

Report

Council

Part 1

Date 16 July 2024

Subject **Annual Safeguarding Report of the Head of Corporate Safeguarding**

Purpose To present the Annual Safeguarding Report to Council

Author Head of Corporate Safeguarding

Ward City Wide

Summary This report is the Head of Corporate Safeguarding's evaluation of 2023/24 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 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 Policy and Transformation

Signed

Background

This is the seventh 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 or are at risk of harm.
- The report was presented to Scrutiny on 26th April 2024. The reporting cycle for this report has been adjusted this year and this has been presented 11 months following the previous report. Members are respectfully reminded that this is not a full 12-month picture. Respecting the wishes of the committee to provide only streamlined and targeted information, revisions to the format and data presented have been made to this 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 model presented for Scrutiny will be agreed within the next two years.
- We have improved 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. In addition, we are planning biannual update meetings with all Heads of Service to ensure that information and oversight is shared.
- 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 demand for services remains high. However, despite the ongoing pressure, we have been generally effective in implementing the right decision or "right service" at the right time for both children and adults. The Prevention and Early intervention service means that there is a step up/step down function for cases that may not meet threshold for statutory services.
- Mandatory Safeguarding training compliance remains an issue. We are fully aware of the gaps and we are working collaboratively to improve compliance and reporting of compliance. This is a matter that is being prioritised. There are developments to centralise the data for completion of this training at a corporate level and the national standardisation of safeguarding training will simplify this.
- 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 (The

Social Care recording system) is being phased out of operation in Wales, so we are exploring new approaches across Gwent wide.

- The Corporate Safeguarding policy has been updated as have the Children's and Adult's Safeguarding policies. All will be available on the council website very soon.

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.

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 2021” – 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 2019
- 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. There will also be biannual meetings with Heads of Service to ensure that themes and risks are discussed fully at a senior level.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no financial considerations for this workstream.

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

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.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner 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	Head of Adult's Services

			Ongoing recruitment	
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 2022-27

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The Children's Services Safeguarding Hub has received additional investment of £350k in 24-25 to address the increased demand. This will enable the service to restructure teams to ensure the demand is managed as safely as possible and help with recruitment and retention issues experienced previously. The impact of this investment will be carefully monitored throughout the year.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The relevant legal provisions and implications are set out in the report.

Comments of Head of People, Policy, and Transformation

Effective safeguarding arrangements are a vital part of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of local people in the course of the 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 openness and accountability and allows the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet to have an overview role of the Council's safeguarding arrangements and activities.

Completion rates of mandatory training remains a concern and service areas should make plans to support their teams in completing this mandatory training. The training referred to in the report is available through the Council's e-learning platform, which is accessible and available to all staff. Performance information on completion is provided to managers on a regular basis for them to ensure completion and since the last report the frequency of refresher of all mandatory training has been agreed.

Scrutiny Committees

The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report was discussed at Scrutiny on the 26th April 2024. Scrutiny recommendations were.

- A diagram be created and included to demonstrate the complex safeguarding structure in NCC, including wider partners. They requested that this is shared with the Committee as soon as Officers are able.
- The tables on page 18 are clarified and that a copy of the updated VAWDASV training table be circulated to the Committee as soon as Officers are able.
- The report separates mandatory training data for Corporate staff and social care professionals.
- Continuous professional development and training data for social care professionals be included.
- A section highlighting Designated Safeguarding Person training and support in future reports.
- Percentages are contextualised within future reports.
- Whistleblowing training data is included within future reports.
- Work in Standard 2 is more thoroughly evidenced.
- The report specifies that "resource implication" refers to the safeguarding team and not NCC as a whole.

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 Dut

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 as a result 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

We have delivered bespoke training to elected members previously and would be keen to repeat this upon request.

Background Papers

Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2024

Dated: 9 July 2024