

Management Scrutiny Committee**Self Regulation Workshop 1****Notes of Workshop held on 31 October 2011**

Present: Cllrs Tate, Rolph, Anderson and Wood.

Also Present: Mike Lowe, Caryl Macbeth, Graham King, Meg Boustead and Nigel Cummings.

The purpose of this initial workshop was twofold in highlighting some of the tools that have been and continue to be developed around self regulation, and looking at the changes to inspection arrangements in key service areas. Graham King and Meg Boustead had been invited to attend and provide a brief overview of the inspection and assessment process in their respective service areas.

Self Regulation in Adult Social Care

The previous regime of inspection included the National Performance Assessment Framework which was carried out annually by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). From this all councils were given an annual judgement and rating which covered the seven dimensions of social care. The judgement had within it agreed areas for improvement and areas of strength, this acted as a blueprint for the forthcoming year.

It was noted that for the 9 years of this inspection regime Sunderland City Council's Adult Social Care was rated excellent in 8 of the 9 inspections undertaken and good in the other one.

The future direction of inspection is based around sector led improvement as follows:

- Nationally led by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), the Local Government Group (LGG) and CQC;
- Co-ordinated through Promoting Excellence in Councils' Adult Social Care Programme Board;
- A regional approach developed by NE ADASS.

The regional approach has four main components:

1. Develop a consistent approach to performance management arrangements.
2. Provide support to those councils formerly judged as 'Adequate'.

3. Develop a regional programme of service development.
4. Start a regionally funded pilot of proposed arrangements.

It was noted that South Tyneside Council had agreed to undertake the pilot for these regional arrangements.

Members were also informed that the development of a Local Account was ongoing with discussions around the exact content of such an account. Local accounts are designed to build on the work that councils are already doing in engaging with its public and consumers around priorities and outcomes. There is the potential for local accounts to become a key accountability mechanism to the public and a useful way of informing self improvement activity locally. It was acknowledged that the account would become mandatory from 2012/13.

The new outcomes framework for adult social care will be much more service user focused, with a measure of outcomes that is more person centred. A buddy arrangement with other councils in the North East will share out the work of peer reviews. There is agreement on the main standards that councils will judge each other on, these are:

- Reablement
- Personalisation
- Prevention
- Safeguarding.

It was noted that the peer review arrangements would involve elected members.

It was also noted that the Annual Account would be signed off by the relevant scrutiny committee.

Members enquired if moving to a self assessment framework would lead to the potential for complacency. It was reported that in preparing local accounts the council needs to be very honest and brave and we like other local authorities in the region will rely on the peer council to be honest in its judgements.

Children's Services – Safeguarding

Members were reminded of the Ofsted inspection process and in particular the annual unannounced inspection which lasts approximately 2.5 days. It was noted that Children's Services had been inspected on Tuesday 25 October 2011. Running in parallel with this is the announced inspection which is more detailed and lasts for upto 2 weeks.

It was highlighted that Ofsted were currently consulting on a new inspection framework which will come into operation next year and this will tie these 2 inspections together.

There will also be more focus in future on the performance of safeguarding services within councils.

It was noted that the council Children's Services were preparing for a peer review of the safeguarding service. This review will be free to the council as it is funded by the government. This will be extremely beneficial to the service and the council as a whole. In preparing for this review an honest and frank self assessment is to be completed. Also with a peer review the service can target areas for review which can help develop new or different approaches.

It was noted that feedback from this peer review would be reported back to one of the future programmed workshops on self regulation.

Self Regulation Resources

Members were given a brief overview of some of the resources and tools available to the Council in relation to self regulation. These were as follows:

Taking the Lead (LGA) – The Local Government Groups approach to self regulation in the public sector aimed at helping councils strengthen their accountability.

Seven Point Offer (LGA) – These include Peer Challenge, Peer Support, Knowledge Hub, Data and Transparency, Leadership Support and Learning & Support Networks.

Accountability Tools (LGID) – Tools are very limited at present due to the new and developing nature of self regulation. The various aspects of the offer relate to different aspects of performance management and are brought together on a dedicated web page so they can be seen as a coherent whole.

Accountability Tools (CfPS) – The Centre for Public Scrutiny has published research around accountability entitled 'Accountability Works'.

YouChoose Budget Simulator – This is a participatory budget tool that is now offered free of charge to all local authorities.

LG Inform (LGA) – This is a performance management tool online that provides performance information against comparators of the researcher's choice. This has the potential to be a powerful tool facilitating the creation of 'bespoke' performance reports.

Summing Up

It was hoped that this first workshop had given an overview of the wider performance perspective and provided some reassurances that many of the principles of performance management are still valued.

Self regulation provides an opportunity to measure the things that really matter to residents and local communities. It will be important through the development of self regulation that the council develops robust procedures as well as looking at how it encourages local people to become more involved with the issues of performance.