

Audit & Standards Committee

10 March 2016

Adult Social Care - Update on Case File Audits

Recommendations

That the Audit and Standards Committee consider and comment on:

1. The results of the case file audit analysis within Adult Social Care.
2. The actions underway to further improve case file audit in Adult Social Care.
3. The proposal for aligning the case file audit procedures in Children's and Adult Social Care into a single, consistent approach in the People Group.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 Case file audit is a key method of quality assurance in Adult Social Care. Case file audits have three objectives. First, they improve social care practice through enabling constructive conversations between practitioners and their managers. They can recognise good practice which can be shared to support individual and team learning. They can also identify areas for improvement so action is taken to address them. Second, they ensure customers are supported appropriately. This includes identifying if there are risks that have not otherwise been highlighted to prevent customers from 'falling through the net.' Third, they provide assurance of the quality of Adult Social Care practice including identifying strengths, areas for improvement and compliance with recording standards to support organisational learning and development.
- 1.2 The People Group quality assurance framework has five standards:
 - Standard 1: People are safe and their independence and wellbeing promoted;
 - Standard 2: People have a positive experience of services;
 - Standard 3: The workforce is skilled, motivated and valued ;
 - Standard 4: Equality and diversity are integral to services;
 - Standard 5: Services make efficient and effective use of resources.

- 1.3 Adult Social Care has an electronic case file audit tool which uses 'Survey Monkey'. The Professional Practice and Governance Business Unit led a number of improvements to the audit tool. This included strengthening the link between the tool and the standards in the Quality Assurance Framework, ensuring Care Act compliance, developing questions on quality and customer experience of People Group services and ensuring questions are clear. The revised tool was implemented across Adult Social Care teams in April 2015. It has enabled the Business Intelligence Team to produce more reliable data and reports to identify good practice and areas for development. Case file audits have been completed by managers (Lead Practitioners, Team Leaders and Operations Managers).
- 1.4 The Council's Risk and Assurance Team undertook an audit of Adult Social Care case file audits during October 2015. It concluded that 'whilst it is evident that further work is needed to embed and improve the effectiveness of the case file audit process, the level of work that has been done to develop the basic framework for undertaking case file audits should be acknowledged. Overall, the opinion is that controls provide 'moderate' assurance that risks are being managed.' Recommendations were made in relation to:
- Elements of the case file audit procedure and guidance are not operating effectively and some clarity is required around some steps within the process;
 - Areas of non-compliance with the process including non-completion of audits; inconsistent approach to completion of audits, such as the level of detail recorded; and a lack of feedback to staff on the outcome of audits undertaken;
 - A lack of clarity regarding ownership of the process, roles and responsibilities between Adult Social Care, Business Intelligence and Professional Practice and Governance;
 - Moderation arrangements are not in place;
 - Quarterly reports to Senior Management do not provide the level of data required to make a judgment on the overall standard of case files.

2.0 Case File Audit in Adult Social Care

- 2.1 Case file audits were launched within Adult Social Care during 2011/2012 including comprehensive audits for Adult Safeguarding Case Files. Case file audits in Adult Social Care carried out either by the practitioner's Line Manager or operations managers, team leaders and senior Occupational Therapists who do not line manage the practitioner.
- 2.2 An estimated 380 case file audits should be completed in a year. This is comprised of:

- 10% of cases that have been through the Adult Safeguarding procedures within 3 months. This is estimated to be 80 case file audits per year;
- 5% of assessments and reviews. This is estimated to be 300 case file audits per year.

The selection of case files should ensure that all workers have at least one of their case files audited during the year. Each Manager (Team Leader, Operations Manager and Service Manager) within Adult Social Care has approximately 4 cases to audit each quarter (which is a total of 16 cases per Manager per year). 136 case file audits were completed by Adult Social Care between 1st April 2015 and 31st January 2016. This compares with an estimated total of at least 99 case file audits were completed between January and December 2014. This is an increase of over 60% projected for a 12 month period. However, it remains significantly lower than the target of 380 completed audits. This will be addressed in a redesign of the audit tool and procedure during March and April 2016.

