

Committee	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	06/02/2018
Subject: Financial Abuse Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Adam Johnstone, Strategy Officer – Housing and Adult Social Care	

Summary

This report presents an update on the work undertaken by the Financial Abuse Task and Finish Group. The group was 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 across the City, a public campaign to coincide with Scams Awareness Month, and a partnership event to raise awareness of the issue among practitioners.

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% of the safeguarding caseload.
2. The Financial Abuse Task and Finish Group was therefore established to bring together officers from Community and Children's Services, Trading Standards, the City of London Police and Toynbee Hall to develop and implement a joint plan to tackle the issue.
3. The group's early work included producing a leaflet which is available in public buildings across the City. The leaflet was circulated with residents' annual

Council Tax bills and is given to anyone registering a death at St Bartholomew's Hospital. More recent work has included:

- combining a variety of datasets to produce an overview of financial abuse in the City
- a public campaign to coincide with Scams Awareness Month, and
- a partnership event to raise awareness of the issues among practitioners.

Overview of Financial Abuse in the City

4. A scoping report found limited data available on financial abuse in the City. The Financial Abuse Task and Finish Group collected data from Adult Social Care, City Police/Action Fraud and City Advice to provide a better overview of financial abuse across the City.
5. It is difficult to determine any clear patterns or trends from the data. 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.
6. The dataset will be regularly refreshed to track financial abuse across the City, regardless of which agency it is reported to. This will provide a way to measure the effectiveness of the group's work, with reports of financial abuse expected to increase as public awareness grows.

Public Campaign

7. During the latter half of Scams Awareness Month 2017 (17–28 July), a range of activities were held to raise the awareness of members of the public and City Corporation staff on how to spot the signs of scams and financial abuse and let people know what they can do if they are concerned about someone.
8. Outreach activities at supermarkets, at Guildhall and at residents' meetings were successful in giving out a large volume of printed material. A social media campaign received significant exposure with 3,914 page views.
9. Letters have been sent to all Adult Social Care service users, offering a personal visit from a Trading Standards officer to provide advice and practical support. One resident responded by requesting a visit and this was arranged at the end of December 2017.

Partner and Practitioner Event

10. A Partnership Event was held on Monday 4 December at Guildhall. This was aimed at practitioners, partner agencies and community leaders. It was intended to be a practical event, where attendees could learn how to protect themselves and others from financial abuse, gain confidence sharing this information with others in their networks, and learn where to direct people for further help.

11. The event consisted of interactive workshops, pop-up exhibition stalls and plenary sessions, with Professor Keith Brown, Director of the National Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work at Bournemouth University, delivering the keynote speech. Other sessions included 'Take a stand against scams' training, 'Financial abuse, scams and fraud in later life', 'Peer-to-peer information sharing with older people' and 'The impact of loan shark debt on individuals and communities'.
12. A total of 63 delegates attended the event from a range of partner organisations, including Age UK, the City & Hackney Older People's Reference Group, Healthwatch, the East London NHS Foundation Trust, The Diocese of London and Toynbee Hall.
13. Of the 21 delegates who completed an evaluation form, all said they felt more confident sharing prevention messages with those who might be at risk of financial abuse and all said they felt more confident signposting people to appropriate sources of help. One delegate commented:

“[This is] very relevant in my work as a Mental Health Nurse. We have many patients who are, or have been, victims of scamming and loan sharks.”

Conclusion

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

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Financial Abuse Work Plan

Adam Johnstone

Strategy Officer – Housing and Adult Social Care

T: 020 7332 3453

E: adam.johnstone@cityoflondon.gov.uk