



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022**

#### **REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR CAPLE**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to share with Cabinet the Annual Report for 2021-2022 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board. See Appendix 1.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes and endorses the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report for 2021-2022.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has a statutory responsibility to publish an Annual Report on 31st July each year, to demonstrate its effectiveness in exercising its functions in the preceding financial year.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Annual Report is twofold; it is a tool of accountability and a tool for evaluation. Accountability has three components:
- accountability to the public;
  - accountability to the statutory partner agencies of the Board; and

- accountability to the inspectorate bodies.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.
- 4.2 The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub-Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board Business Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

#### **4.3 Summary of Key Achievements for 2021-2022**

- 4.4 The Board published an Annual Plan on 31 March 2021, setting out its priorities for safeguarding children, young people and adults. Full details can be found in the report attached but a summary of the progress made against priorities is provided below:

#### **Ensure an Effective Response to the Impact of the COVID19 Pandemic**

- 4.5 This year, the Board continued to maximise opportunities to use virtual platforms to hold meetings and deliver training. Three virtual Learning Events were held to support Practice Reviews.
- 4.6 The Board ensured that outstanding actions from the previous year, which were delayed due to the pandemic, were completed. This included completing outstanding audits and protocols that were in development.
- 4.7 The Board wanted to ensure that those most at risk were able to re-engage with services. Agencies maximised virtual platforms and a variety of communication methods to facilitate this. Innovative approaches, such as facilitating family time in outside areas, were adopted.
- 4.8 The Board wanted to ensure that people living in Care Homes continued to be safeguarded as lockdowns eased. COVID cases continued to fall throughout the year and arrangements for safe face-to-face visits for family members of residents were put in place.

- 4.9 The pandemic brought significant challenges to the workforce, with changes to working arrangements, shifts in priorities and staff sickness/isolation being key features of working practice. The Board sought assurances from partner agencies that staff were supported, and their wellbeing prioritised.
- 4.10 Board partner agencies operated an adapted 'business as usual' approach throughout 2021-22 and responded flexibly to an increased demand and ever-changing situation across the health and social care system. Agencies have provided the Board with consistent performance data to monitor activity and identify changes in demand. Data demonstrated increasing demands in all areas, and quality assurance work was undertaken where a greater understanding on the reasons for this were required.

#### **Strengthen Safeguarding Links to other Partnerships in the Region**

- 4.11 At an executive level, this has involved working with the Regional Partnership Board and its supporting governance structure. Good links have been maintained with the Community Safety Partnership at both a strategic and operational level. There are good collaborative working arrangements with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Prevent/Channel Panel, Licensing and Domestic Abuse Services that sit within the Community Safety Partnership. A Regional Prevent Delivery Group has been established and partner agencies have been involved in the testing of a new Prevent e-learning platform, designed to safeguard individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

#### **Improve our Approach to Public Protection Concerns**

- 4.12 The primary focus this year was on Exploitation, an increasingly prevalent issue in the region. Structures were already in place in relation to child sexual exploitation but there was a need to expand the focus to consider the impact of additional areas of concern, including criminal exploitation, on-line abuse, modern slavery and human trafficking and radicalisation. The concept of contextual safeguarding has been a key feature in the development of a strategy to address these areas of concern.

At the end of 2021-2022, a draft strategy was in place and work is ongoing to develop a supporting toolkit and referral pathways. A Regional Steering Group and a Task and Finish Group was set up with participation from key stakeholders in the development. The initial Strategy will be for children and young people transitioning in adulthood with a view to progressing the strategy to all adults in 2022-2023.

## **Other Key Achievements**

### 4.13 Self-Neglect

A regional approach to managing cases of self-neglect in adults was introduced in October 2021. A Self Neglect Protocol and Guidance document were approved by the Board in June 2021. Three Self-Neglect Partnership Panels were set up, led by each local authority with multi-agency representation.

### 4.14 Learning Framework

A regional Learning and Improvement Framework was approved by the Board early in 2022. This demonstrates how learning will be identified, disseminated and implemented in practice within a multi-agency context in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults within Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Framework enables, not only a rigorous assessment of the quality of multiagency safeguarding arrangements, but also how we learn from this to drive forward improvements to safeguarding and in turn, outcomes for children and adults at risk.

### 4.15 Monitoring Group

This year, to manage the increasing number of Practice Reviews being carried out by the Board, and in line with the new Learning and Improvement Framework, a dedicated multi-agency Monitoring Group was set up. The group meets bi-monthly and has the responsibility for monitoring action plans and ensuring that recommendations are completed in a timely manner.

### 4.16 Suicide Prevention

The Board has continued to collaborate with other partnerships and agencies to tackle the prevention of suicide and self-harm agenda. A multi-agency Suicide Review Group was established this year. The group receives information held by the Board in respect of suspected completed suicides managed under the Immediate Response protocol, which allows us to identify themes, demographics and triggers that can support us in tackling this very important agenda.

### 4.17 Protocols and Procedures

The following Board protocols and guidance documents were reviewed and updated during 2021-2022:

- [Complaints Procedure](#)

- [Baby and Infant Safe Sleeping Guidance](#)
- [Bruising and Injuries in Children Not Independently Mobile](#)

The following protocols and guidance in relation to Child Protection Conferences were updated and regionalised this year:

- [Child Protection Register Enquiry Protocol](#)
- [Child Protection Conference Protocol for Practitioners](#)
- [Core Group Guidance and Resolution Process](#)

### **Additional Focus**

- 4.18 In October 2021 the Safeguarding Board commissioned the National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales) to carry out an independent rapid review into multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Bridgend. This followed five unexpected child deaths, which were all unrelated.
- 4.19 The independent review was completed separately to any forthcoming Child Practice Reviews, audits, or individual reviews in relation to the five cases.
- 4.20 The overall outcome was to provide assurances to the Board that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were effective in Bridgend. Other outcomes/benefits included:
- The identification of any areas for improvement that could be actioned immediately.
  - The identification of any immediate learning from a local and/or regional perspective.
  - An assurance that relevant staff were supported appropriately, both during the pandemic and in light of the recent deaths.
- 4.21 A final report was presented to the Board in December 2021, which contained a series of recommendations which have since been monitored via an Executive Group of the Board. This work continues into the current year.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time.

## **6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A Welsh version of the Annual Report will be available on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board website.

## **7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 The Annual Report has been developed in conjunction with all statutory partners of the Safeguarding Board. It has been approved by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and shared with the Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities and the functions of the Regional Safeguarding Boards, which includes the publication of an Annual Report on the 31<sup>st</sup> July each year.

## **10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 10.1 The Board contributes to elements of the work of the Public Service Board by reporting on safeguarding activity.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The Board has responded to a number of serious and tragic incidents during the past year. The death of Logan Mwangi and the prosecution of those responsible has focussed attention on the vital importance of safeguarding the most vulnerable in our communities. The Board is committed to learning from the circumstances leading to Logan's death and will fully implement any recommendations from the Child Practice Review when it reports later in 2022.
- 11.2 As we move into 2022-2023, our services will continue to respond to the pressure of increasing demand, complexity and the ongoing impact of the pandemic. The Board's Annual Plan for 2022-2023 was published on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and priorities within will be reported back to a future meeting.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**Background Papers**

None

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