awareness and build working relationships for the future.

The SAFE team has developed and disseminated its own Terms of Reference and referral criteria.

SAFE has contributed to the new ESAB document 'Managing Institutional Abuse' - A practitioners guide; and is also taking the lead on reviewing the Suspensions Policy and Safeguarding Service User's Finances and Belongings Policy

SAFE recognises that it cannot work in isolation and has been proactive in developing collaborative partnerships with other professionals, including the Care Quality Commission, Quality Improvement Team, Essex Guardians, District Nurses, GPs, Community Matrons, PCT safeguarding leads, advocacy services, and Police.

SAFE works closely with care homes to raise practice standards through disseminating examples of good practice and signposting to other organisations and services. SAFE actively support homes to focus on, prioritise and improve standards for the benefits of the residents.

SAFE provides support to landlords by working with them to identify necessary areas of change and signposting them to organisations to support them to make positive change. SAFE is currently building on it's work in the north of the county to identify homes of

multi-occupancy across the county, and identify ways of working with the vulnerable people that they locate in such homes.

### **Conclusion**

SAFE is now part of the overall safeguard umbrella that is integral to all service delivery across Adult Social Care. The team sits within the management structure of Adult Safeguards and there is a seamless process through all functions within this area of work. In future, SAFE briefings and updates will be included as business as usual within the Adult Safeguards annual report and action plan.

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March 2011