

# Report

## Council

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### Part 1

**Date:** 18 July 2023

**Subject** **Annual Safeguarding Report (Interim) of the Head of Corporate Safeguarding**

**Purpose** To present the Annual Safeguarding Report (interim) to Council

**Author** Head of Corporate Safeguarding

**Ward** City Wide

**Summary** This report is the Head of Corporate Safeguarding's evaluation of 2022/23 performance for the Local Authority. This Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for every Service within the Council setting out responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk. It lays out the methods by which the Council will be assured that it is fulfilling its duties and that effective practices are in place to support individuals to live their life free from harm, abuse and neglect. It also informs of future developments and proposed improvements to measuring performance and data collection for benchmarking progress and improvement.

**Proposal** **To receive the Annual Safeguarding Report (interim) by the Head of Corporate Safeguarding**

**Action by** Head of Corporate Safeguarding

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Social Services Staff
- Safeguarding Champions in all Directorates
- Cabinet Member for Social Services
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change

**Signed:**

## **Background**

This is the sixth review of the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report. Further revisions to the format and data presented within this annual report have been made. It is anticipated that due to further work with partner agencies such as the Gwent Safeguarding Board and Welsh Government there will be further changes to format in coming years.

This role falls under the management of the Director of Social Services.

The Annual Safeguarding report demonstrates how Newport City Council will meet its obligations towards the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. It also gives assurances to the public, councillors, employees, volunteers and people carrying out work on behalf of the Council that there are sound arrangements in place to safeguard children and adults at risk. This report complements the end of year reports that are also available.

## **Head of Corporate Safeguarding's Summary of Performance**

- Corporate Safeguarding describes both the policy commitment that a Council makes and the arrangements it has in place, to ensure that all its Directorates and employees play their part in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and adults who may be at risk of harm.
- The report is an interim report of the Annual Corporate Safeguarding report. It was presented to Scrutiny on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. The reporting cycle for this report has been adjusted this year and this has been presented 7 months following the previous report. Members are respectfully reminded that this is not a full 12-month picture. Respecting the previous requests to provide only streamlined and targeted information, revisions to the format and data presented have been made to this interim report and it is anticipated that due to further work with partner agencies such as the Gwent Safeguarding Board and advice from Welsh Government, a final version of the report will be agreed within the next two years.
- We are also looking at the governance structure of Corporate Safeguarding and in consultation with current Safeguarding Champions and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) across the Local Authority, we have agreed to meet quarterly to formulate a joint action plan for Corporate Safeguarding issues and the monitoring of these.
- Everyone – employees, contractors, volunteers, and councillors have a role to play in protecting children and adults from harm, whether this is inside or outside the home. It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of safeguarding in their day-to-day work for the Council and know when and how to raise concerns.
- Overall, the Local Authority is compliant and meeting its duties regarding Safeguarding practices for children and adults. It is acknowledged that services are still feeling the effects post-pandemic and referrals into HUB and First Contact Team remain high. However, despite these increases we have been generally effective in implementing the right decision or "right service" at the right time for both children and adults. There have been further developments in the Prevention and Early intervention service as well as the beginnings of a plan for the development of a regional threshold document for services.
- It is acknowledged that the authority still has some way to go to improve in terms of mandatory training compliance targets, particularly when benchmarking to other LA's and partner agencies specifically for VAWDASV compliance, which carries Welsh Government non-compliance fines. The continued low compliance for mandatory safeguarding training courses by employees (including volunteers and elected members) is a matter which is being prioritised. There are developments to centralise the data for completion of this training via an at a glance dashboard on MiHub. This will make the oversight of compliance more straightforward.

- We are asking that the actions for future work are endorsed and those outstanding are rolled over with the appropriate prioritisation given to the work around mandatory training compliance; governance and recording of safeguarding data for more effective benchmarking and reporting (including developing a more robust self-assessment tool which is regionally aligned; WCCIS reporting of service area referrals from DSP's); Safeguarding Training Framework development project to be relaunched; and a newly devised "Safeguarding, Young People Web Information Project" beyond the current safeguarding webpage to be considered by CSMT beyond the action plan of annual Corporate Safeguarding.

