



## **CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD – 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022**

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2021/22**

**REPORT BY: SERVICE MANAGER FOR SAFEGUARDING**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress made by the Corporate Safeguarding Board (the Board) during the 2021/22 financial year.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Board was established in February 2015 following a review by Audit Wales, formally the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council) assurance and accountability arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures were in place and being adhered to. On 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy was ratified at full Council.
- 2.2 Audit Wales subsequently undertook a follow-up review of arrangements in 2019 and identified a number of areas for improvement and consideration. A comprehensive Action Plan was developed in response which was monitored by the Board and has now been signed off as completed. A Forward Work Programme was then developed to progress work under the auspice of corporate safeguarding.
- 2.3 This is the 7th Annual Report which provides an overview of the progression of the Forward Work Programme during 2021/2022 and safeguarding practices across the Council.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Board is requested to
- note the content of this Annual Report and the recommendations
  - note the progress made regarding the Forward Work Programme
  - approve this Report to be presented to Social Services Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee in due course

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure the Board is fully aware of the Council's arrangements for corporate safeguarding and is satisfied that these arrangements are effective.

## **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 During 2021/22, the Covid-19 pandemic has continued to impact on the Council's ability to provide services, balancing the need for service provision with public and employee safety. However, the need to safeguard children and adults has continued to be one of the biggest considerations for the Council and operational safeguarding practices have continued to operate across Social Services. In order to offer assurances to the Board, the management structures for safeguarding in both Children and Adult Services have remained consistent and relevant staff have been available to support corporate safeguarding practice and development.
- 5.2 The 2020/21 Annual Report was agreed by Board on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 and reported progress in relation to several key achievements which included:
- Corporate Safeguarding Board Meetings and Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's) Development Group moved to a virtual platform
  - Audit Wales Action Plan was fully implemented
  - Safeguarding in the Procurement Process was developed for implementation Council wide
- 5.3 The following recommendations were agreed to continue the positive work into 2021/22:
- HR Department to liaise with Regional Safeguarding Outreach Officer for the Disclosure and Disbarring services to look at the role out of safe recruitment training
  - Corporate Management Team (CMT) to approve the Safeguarding in the Procurement Process Protocol so this can be implemented Council wide
  - Continue the implementation of the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework via the DSO Development Group, with data collection from service areas on an annual basis
  - Review of Internal Audit findings when available
  - Self-assessments to be reviewed and updated annually by DSO's
  - Review of the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework based on changes to training delivery
  - Develop a Safeguarding Media Campaign to link with Safeguarding Week in November 2021, to include consideration of promotion of the DSO role within service areas
  - Progress the Tier 1 Corporate Safeguarding Training video, along with Welsh translation and make this available to all volunteers, contractors etc
  - Deliver updated training to CMT and Elected Members via the Tier 1 basic awareness video when available
  - Monitor the progress of the regional Learning Management System Project
  - Progress work on a consistency of corporate safeguarding practices across Gwent, including development of a comparator key data set
  - Continue to invite speakers to attend the DSO Development Group regarding relevant safeguarding topics to continue to increase knowledge and understanding issues
  - Based on the Board's approval, the Action Plan to be closed down and replaced with a Forward Work Programme for 2021/22.

### **Overall progress to date**

- 5.4 The DSO Development Group has continued to meet on a quarterly basis via virtual platform (MS Teams). Attendance has continued to be positive. The knowledge base of the DSO's has continued to be supported via presentations and discussions on

relevant safeguarding matters which will be an ongoing recommendation. The group has met virtually on the following dates:

- 17.05.2021
- 14.07.2021
- 18.10.2021
- 07.03.2022

In addition, the Board has met on 2 occasions, rather than quarterly on the following dates:

- 13.09.2021
- 28.02.2022

- 5.5 The Board was scheduled to meet on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2021, however this meeting was postponed until the February date above due to the on-going progress of the work in the Forward Work Programme. For the past 2 years the Board has met twice per year, this has been for a variety of reasons including Covid 19 however, it is evident that this has not impacted on the progress of work and therefore it is recommended that the Board continues to meet twice yearly moving forward.
- 5.6 The recommendations for future work relating to corporate safeguarding have been captured in the Forward Work Programme. This was reviewed in March 2022 and is attached as Appendix 1. The following points are noteworthy regarding the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating status:
- a. Recommendation 2: (RAG rated Red) Relates to the National Training Framework which has not yet been implemented – implementation is planned for November 2022. Further consideration of corporate safeguarding training is considered later in this report.
  - b. Recommendation 4: (RAG rated Amber). Internal Audit have started to roll out the corporate safeguarding audit. This has been impacted by Covid 19, IT systems issues and employee availability. The report for Education and Corporate Services is due shortly and the audit will be sent out to Environment and Economy Directorate next. The outcomes from the audit can be considered via the DSO Development Group and fed into updated service area self-assessments and resulting actions plan. This can also be incorporated to the Forward Work Programme.
  - c. Recommendation 6: (RAG rated Amber). Work to acquire a Learning Management System (LMS) is moving forward with the consortium of four LA's (Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr, and Carmarthenshire). Currently, a report on a Caerphilly basis has been prepared and is with the Head of HR for review ahead of further consultation prior to submission to CMT. The purpose of the report is to update CMT on the progress of identifying and procuring a fit for purpose LMS for multiple partner local authorities, to gain agreement and secure the financial investment to proceed.
  - d. Recommendation 8: (RAG rated Red). This relates to regional corporate safeguarding developments and this work has been delayed due to changes in personnel across the Local Authorities (LA's), Covid 19 and differences in the development stages in each of the LA's. However, this developmental work does not have a direct impact on the safeguarding practices for the Council, rather this work would seek to strengthen existing practices and provide consistency across Gwent.

- 5.7 The Corporate Safeguarding Training framework was implemented in November 2019 however, since that time the progress of delivery of safeguarding training has been impacted by Covid 19. The recording and monitoring of safeguarding training, the delivery training and the 3 year refresher training were all raised in a number of Self Assessments completed by DSO's across service areas and recorded as Amber. This could leave the Council at risk due to being unable to monitor and track safeguarding training consistently across all service areas. It is evident that this is being completed in some smaller service areas e.g. Libraries however, for larger service areas such as Housing, this is a task that requires further consideration. However, the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework has made considerable progress in tracking training under specifically designed codes within Itrent and has raised the profile of safeguarding training across the Council. This of course, is dependent on training facilitators, managers and employees ensuring training is updated onto Itrent via the process outlined in the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework.
- 5.8 As noted in 5.6 (c) above, work is ongoing regarding an LMS system which could help support and track training and produce reliable data regarding employees' completion of safeguarding training across all service areas. Discussions have been held with the Workforce Development Team who are now supporting the recording and delivery of training under the VAWDASV National Training Framework and how the team can support the recording of training via better use of Itrent and the use of Learning@Wales system to deliver Group A eLearning training from the National Safeguarding Training Framework.
- 5.9 In addition to this, from an Education safeguarding perspective, an audit process is in place to ensure appropriate safeguarding practices. It is positive that out of the 45 education settings that received a safeguarding audit during 2021/22, only 2 settings required further action (Appendix 2 Key Data Set). The audit process is continually reviewed to ensure that it is robust and in line with Keeping Learners Safe and the requirements of Estyn model of auditing. As well as the training delivered to schools via Head Teachers on a 3 yearly basis (30 Head Teachers received training this year, 21 of whom have delivered to all school staff during the reporting year), 158 Designated Safeguarding Leads in secondary and primary schools received specific training and sessions for school Governors via the Governors Network has also been delivered.
- 5.10 The Corporate Safeguarding Board agreed to implement a Safeguarding Self-Assessment, which is completed on an annual basis by DSO's and requires the DSO to RAG rate some of the areas. All DSO's returned self-assessments for 2021/2022 and there were no RED areas in terms of safeguarding. It's also positive that 2 service areas highlighted themselves as all GREEN, being confident regarding their safeguarding practices. The majority of service areas highlighted some AMBER areas which are summarised as follows:
- Ensuring the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and the Corporate Safeguarding Policy is promoted routinely across the service area at regular intervals
  - Acknowledgment that undertaking the role of the DSO is an additional responsibility on top of their operational duties