- 2.3 Other Adult Social Care quality assurance activities in addition to case file audits include Quality Assurance Panels chaired by Senior Managers. The panels assess the quality and standards of case recording and practice on a weekly basis. The 'Back to the Floor' programme involves Managers to spend time on the front-line and look at 'what is happening in practice'. The visits are conducted quarterly and reports are generated from each visit and subsequently shared with the Senior Management Group. This means good practice and areas for development can be evidenced and action taken to improve practice and quality.
- 2.4 In addition to the Risk and Assurance audit outlined in 1.4, the Professional Practice and Governance Business Unit conducted a survey of Adult Social Care practitioners and auditors during October 2015 using an online questionnaire. The key findings will be taken into account during the redesign of the audit tool and procedure during March and April 2016. They were:
- Use of the case file audit tool can be time consuming, but is valued by auditors;
 - Auditors say that they use the outcomes to make improvements, but results are not always shared with practitioners;
 - Some sections of the tool are less helpful than others;
 - The procedures and guidance for case file audit are rated as 'good' but the moderation process is less useful;
 - Auditors do not often get clear information about timescales, or the findings of their audit;
 - Practitioners are largely unaware of the case file audit process;
 - Where outcomes of the audit are shared, practitioners find it helpful and others would welcome discussion and feedback about the findings.

2.5 Children's Social Care has implemented a new case file tool and procedure in February 2016. The People Group plans to review this in July 2016 and for the equivalent Adult Social Care procedure to be included in the review. This presents the opportunity for an efficient and effective single case file audit procedure across Adult and Children's Social Care. It creates the potential to make case file audit easier to conduct, more consistent and to address the recommendations made in the separate internal audits of case file audits in Adult and Children's Social Care.

3.0 Key themes from Case File Audit

3.1 Key findings from the 136 case file audits in 2015-16 are:

- There is evidence of customer's views in 80% cases and their wishes in 82%.
- Carers' views are recorded in 64% of cases and their wishes in 54%;
- Desired outcomes are clear in 92% of cases, but only 29% had timescales for achieving them and 50% had evidence of progress on outcomes;
- There is evidence that the customer is in control of their care and support in 71% of cases;
- There is evidence of what the customer can do for themselves as well as areas where they may need assistance in 76% of cases;
- 40% of customers had been offered a direct payment;
- There is evidence that customers are safe in 90% of cases;
- There is evidence of positive risk taking in 70% of cases;
- What the customer wants to happen is recorded clearly in 81% of cases;
- 81% of customers were fully involved in their assessment, 75% in their support plan and 74% in their review. 84% of carers were fully involved in the assessment, 70% in the support plan and 60% in the review.

3.2 Adult Social Care case files during 2015-16 have provided a high degree of assurance of good practice. The majority have recorded evidence that customers are safe and in control of their care and support, their views and wishes recorded and they have been fully involved in their assessments, support plans and reviews. Importantly, customers' desired outcomes are clearly recorded.

3.3 However, Adult Social Care case files during 2015-16 have also suggests areas where improvement may be needed. First, carers are between 16% and 26% less likely to have their views and wishes recorded in comparison with customers. Second, whilst desired outcomes are recorded, only 29% had timescales for achieving them and 50% had evidence of progress on outcomes. This may highlight a need for more SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) support plans. Third, 40% of customers had been offered a direct payment. Further work is needed to determine whether or not this figure should be higher. It is notable that Adult Social Care

guidance on direct payments states: 'the general principal of direct payments is that they must be offered to all eligible customers and potential customers, but may not be forced upon them.'

4.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 The decision taken by the People Group is that Adult Social Care will continue to use the current case file audit tool until July 2016. By this time, the Business Change Team and Professional Practice and Governance will have used learning from the 'Proportionate Assessment Support Plan and Review' work and implementation of the new case management system, Mosaic (replacing Care First) to inform a fully revised Adult's Audit Tool. At the same time, a single Case File Audit process with Children's Social Care will be agreed.
- 4.2 The rationale for this decision is that the 'Proportionate Assessment Support Plan and Review' work is aimed at creating a more effective and efficient process in Adult Social Care. The case file audit will play an important role in establishing if this has been created and sustained. Mosaic potentially offers Adults and Children's Social Care the opportunity to automate and streamline case file audit, making it easier to conduct and report on. An adult case file audit tool developed without reference to this would have a very short life.

Background papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Mike J Wood	mikejwood@warwickshire.gov.uk Tel: 01926 742177
Head of Service	Marie Seaton	marieseaton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	John Dixon	johndixon@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Josie Compton	cllrcompton@warwickshire.gov.uk