



## **CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD – 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2024**

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2023/24**

**REPORT BY: SERVICE MANAGER FOR SAFEGUARDING**

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

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Safeguarding Board with an update on progress made during the 2023/24 financial year.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Board was established in February 2015 following a review by Audit Wales, 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. Since that time the Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been updated when required to ensure the policy continues to reflect relevant safeguarding matters. The Policy is available on the Council's Intranet pages.
- 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 and signed off by the Board. Since that time a Forward Work Programme was developed and is reviewed via the Board regarding the progress of work under the auspice of corporate safeguarding.
- 2.3 This is the 9th Annual Report which provides an overview of the progression of the Forward Work Programme during 2023/2024 and safeguarding practices across the Council.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Board is requested to:
- note the content of the Annual Report including the recommendations.
  - note the progress made regarding the Forward Work Programme
  - approve the Report being presented to Corporate Management Team, 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 2022/23, safeguarding children and adults has continued to be the main priority for Social Services. As reported last year, management and operational structures have remained consistent in both Children and Adult Services, this has ensured the continued consistency of safeguarding practices and the availability of support regarding safeguarding on a corporate level. From an Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) perspective, it was recognised that the complexity of work being referred for children and adults and the increased resource demands in the team, that the Team Manager capacity should be increased to provide dedicated roles for children and Adults. Therefore, as of the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, there are 2 Team Managers in post within IAA.

- 5.2 The following recommendations were made in the 2023/24 Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report ratified at Board on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2023:

- All new starters complete the Group A eLearning module available on the Caerphilly Page of the Learning@Wales digital platform
- HR induction process to be updated to reflect this for all new employees
- Update the Caerphilly Safeguarding Training Framework for all PC users to complete Group A as their Tier 1 basic awareness training. The Tier 1 safeguarding videos, SWAY presentation and written presentation for Basic awareness can still be available for non PC users as required
- Roll out the Corporate Safeguarding Credit Card leaflet for use by service areas – printing costs need to be approved.
- Safe Recruitment training plan to be developed so that this is made available to all those involved in the recruitment process
- Implement the Gwent regional self-assessment format for 2023/24 and begin discussions about comparison data being collected to report during the year
- On going liaison with the Workforce Development Team and links to Itrent to improve data collection for safeguarding training and consider job roles to specific levels of safeguarding training requirements
- Review the Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework in line with the National Safeguarding Training Framework after November 2023
- Continue to invite speakers to the DSO Development Group to increase knowledge of DSO's on matters relating to safeguarding
- Review the current work and decision making relating to the LMS
- Incorporate the amber/red rated issues from the self-assessments into the forward work programme as agreed by the DSO Development Group.

## Overall progress to date

5.4 The DSO Development Group has continued to meet via the virtual platform (MS Teams) where the Forward Work Programme and other matters relating to safeguarding have been discussed. This includes presentations to the DSO's regarding safeguarding matters or service provisions to ensure continued learning regarding safeguarding matters. The group has met virtually on the following dates:

- 10.07.2023
- 16.10.2023
- 22.1.22024
- 15.04.2024

A further meeting took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 which was an extraordinary meeting to consider the National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF) and the impact of this on the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework. This is detailed in 5.9 below.

5.5 The Corporate Safeguarding Board last met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2023. A Board meeting was scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2023; however this was cancelled due to the work in the Forward Work Programme progressing and the availability of the Safeguarding Service Manager, who was at that time also supporting operational requirements in the Information, Advice and Assistance Team due to resourcing matters. Even though Board has only met once, corporate safeguarding data was presented to CMT and PDM in November 2023 by the Head of Children's Services and the Safeguarding Service Manager.

5.6 The recommendations for future work relating to corporate safeguarding has been captured in the Forward Work Programme. This was reviewed in preparation for Board and is attached as Appendix 1. The following points are noteworthy regarding the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating status:

- a. Recommendation 1: (RAG rated Amber) Relates to the delivery of safe recruitment training supported via People Services. Progress has been made in the training package has been developed and a delivery pilot has taken place. However, People Services are reviewing their processes, and any changes would need to be reflected in the training before this is rolled out. It is anticipated that the training will be available approximately summertime 2024. This will ensure the training accurately reflects updated HR process and practice.
- b. Recommendation 3: (RAG rated Amber). This relates to Corporate Safeguarding Training. Several actions are highlighted as Amber under this recommendation, which mainly relate to the implementation of the National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF). There is much work to be completed regarding this in relation to linking job

roles to the relevant level of training under the NSTF which would then inform the updated Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework. This is detailed in 5.9 below.