Whilst the Social Services Directorate lead on dealing with enquires regarding concerns that individuals may be at risk of harm, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard the well-being of adults and children who may be at risk whatever their role. The Corporate Safeguarding policy covers all functions and services of the Council and applies to all Council employees, elected members, foster carers, individuals undertaking work placements, volunteers and anyone carrying out work on behalf of the Council, including independent contractors.

The Council also has a duty to ensure that other organisations commissioned to provide services on their behalf have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the well-being of adults and children.

### **National Safeguarding Training Standards**

Social Care Wales, along with multi-agency partners, is developing National Safeguarding Training Standards. These will support safeguarding professionals, and a much wider range of Council and agency staff, to understand their respective roles in relation to safeguarding. The framework is structured around defining the responsibilities associated with different employee, executive or leadership roles. These will be arranged in groups, from Group A, which focuses on basic safeguarding awareness and guidance for all employees, through to Group F, which includes public sector leaders.

The Council will work to safeguard children and adults at risk in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which defines:

- A child at risk is a child who is experiencing or at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm and;
- Has needs for care and support whether the authority is meeting any of those needs.
  - An adult at risk is an adult who is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and;
  - Has needs for care and support whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs and;
  - As a result of those needs is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

### **Recommendations to the Council**

The Council is asked to:

1. Consider the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Executive Summary report, to scrutinise and review the progress of the key priority work plans for both corporate safeguarding arrangements and the safeguarding self- assessment findings for the whole Council.
2. Determine if it wishes to make any comment / recommendations regarding the report and how the Council is managing corporate safeguarding.

### **Related legislation, policy, and guidance**

Legislation which is contained within the various Acts and guidance that are identified below enshrine the right to protection from abuse. The legal starting point in achieving this objective is professionals' duty to report allegations of abuse and neglect.

The law also identifies the Local Authority as the lead organisation in making enquiries to identify whether an individual is at risk and in coordinating the response to protect. In practice this is never

achieved in isolation or without clear leadership and accountability for the work which is equally set out in law, along with the duty to cooperate and collaborate with others.

The Council recognises that good practice in safeguarding brings together all activity aimed at promoting safe practice with vulnerable groups and preventing abuse and neglect. For this reason, and because the law, policy, guidance, and regulations change from time to time, it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of relevant documents, but the most significant items are below:

- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- Education Act 2002 – plus “Keeping Learners Safe 201” – The role of local authorities, governing bodies, and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Housing Act 2004
- Licensing Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The Council will ensure that practice is compliant with the following policies and procedures:

- Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 - codes of practice and guidance
- Newport City Council’s Whistleblowing Policy
- Newport City Council’s Recruitment Policies, which includes Safe Recruitment Policies and Safeguarding in Employment Guidance
- Employees, and councillors should also act in accordance with the relevant professional Code of Conduct

The intention is that this Corporate Safeguarding Policy will supplement and not replace any responsibilities already set out in legislation, policy or guidance set out above.

### **Strategic context**

At a strategic level, this approach to safeguarding supports the delivery of the Council’s wellbeing objectives as set out within the Corporate Plan 2022-27

At an All-Wales level, keeping people safe contributes to the Wellbeing goals set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales.

### **Governance**

The Council will discharge its strategic statutory safeguarding responsibilities through Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and Safeguarding Champions in each Council Directorate. These identified individuals will represent their Directorate at the Corporate Safeguarding Champions quarterly meeting and act as a conduit for the dissemination of safeguarding information from the Head or Corporate Safeguarding.

### **Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)**

There are no financial considerations for this workstream.

