

Identifying and responding to concerns in health and social care services



The West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAB), through its learning have identified that there have been missed opportunities in identifying and responding to concerns around the quality-of-service provision in health and social care services particularly: residential care, nursing home care, supported living and home care.

This learning brief has been devised to provide guidance on what may indicate issues in the quality-of-service delivery and how to respond to them if raising a safeguarding concern is not appropriate.

When working with an individual who is in receipt of health and social care services, please consider the following in regard to the provider delivering the services, these could be as part of a review or any other contact with the individual:

- Before the visit check if there are any ongoing safeguarding/quality concerns about the provider so you can pay particular attention to these during your visit.
- If you are visiting the individual in response to safeguarding/quality concerns, ensure that you are clear on what these concerns are and what you are expected to investigate when carrying out the visit with the manager leading on the concerns process.
- Is the service meeting the needs of the individual? Be clear on the expectations on the deliver of service so that any unmet service provision can be identified.
- Quality of records – good record keeping is essential to good quality care. In a communal setting such as a care home ask to see the providers safeguarding and complaints log, are there any themes around quality of care?
- Are you able to speak with the individual alone? – if the provider doesn't allow you this could be cause for concern.
- Speak to staff, are they approachable, ask them a question about responding to a safeguarding concern, are they able to answer appropriately?
- Are staffing levels appropriate? – Rota's, timesheets can provide some evidence but ask some questions of the individual and/or their loved ones to collaborate these records.
- Where appropriate and if the individual gives permission check their bedroom, is it comfortable and suitable for them?
- If the provider supports the individual with their finances, check records to ensure that income and expenditure for the individual is being accurately recorded and that any spend is related to their needs and reasonable in amount.
- Where commissioned to do so does the provider support the individual in social activities and are these appropriate – i.e does the individual enjoy them.
- What daily activities are in place and are they suitable for the individual? – collaborate any activity schedules with the individual, staff or other residents.
- Is there any specific training required for staff that support this individual; can the provider evidence that they are appropriately trained.
- Assess the quality of care being delivered, the care planning and the recording. Is it person centered and focused on meeting the needs of the individual rather than fitting the individual into the preferences of the staff/organisation?
- Are there suitable risk management plans in place for the individual such as: pressure care, fire, falls, choking and are these being followed.

It is important not to accept information at face value, use professional curiosity to collaborate care plans, activity schedules, menus, check pressure care equipment settings etc.

Providing feedback

Do share areas of good practice you have seen with the staff/manager at the time of the visit. If you have concerns use your professional judgement to determine if it is appropriate to speak to the staff/manager at the time of the visits so they can address these concerns. Any concerns noted that do not meet the thresholds for a safeguarding concern should be noted within your visit documentation and reported to your organisations contract management team.

Sharing concerns

If the visit identifies concerns about the quality-of-service provision for the individual and/or other people accessing the service, that does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding concern, these should be shared via your organisations care quality process. Each Local Authority and the Integrated Care System (previously the CCG) have systems in place for quality concerns to be shared. They use this information to risk assess providers and intelligence shared may trigger further investigation by these teams. Details on how to contact these teams can be found below.

Reading Borough Council
QPM@reading.gov.uk

[Care Quality - West Berkshire Council](#)

Wokingham Borough Council
CareQuality@wokingham.gov.uk