- c. Recommendation 4: (RAG rated Amber). In terms of the matters raised by DSO's via the self-assessments for 2022/23, this has remained Amber due to the issues related to training which are yet to be resolved and are now linked to the implementation of the NSTF and will be taken forward into 2024/25.
- d. Recommendation 5: (RAG rated Amber). Internal Audit continue to work with Heads of Service regarding the outstanding actions. One main point regarding outstanding actions does relate to the role out of Safe Recruitment training which has already been outlined under point (a) above. Further reference to Internal Audit outstanding actions is referenced further in the report at point 5.12.
- e. Recommendation 7: (RAG rated Amber). The work relating to the LMS system has progressed and reference to the current position is highlighted further in the report at 5.10.
- f. Recommendation 9: (RAG rated Amber). The regional work regarding corporate safeguarding arrangements has made some progress over the past year. The regional self-assessment tool is now in use in 4 of the Gwent LA's. However, comparison data from the 5 LA's has not been available for reporting for 2023/24. This is due to the reporting structures in each of the Gwent LA's not being aligned. Initial discussions have been held regarding a regional response to the NSTF, however again the 5 LA's are at different stages regarding the implementation and this is being further considered by Gwent Heads of Service.

5.7 As noted in previous annual reports, the delivery of safeguarding training and the monitoring and tracking of this has remained an ongoing concern throughout 2023/24 and continues to be a risk for the Council. The Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework is now superseded by the National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF). The NSTF sets out different levels of training (Group A to F) which is linked to the job role and involvement and decision-making responsibilities in the safeguarding process. Under each level is a set of training standards that must be linked to the training package to be delivered under each Group. Social Care Wales (SCW) developed an eLearning package that meets the requirements of the Group A standards outlined in the NSTF. This was made available via the learning@wales platform however issues arose with accessing the platform so this has not been fully embedded. Due to this the Work Force Development Team developed a PowerPoint Presentation based on the eLearning module. This

has now been rolled out to CMT and Elected Members and completion is tracked via the use of a questionnaire captured via google forms with a request to complete the training by the end of March. As of the 3.4.24, this figure stands at 31 – 3 members of CMT and 28 Elected Members. Elected Members and CMT members make up Group F of the NSTF due to their strategic positions in the Council. The NSTF states that Group F Council members can undertake Group A training. The PowerPoint presentation was made available to CMT and Elected Members

- 5.8 There is a need to make Group A training available to all employees in job roles who require this level of training. Work is in progress to make the Group A PowerPoint presentation available on the council intranet safeguarding page prior to the roll out of the LMS platform.
- 5.9 Under the current Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework will need to be updated to reflect the NSTF, however the first piece of work required is for DSO's to consider the level so training required against job roles within the service areas. This is a large piece of work for DSO's and has been supported via CMT. A deadline of the 10<sup>th</sup> of May has been provided to DSO's to complete this piece of work.
- 5.10 As noted in 5.6 (e) above, the work regarding the LMS has progressed to the point where Caerphilly now has access to a pilot Caerphilly site within Thingi. What is positive is that the Caerphilly Thingi site has been prepopulated with the Group A Safeguarding Package and the Group 1 VAWDASV eLearning package. To manage the risk to the Council with regards to safeguarding training, the focus of work for 2024/25 will be ensuring that the implementation of the NSTF moves forward.
- 5.11 The Self Assessments for 2023/2024 were completed using the updated regional tool which is now in use for 4 of the Gwent local authorities. The self-assessments have been reviewed by the Safeguarding Service Manager and the following themes have been identified to feed into the Forward Work Programme for 2024/25:
- Ensuring that policies are updated and reviewed on a regular basis and how this is communicated within service areas.
  - Delivery of safeguarding training and the tracking and monitoring of training to ensure compliance, this includes the availability of training for DSO's
  - Availability and delivery of safe recruitment training. This is also noted by Internal Audit as an outstanding action for services areas and is already noted within the Forward Action Programme
  - Ensuring that service areas that are accessed by citizen's are made aware of who the DSO is for that service area.

