

Care Governance Strategy
for
Adult Social Care Services

Foreword

To ensure that the quality of social care support provided to the citizens of Cumbria is of a high standard and to demonstrate our commitment to the continuous development of best care practice within Cumbria County Council, the following Care Governance Strategy has been developed as an effective tool for quality improvement and service development

“Governance” describes the overall system of accountabilities and assurances that are put in place to ensure the organisation discharges its functions legally, ethically and effectively. Care Governance will be incorporated in Cumbria County Council’s existing corporate governance strategy and departmental policies.

Care Governance supports the delivery of the Council Plan, contributing to the achievement of the Adult Social Care Service improvement plan linked to maximising life opportunities, promoting health and well-being, improving services and developing staff.

In partnership with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT), the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Care Sector Alliance of Cumbria and service users and carers, we will develop policies and guidelines which will ensure that evidence based care and support is delivered safely, appropriately and is focussed on the individual needs and experiences of people.

Training programmes will be developed for new and existing services to embed Care Governance into the organisational culture at all levels.

A clearly defined accountability structure will be put in place to ensure the systems operate effectively and that key objectives and outcomes are being consistently and energetically pursued.



Cate Bowman
Head of Care Governance and Cumbria Care
November 2007

Care Governance Strategy

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition of Care Governance

Care Governance is a continuous process rather than a single event and is defined as:

A framework through which organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in care will flourish.

It covers the organisation's systems and processes for monitoring services and provides a route for accounting for the quality of services to the governing body and applies to all commissioned services, both in health, the independent sector and the third sector.

1.2 The Core Values of Care Governance

The adult social care directorate believes that care governance should be understood and applied by all members of staff involved in the delivery of care and support, and that the core values should underpin all decisions made in the service.

The core values of care governance are:

- Continuous improvement of services, care and support
- The service user experience is the central focus in decision making, meeting their needs and aspirations and keeping them informed.
- Commitment to quality, which makes certain that all staff are up to date in their practice, are expertly supervised and develop an environment where learning and tackling discrimination is built into everyday practice.
- Commitment to equality and diversity.
- Openness to share and report mistakes, errors and adverse effects of intervention as well as a commitment to learn from them.

These core values ensure that:

- Service users are given high quality care and support and that the County Council respects the independence, choice, dignity and privacy of service users and employees
- The working environment is safe and secure, and employees are valued
- The organisation supports employees and encourages input even when difficult or controversial issues are raised.
- Employees will be supported to develop skills to deliver best care practice.

1.3 Establishing a Care Governance Framework

Care governance is a key driver to realise the vision set out in the White paper “Our Health, Our Care, Our Say” for adult social care. This recognises that the Adult Social Care Directorate is both a provider of services and has an enabling role across the whole social care economy.

The directorate is refining its understanding and application of care governance and the challenges it faces for development and change. In particular, the need to use care governance as a unifying principle to assure the safety and quality of service provision and as a framework for commissioning and purchasing related services from other providers.

The Adult Social Care Directorate will:

- Establish a baseline for each of the care governance components listed below
- Plan realistic goals which focus on developing systems and processes to support care governance
- Implement a coherent programme for continuous quality improvement

1.4 Components of Care Governance

Care governance covers all aspects of services that have a direct or indirect impact on the delivery of care and support to service users. The following components are interrelated and form a framework for Care Governance:

- Service user experience
- Service user/carer and partnership involvement
- Risk management / Health and Safety
- Quality Assurance and care practice audit
- Staffing, staff management and HR policies and procedures
- Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Equality and diversity
- Education, Training and continuous professional and practice development
- The use of information to support the delivery of service including evidence based practice and learning from complaints, compliments and adverse incidents (occurring both within Cumbria and elsewhere)

