

Committee(s)	Dated:
Adult Safeguarding Sub Committee	28/09/2017
Subject: Financial Abuse in the City of London	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

This report presents an update on the work undertaken by the Financial Abuse Task and Finish Group. The group has been established to provide a co-ordinated approach to reducing financial abuse – the second most prevalent cause of safeguarding alerts in the City of London.

Recent work has included combining a variety of datasets to produce an overview of financial abuse in the City, a public awareness raising campaign to coincide with Scams Awareness Month, and planning for a partnership event open to practitioners and the public on Monday 4 December.

A further report detailing the impact of the work of the Task and Finish Group will be presented to the Sub Committee at a future date.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board City Sub Group has identified tackling financial abuse as a priority for the City. Financial abuse is the second most prevalent cause of safeguarding alerts in the City, making up 28 per cent of the safeguarding caseload.
2. Tackling financial abuse supports Principle 1, Priority 1, Action 1 and Principle 3, Priority 12, Action 1 of the CHSAB Strategic Plan 2017-2018. These are;

'Identify and report on where there are gaps in awareness of safeguarding from demographic data, based upon referral data / benchmarking, in order to target awareness raising.'

‘CHSAB seeks to keep itself aware of key subject areas via other general agencies and identifies areas where it could assist in the promotion of good practice, via briefings and presentations to the CHSAB on: ... Financial abuse, including scamming’

3. The Task and Finish Group brings together officers from Community and Children’s Services, Trading Standards, the City of London Police and Toynbee Hall to develop and implement a joint communications strategy and plan, which outlines our collective approach to raising awareness about financial abuse.
4. The group’s early work included producing a leaflet which is available in public buildings across the City, was circulated with residents’ annual Council Tax bills and is given to anyone registering a death at St Bart’s Hospital. More recent work has included:
 - combining a variety of datasets to produce an overview of financial abuse in the City
 - a public awareness raising campaign to coincide with Scams Awareness Month, and
 - planning for a partnership event open to practitioners and the public on 4 December.

Overview of financial abuse in the City

5. A scoping report found limited data available on financial abuse in the City. Many stakeholders consulted said they would welcome a greater understanding of the scale and trends in the abuse to further aid prevention and awareness work.
6. Data has been collected from Adult Social Care, City Police / Action Fraud and City Advice to provide a better overview of financial abuse in the City.
7. During 2016/17, the City of London Corporation received twenty nine safeguarding concerns. For concerns started during 2016/17, the most common category was neglect and acts of omission with eleven (38 per cent) of risk types recorded, financial abuse was the second most common with eight (28 per cent).
8. Seven of these related to individuals within the City. Just under half did not require a Section 42 enquiry as they either did not meet the Section 42 criteria or the person at risk did not want to take the case further. For under half of safeguarding cases, the source of risk was known to the individual and in most cases was a family member.
9. Data provided by the Police Action Fraud for 2016/17 and 2017/18 Q1 identified 26 cases in the City involving financial abuse for individuals identified as vulnerable.

10. Of the ages known 86 per cent victims were of the working age (between 18 to 64). Six out of the 26 fraud cases related to online Shopping and Auctions. For the other cases, a wide variety of different fraud types were reported. For 46 per cent of the cases there was significant impact on financial or health wellbeing.
11. City Advice provides free confidential and impartial advice to anyone who lives, works or studies in the City. It receives fewer than five contacts per year on consumer issues including sale of good matters, product safety and scams. Further information has been requested on recent cases to ascertain if financial abuse may have been a factor.
12. It is difficult to determine any patterns or trends for financial abuse cases. In just under half of cases reported to Adult Social Care the source of risk was known to the individual. Cases reported to Action Fraud tend to involve younger victims and fraud that occurs online.

Scams Awareness Month campaign

13. During the latter half of Scams Awareness Month 2017 (17-28 July), a range of activities were held to raise awareness with members of the public and City Corporation staff on how to spot the signs of scams and financial abuse and what people can do if they are concerned about someone.
14. Planned activities included leaflets drops in public spaces across the City, utilising internal communication channels to raise officer awareness and coverage in social and print media.
15. The leaflet drops were able to distribute large volumes of material and raise general awareness of the issue. Stalls at supermarkets and in the Guildhall saw the most footfall, although arranging access to the former took a considerable amount of officer time. Stalls at Residents' Open Meetings were less successful and it is questionable whether the benefits of running these sessions outweighed the costs.
16. Departmental, partner and corporate channels, such as the Town Clerk's Bulletin and the Members' Briefing, were utilised to maximise exposure of campaign key messages. The group will continue to secure space in these various channels as plans progress.
17. The social media campaign received significant exposure with 3914 impressions (potential number of times content seen). However, this exposure could have been even higher with the cooperation of partners. Many Task Group members did not retweet, share or like pre-agreed messaging or tweet similar messaging from their accounts during two week period – including City Police, Trading Standards, the City Corporation central feed and City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board.

18. Plans to pursue coverage in local print media did not progress. Despite prior notice, the City Corporation Media Team did not support the campaign – instead choosing to support a City Bridge Trust campaign on the same topic.

19. For a full evaluation of the campaign, please see Appendix 2.

Partnership Event

20. Plans are progressing to hold a Partnership Event on Monday 4 December in the Livery Hall at Guildhall. This will be aimed at practitioners and community leaders from the general public. It will be a practical event – where attendees will leave with tips on how to protect themselves and others from the latest scams.

21. It is envisaged that the event will consist of interactive workshops, pop up exhibition stalls and plenary sessions, with Professor Keith Brown, Director of the Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work at Bournemouth University, delivering the keynote speech.

22. Invitations will be offered to officers and partners likely to have a high amount of contact with people who are vulnerable to financial abuse and to members of the public who are well placed to support and influence others in their local networks.

Conclusion

23. This report presents an update on the City of London Corporation's financial abuse work. A further report detailing the impact of the work of the Task and Finish group will be presented to the Sub Committee at a future date.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Financial Abuse Work Plan
- Appendix 2 – Financial Abuse Campaign Evaluation

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