- Site security was raised by 2 service areas as requiring action and this related to ensuring visitor badges were available and used and also ensuring supervision is require of contractors when accessing sites.
- Maintaining confidentiality for information shared about a child or staff member.
- Consent regarding information and what can and cannot be shared.
- On line safety responsibilities
- Monitoring of complaints
- The commissioning of services and ensuring safeguards are in place for commissioned services.
- The need for safeguarding to be linked to service area strategic plans - this question was not answered in some self-assessments.

5.12 As noted in the Forward Work Programme, an Internal Audit regarding Corporate Safeguarding has completed across all Directorates. Internal Audit colleagues on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 advised that there are 12 outstanding recommendations. 7 of the 12 relate to the availability of safe recruitment training with 1 related to basic safeguarding training being available for volunteers, new starters and contractors. As already noted within the report, it is anticipated that safer recruitment training will be available later this year. The remaining 5 recommendations relate directly to the self assessment return from Land and Property Services which the Head of Service is fully aware of.

5.13 From an education perspective, safeguarding underpins all priorities within the LEA. There are several areas of focus for the work of education safeguarding including advice and support, training, safeguarding audits of education provisions and support for practitioner concerns. This activity ensures that, not only safeguarding compliance is met, but that there is a robust and effective culture of safeguarding which is centred on the welfare of learners, protecting them and creating conditions for them to thrive.

5.14 There is excellent partnership working across Education with Children's Services and other key stakeholders in safeguarding to ensure that there is a robust approach towards safeguarding arrangements. There is on-going representation from social services and education at multi agency' safeguarding forums including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee meeting (MARAC), Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting (MASE), Case Practice Review's (CPR's) and Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (PRUDIC). Education is also supportive of Operation Encompass to support children in school impacted by domestic abuse. There are positive links between Education Safeguarding, education provisions and the Information Advice and Assistance Team (IAA) to ensure the right service

is provided at the right time and safeguarding concerns re responded to effectively.

- 5.15 Caerphilly Children's Services hosts the Gwent Police West Safeguarding Hub in IAA at Foxes Lane. The Hub supports Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen and fosters regional working arrangements for children who are at risk of exploitation or missing or require early intervention and prevention.
- 5.16 Appendix 2 highlights the corporate safeguarding key data set which provides relevant safeguarding data for 2023/24.

### **Planned Future Work**

- 5.17 The following recommendations are made for further work to be completed under the auspice of Corporate Safeguarding for 2024/25:
- Continue to deliver existing training packages until the NSTF is fully implemented and packages of training to meet the required standards are available
  - Make the PowerPoint presentation available for all employees who require Group A basic safeguarding awareness training via the intranet
  - Update the HR Induction process to include the Group A PowerPoint presentation to be completed by all new employees as part of the induction process, moving to accessing the LMS system once available.
  - Implement the LMS product Thingi and ensure all required safeguarding training is linked to the LMS, including Group A Basic Safeguarding Awareness eLearning module.
  - Designated Safeguarding Officers to link job roles to the required level of training under the National Safeguarding Training Framework by the 10<sup>th</sup> of May
  - Once available via Gwent Safeguarding Board, deliver Train the Trainer sessions to the current in house training delivery group to deliver Group B training on a corporate basis.
  - Group A PowerPoint presentation to be translated and made available in Welsh, pending the eLearning module being available for use by employees in Thingi. A Welsh eLearning Model is available on the Social Care Wales Website
  - Monitor completion of the Internal Audit recommendations
  - Support the Head of Land and Property Services to meet the required recommendations identified by Internal Audit and review the Designated Safeguarding Officers role within the service to ensure compliance the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
  - Ensure that Safe Recruitment Training is finalised and rolled out
  - With the Head of Children's Services, consider resources available to roll out Group B and Group C training across the Council

## **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 Safeguarding training has been provided within existing resources and this has continued to date.
- 8.2 The National Safeguarding Training Framework (NSTF) has now been launched and work is underway to align the levels of training within the framework against job roles so that the Council can be compliant with the framework and employees receive the right level of safeguarding training commensurate with their job role in the Council. As stated within the report, there are resource implications for training delivery and the commissioning of training to ensure compliance may need to be considered. The costing of this will be impacted by the numbers of employees that require training via Group B and Group C.

## **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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The Corporate Safeguarding Board  
The DSO Development Group

Appendix 1: Forward Work Programme

Appendix 2: Key Data Set 2023/2024