	<b>Year 1 (Current)</b> £	<b>Year 2</b> £	<b>Year 3</b> £	<b>Ongoing</b> £	<b>Notes including budgets heads affected</b>
<b>Costs (Income)</b>					
<b>Net Costs (Savings)</b>					
<b>Net Impact on Budget</b>					

## Risks

It is important to identify and manage any project or scheme's exposure to risk and have in place controls to deal with those risks.

<b>Risk Title / Description</b>	<b>Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation Action(s)</b> What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	<b>Risk Owner</b> Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Pressure on the Delivery of Children Services	H	M	Ongoing efficiency management Ongoing recruitment	Head of Children's Services
Pressure on Adult & Community Services	H	M	Ongoing efficiency management Ongoing recruitment	Head of Adult's Services
Safeguarding – inherent risk	M	M	Training and awareness raising to all staff	Head of Corporate Safeguarding

\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

## Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2022 -2

## Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The Council and Safeguarding report confirms there are no cost implications as the identified action plans will be implemented from existing resources.

## Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report, which simply provides an annual update for Council on the progress made in implementing the arrangements for corporate safeguarding in relation to children and vulnerable adults in accordance with the annual Corporate Safeguarding Plan. The Report confirms that the Council is compliant and is meeting its statutory safeguarding duties under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It is acknowledged however that the authority needs to improve mandatory training compliance targets, particularly when benchmarking to other LA's and partner agencies specifically for VAWDASV compliance.

## Comments of Head of People, Policy, and Transformation

Effective safeguarding arrangements are a vital part of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of local people during Council's business. A corporate approach to safeguarding ensures clear and consistent procedures are in place so that council employees can recognise signs and dangers and will then act appropriately. The Corporate Safeguarding Report provides for openness and accountability and allows the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council to have an overview role of the Council's safeguarding arrangements and activities.

There are no direct human resources implications to this report other than the rollout of the mandatory training.

## Scrutiny Committees

The report went to Scrutiny Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. Recommendations were as follows;

- The Committee thanked the officers for the detailed report and were pleased with the work that the service area are doing. Members requested that future reports focus less on statistics and more on outcomes, such as more detail about what we are doing, what the issues and problems are, and what we are doing about it.
- The Committee were aware that some of the online training courses are managed externally, however they would like to make a recommendation to IT to help make it as easier as possible for Members and staff to access training courses.
- The Committee noted that two sets of figures were included in the report regarding the number of courses completed by schools were different as two separate systems are being used. As the information is inaccurate Members request that this information is removed from the report.

## Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

### • Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

- The importance of having a workforce up to date with all mandatory training courses and understanding the role and influence their services have in the ongoing work to ensure the community is strong and resilient.
- The Social Services and Well-Being Act (2014) ensures that the prevention element that is required within the legislation supports communities to access early intervention for support that offers advice and assistance to maintain independence, improve wellbeing and prevent unnecessary escalation to statutory services. To ensure that professionals know their statutory duty to identify and report concerns is central to this.
- Integration: The ongoing work to in an integrated way with partners to ensure that we are all meeting our collective safeguarding responsibilities.
- Collaboration: The ongoing work with partners, specialist providers, independent, third sector and nationals who have rallied together throughout the Pandemic to ensure support continues to be available. Supported by the Local Authority in terms of co-ordination of services and distribution of Welsh Government funding to ensure they remain sustainable and responsive to changing needs.
- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the city we serve.

### • Equality Act 2010 and Socio-economic Duty

This report does not reflect a policy change or decision which would impact disproportionately on staff or communities because of protected characteristics or inequalities arising because of socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, a formal Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However, fairness and equality are considered in service delivery.

### • Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The service area is mandated by Welsh Government to collect data around this measure to illustrate and monitor need.

## Consultation

There have been two bespoke online safeguarding sessions delivered to elected members in 2022 in addition to the mandatory safeguarding training that all staff must attend.

## Background Papers

Interim Corporate Safeguarding Report 2023

Dated: 11 July 2023