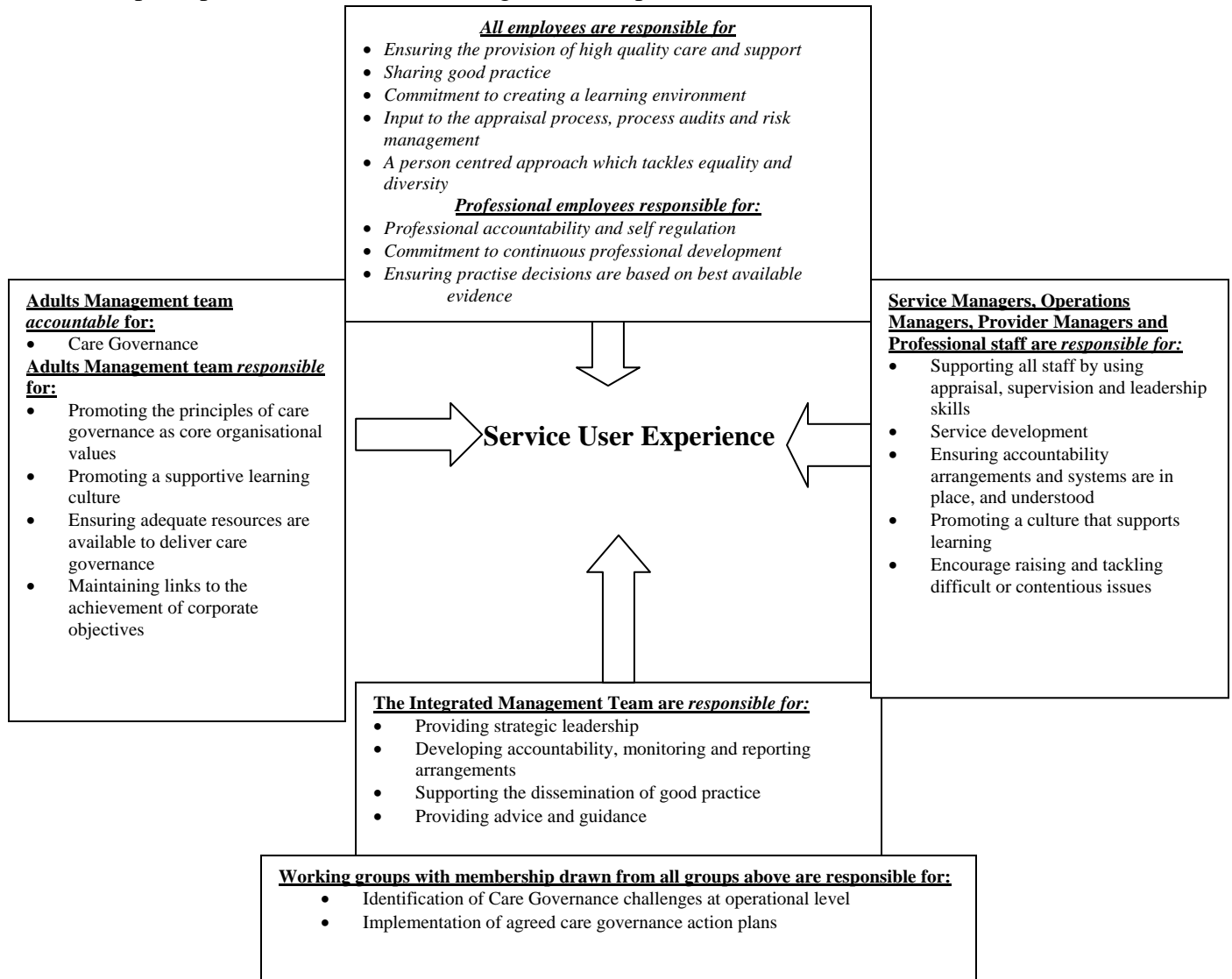
Many aspects of the components listed above are already integrated into best practice within the Adult Social Care directorate.

2 The Care Governance System

2.1 Care Governance Responsibilities

Care governance is everyone's responsibility

The core values of care governance should be understood and applied by all members of staff involved with and working in Adult Social Care. They should be the guiding principles in all decisions relating to service provision.