- Delivery of training in the 3 tiers of the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework has been impacted by Covid 19. The tracking of training and refresher requirements, pressures of work and managers' access to Itrent to input training were highlighted as particular areas of concern
  - Storing safeguarding information confidentially with only relevant person having access needs further work in some service areas
  - Ensuring all commissioned services are aware of safeguarding requirements and training (this is now in place via the Procurement Safeguarding protocol for all newly commissioned providers)
  - Ensuring that safeguarding is considered as part of all strategic planning across all service areas
  - Ensuring that the corporate safeguarding responsibility is included in all Job descriptions, regardless of the role, across all service areas in line with the Council employees' duty to report.
  - Safe recruitment training was identified by some service areas. Safe recruitment sessions regarding DBS have been delivered via the Management Network however service areas felt that training for managers across service areas should be provided. Its understood that HR will be considering this as part of their review of HR policies
  - Safeguarding in buildings was highlighted in some areas as requiring further work, this is due to restrictions being lifted after covid 19 and employees returning to agile working and citizens being able to access building based on covid recovery plans
- 5.11 Despite the above AMBER areas that require further action, safeguarding practices across the Council continue to be strong and well embedded. Training has been supported for all services areas. The self-assessment process highlighted My Time as an opportunity to raise safeguarding matters with employees and it was clear that DSO's know who seek to advice from when required with positive links with the Adult Safeguarding Team Manager, Child Protection Coordinator and Safeguarding Service Manager. DSO's also value the DSO Development Group.

### **Planned Future Work**

- 5.12 The following recommendations are made for 2022/23:
- Implement the National Safeguarding Training Framework in November 2022 and, in response, review the training currently under the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework
  - Make Group A, eLearning Module available on the Learning@Wales website under the Caerphilly page, alongside VAWDASV Ask and Act Group 1 eLearning Module as well as Caerphilly's Tier 1 Corporate Safeguarding Video (Welsh and English)
  - Review of Internal Audit's findings, when available
  - Incorporate AMBER issues noted in point 5.10 into the Forward Work Programme
  - Self-assessments to be reviewed and updated annually by DSO's
  - The Safeguarding Media Campaign to be implemented
  - Deliver Tier 1 Safeguarding Training to CMT and Elected Members the 2022 Elections
  - Continue to monitor the progress of the LMS Project
  - Progress work on developing a consistent approach to corporate safeguarding practices across Gwent, including development of a comparator key data set and a regional self-assessment tool

- Continue to invite speakers to attend the DSO Development Group regarding relevant safeguarding topics
- Reduce Board meetings from quarterly to twice per year (6 monthly) with the DSO Development Group continuing to meet quarterly.

## 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are no assumptions made or presumed in this report.

## 7. **INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Integrated Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

## 8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 As noted in the previous Annual Reports, safeguarding awareness training has been provided within existing resources and this has continued to date.

8.2 The National Safeguarding Training Framework is due to be launched in November 2022, this may require consideration of who facilitates training for safeguarding leads and those roles within the safeguarding process. Such training may need to be commissioned.

8.3 The progression of the LMS is now supported via Workforce Development in conjunction with Digital Services and Welsh Government Transformation and is still on going. Future costs continue to be unknown however, a report is due to be presented to CMT.

## 9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel or HR implications arising from this report.

## 10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 The report is for information purposes and reflects the views of consultees.

## 11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

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Consultees: Gareth Jenkins, Head of Children's Services  
Cllr Elaine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Services  
The Corporate Safeguarding Board  
The DSO Development Group

Appendix 1: Forward Work Programme