

**MONITORING OF CONTRACTS WITHIN CARE HOMES**

**To:** Audit and Accounts Committee

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014

**From:** Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management

**Electoral Division(s):** All

**Forward Plan Ref:** N/A

**Key decision:** No

**Purpose:** At the Audit and Accounts Committee in July 2014, members requested a report on the process by which Care Home contracts are monitored and the level of assurance available to their financial management.

**Key Issues:** The Audit and Accounts Committee to consider the assurances available.

**Recommendations:** The Audit and Accounts Committee note the report and consider whether further assurance should be included in subsequent Internal Audit Plans.

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## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 At the July 2014 Audit and Accounts Committee, the Head of Internal Audit was requested to report back on the process by which Care Homes are monitored and the level of assurance as to their financial management. This followed a concern raised by a member in relation to the standards of care.
- 1.2 The following reflects a description and explanation of the processes and assurances in place but not an up-to-date assurance based upon a recent Internal Audit review.

## **2.0 ASSURANCES AVAILABLE**

- 2.1 Several assurances are in place to monitor Care Homes provision, as summarised below:
- (i) Process for dealing with Non-Compliance in Care Homes
  - (ii) The East Anglia Quality Surveillance Group
  - (iii) Risk Summits
  - (iv) Provider Forums
  - (v) Workforce Development Strategy
  - (vi) Internal Audit assurance

Each of these is now discussed.

### **Process for Dealing with Non-Compliance in Care Homes**

- 2.2 A system has been established within the Children, Families and Adult Services (CFA) Directorate which outlines the process to be undertaken from the identification of the source of a concern through to follow up actions.
- 2.3 The process commences from identifying potential concerns from the following sources:
- Complaints
  - Monitoring Visits
  - Information sharing meetings
  - Care Quality Commission (CQC) referrals
  - Healthwatch
  - ASC Operations
  - DN or other health professional
  - Safeguarding referrals
- 2.4 Following the identification of the concern, an assessment of the impact upon the safety of residents and an evaluation of whether they are at risk of harm, internal safeguarding and/or contract meetings occur.

- 2.5 Dependent upon the evaluation of the concern, external contract meetings are held with the senior representatives of the home/organisation at which the areas of concern are outlined. The outcome of such a meeting is then to request a Single Service Improvement Plan and Follow Up actions are agreed, which may include:
- communication with residents and relatives
  - safeguarding meetings
  - regular progress updates to the Council Directors and Group Spokes
  - the gathering of evidence to support sustained improvement against Contract Standards and CQC Essential Standards
  - consideration of removing suspension of placements
- 2.6 The system for dealing with non-compliance in Care Homes also includes informing the CQC, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Directors.
- 2.7 The key theme through the process is the on-going communication between providers, residents and agencies. A key meeting of agencies is the Sharing of Information meeting held every two months. This comprises an update of services of concern and any new services where concerns have been identified. Information and intelligence is shared regarding poor performing services with the regulator and other commissioning organisations in the county.
- 2.8 This meeting supplements the contract monitoring performed by the Council, which involves the use of a regional risk assessment approach to the identification of concerns.

### **The East Anglia Quality Surveillance Group**

- 2.9 This group provides a regional forum to share concerns, intelligence and thematic reviews beyond the county.

### **Risk Summits**

- 2.10 Once concerns are identified, external contract meetings are supplemented by “risk summits” if a specific concern merits additional attention. This could be triggered by difficulties in implementation of the Single Service Improvement Plan or consistent non-compliance with issues raised by agencies on a regular basis. The meeting aims to establish a collective view and approach to how services are to be improved.
- 2.11 Dependent upon the nature of the concern, the Risk Summits will include representatives from CCC Procurement, Adult Safeguarding, Care Placements Manager and Compliance Managers from the CQC.

## **Provider Forums**

2.12 A Provider Forum is held every quarter to disseminate good practice and allow current issues to be discussed. Recent presentations have included:

- New CQC inspection regimes
- Business Continuity Planning
- End of Life Care Training

## **Draft Workforce Development Strategy**

2.13 The Contracts Team within CCC have recently drafted a Workforce Development Strategy aimed at offering Care Homes a co-ordinated and consistent approach to training and staff development, recruitment and retention, management and leadership, career progression, statutory and local compliance.

## **3.0 INTERNAL AUDIT ASSURANCE**

3.1 Internal Audit reviewed Contract Management for the then Community and Adult Services in September 2011. The audit focused upon providing assurance over the following areas of the contract management process:

- Effectiveness of the Contract Management Strategy and whether it represented good practice
- The monitoring of Self Directed Support packages
- The provision of Domiciliary Care packages in line with the commissioned package of care

3.2 At that time, the review was assigned a “Moderate” assurance opinion. One of the recommendations was that an overall record of monitoring activity be created. This was addressed by creating a ‘dashboard record’ of Care Homes that includes:

- Whether the home is recorded on the Contracts Team “soft concerns” database
- The number of safeguarding alerts in the past 12 months
- The number of substantiated safeguarding findings
- If any CQC warning notices are in effect
- If the home is on the CQC sharing list

This provides a risk assessment to inform the timing of a visit as well as providing intelligence for areas of focus.

3.3 All recommended actions were subsequently considered to have been actioned. This report can be forwarded to members if required.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	