In order to fulfil the responsibilities of Care Governance the Integrated Management Team will:

- Develop leadership and accountability arrangements including reporting arrangements
- Monitor overall performance in relation to care governance
- Identify and agree priorities, develop action plans and establish baselines for future assessments
- Develop processes to support future practice audit and effectiveness programmes
- Establish a systematic approach for reviewing practice policies and procedures
- Monitor the application of care governance principles within all Adult Social Care services
- Assume joint accountability for the care governance of services which are delivered with partners, for example staff in the voluntary and independent sectors, Supporting People, housing and employment agencies, and nursing/care agency staff ensuring that all service specifications and contracts reflect Cumbria County Council's care governance obligations.
- Ensure the compliance with the Commission for Social Care Inspection national minimum standards in all regulated services
- Identify and coordinate the inclusion of new legislation and guidelines into existing policies.
- Develop processes to support the delivery of equality and diversity work programmes
- Ensure that our performance delivers targets as outlined in action plans arising from equality impact assessments.

2.2 Accountability Framework

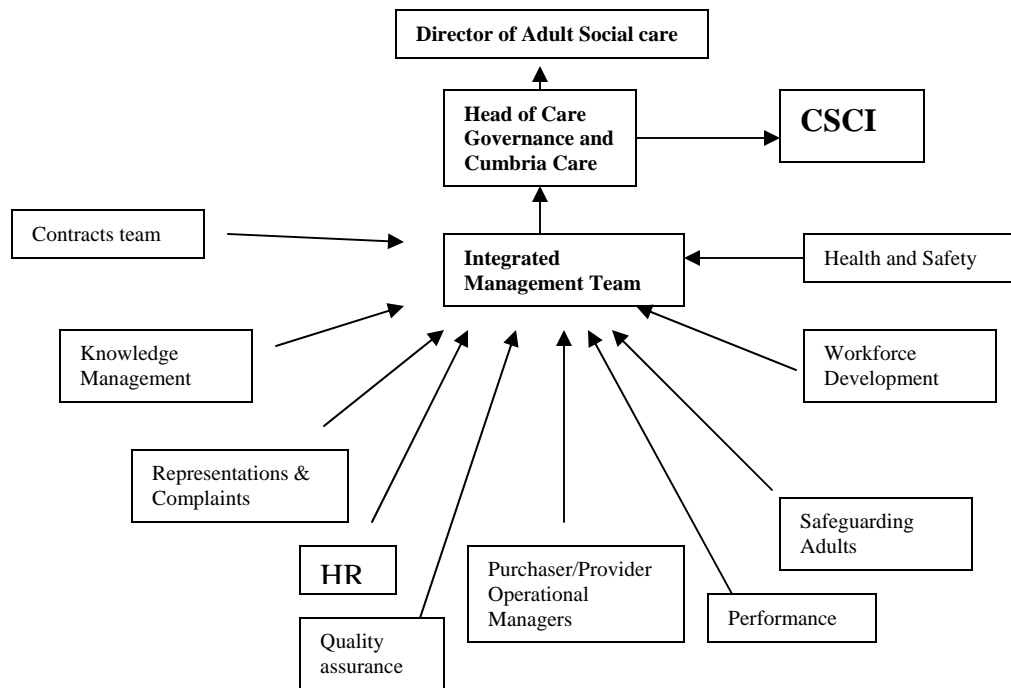
To ensure care governance works effectively there are clear lines of accountability throughout the organisation.

The Head of Care Governance and Cumbria Care will have executive responsibility to ensure that the care governance strategy is developed and implemented effectively and will report to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care.

The Head of Care Governance will report to CSCI on care governance issues via regular meetings in liaison with the PCT.

The Head of Care Governance and Cumbria Care will be responsible for overseeing the integration of care governance into the Directorate and ensuring effective management and implementation of the care governance programme through the Integrated Management team.

Working groups will be responsible for the development and delivery of care governance at service level.



