

MEETING	THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE	30 NOVEMBER 2017
TITLE	DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDS ARRANGEMENTS (DOLS)
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- 1) At the meeting of the Controls Improvement Working Group held on 11 September 2017, matters arising from the investigation made to the Council's arrangements in terms of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) were discussed. Whilst noting that considerable effort has already been made, the Working Group expressed its eagerness to strengthen internal arrangements and control and in doing so, to improve the Council's ability to respond to statutory requirements and reduce legal and financial risks for the Authority.
- 2) The purpose of this report is not to raise the matters discussed at the Working Group again, which appear in the minutes, but rather, to offer a further explanation on the Adults, Health and Well-being Department's wider commitment to respond to the recommendations.
- 3) Although the Department has assigned existing resources and has made use of new resources through the bidding process for creating the capacity to deal with DoLS matters, the Working Group has noted that the Department's wider contribution to deal with the workload of assessing and reviewing DoLS cases is essential to the programme. In September, the Working Group was not convinced that this element was being implemented effectively.
- 4) The Adults, Health and Well-being Department acknowledge that the arrangements for this element were not confirmed in September, but it can be confirmed that, since then, steps have been taken to improve the situation. The priority given to the changes in the Older People Service to working arrangements in five areas has contributed towards the Department's slow progress in putting robust arrangements in place.
- 5) On 25 October, a discussion was held with the service managers regarding the role of the Best Interest Assessor (BIA) officers and, consequently, the following arrangements have been implemented:
 - Every BIA officer is released one day a month to undertake an assessment.

- The area leaders will remind each BIA officer of this expectation and will support them through the Department's monthly professional supervision arrangements.
 - Arrangements have been put in place to support the BIA officer who needed a confidence boost in terms of completing assessments.
 - Clear expectations have been set in terms of the roles of area leaders and lead practitioners to ensure that the DoLS programme is implemented effectively and in a timely manner as an integral part of the area teams' work.
- 6) 29 members of the Department's staff are qualified as BIA officers. However, long-term sickness, part-time work contracts, maternity leave and appointments to other posts mean that there are approximately 20 officers who are available to fulfil this work. However, the Department acknowledges that this contribution is key to DoLS work and every effort will be made to facilitate and support it.
 - 7) It is also appropriate to draw attention to the possible impact of prioritising this work over other elements of the Department's day to day work.
 - 8) Committing BIA officers to one assessment a month could impact the area teams' ability to respond effectively and in a timely manner to the demand for services within these areas and, possibly, influence somewhat the timetable of integrating services with health. This risk might be greater in these areas where it is difficult to recruit qualified care staff. It is only possible to quantify this risk by implementing the new arrangements, mainly by keeping an eye on whether there is any increase in our waiting lists for services in the areas.
 - 9) In addition, the nature of the work means that workers cannot carry out a BIA assessment on cases they are familiar with. As a result, they will have to complete assessments on cases outside their usual work area. Usually, an assessment takes 8 to 10 hours and the need to travel and become familiar with cases would increase the hourly input.
 - 10) The Adults, Health and Well-being Department can offer assurance to the Committee that these changes will be implemented and that the situation in terms of undertaking DoLS reviews and the possible impact on wider services will be monitored.
 - 11) With these arrangements in place and the majority of appointments within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit already made, it is intended to report on the progress made to the Control Working Group within six months.