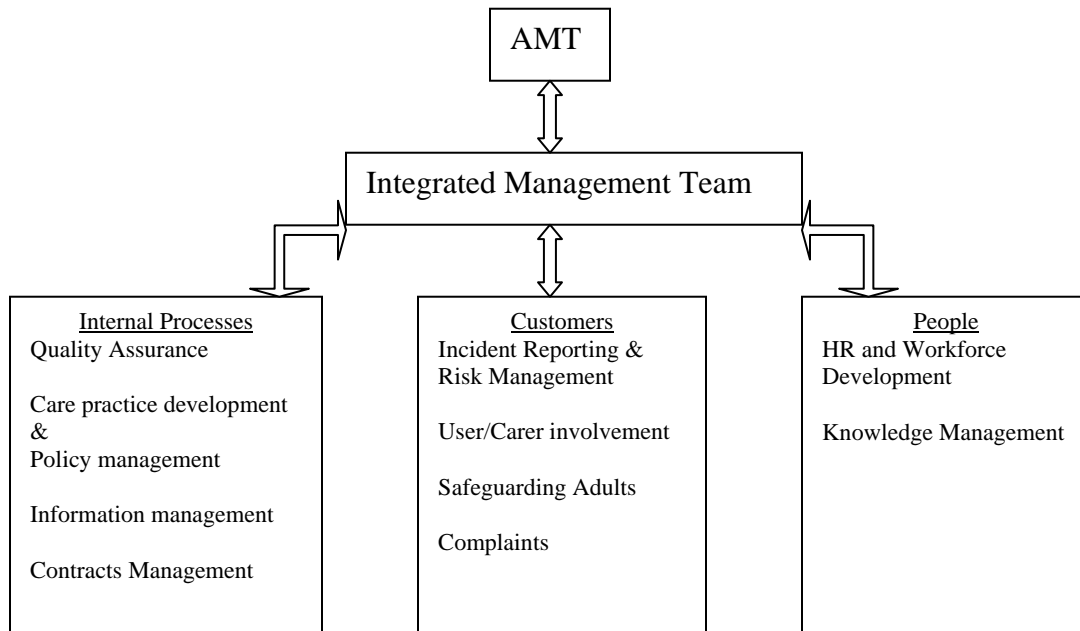
2.3 Membership and Role of the Working Groups

To integrate care governance into the Adult Social Care Directorate, and to ensure a practical, hands-on approach to care governance a series of working groups will be established to develop the key care governance components and integrate them into the existing organisational structure.

2.4 Working Groups Scheme of Delegation

The establishment of care governance in Cumbria County Council's Adult Social Care Directorate requires a great deal of work, organisation and process alignment.

The following chart outlines the proposed working groups and the reporting and delegation pathway through the organisation. Targets and action plans to deliver against the priorities identified below will be developed by each group.



2.5 Priorities 2008 – 2009

- Develop an open non-blame culture which encourages staff input even when difficult or controversial issues are raised.
- Monitoring compliance with standards set by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and with Cumbria County Council Adult Social Care Directorate policies and procedures
- Build on Cumbria County Council Corporate and Departmental guidelines, policies and procedures to develop processes to support future care audit and effectiveness programmes and develop a systematic approach for reviewing relevant policies and procedures
- Promote a process that ensures we learn from complaints and as a result improve services, care practice and performance
- Develop education, training and reflective practice opportunities to ensure that services are developed using current best practice and establish a learning environment for employees
- Develop information systems, which deliver accessible, relevant and user-friendly data to inform and support care governance priorities
- Develop a workforce planning strategy that addresses the recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled and trained employees.
- Build on existing systems to develop a network for service user and carer involvement and empowerment in developing Adult Social Care services
- Implementation of incident reporting across all adult services. (including safeguarding issues)

3 Reporting Timetable

3.1 Frequency of meetings

The Integrated Management Team meets on a monthly basis and will establish the care governance system and the key players. The meeting will be set to ensure a coordinated approach to care governance issues

3.2 Frequency of reporting from working groups

A Care Governance progress report will be submitted to AMT by the Integrated Management Team every 3 months.

Each working group lead will be responsible for submission of monthly progress reports to the Integrated Management Team.

Timetabling of final reports will be agreed with the Integrated Management Team

3.3 Reports templates

The progress reports will include

- Name and membership of working groups
- The task/remit of the group
- How the tasks fit into the wider Performance Management reporting
- Action plans, identified leads and milestones
- Current progress
- Any implementation resource issues
- Other challenges to implementation