



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-23

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2022

**LOCAL AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS TO
SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK**

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Group over the past year.
- Set out the further actions that require attention.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- Reviews the progress made on the Delivery Plan to support Corporate Safeguarding requirements and requests further information on any areas where this is deemed insufficient.
- Agrees that a further update will be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The safeguarding of children and adults at risk is a high priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, whether they work for, or on behalf of, the Council. Everyone should have the ability to identify what constitutes a potential safeguarding issue and know how to raise a concern.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council has in place a Corporate Safeguarding Policy, which provides a framework setting out how we can be assured that we are fulfilling our duties to safeguard the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 4.2 A Corporate Safeguarding Group is responsible for ensuring that the Council carries out its responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, as set out in its Corporate Safeguarding Policy. The Group ensures that robust arrangements for safeguarding are in place across the Council. This includes seeking assurances that the Council has effective performance management processes in place to fulfil its duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.
- 4.3 The Council's responsibilities for Corporate Safeguarding add to and complement the work of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, which is the multi-agency statutory partnership that has the responsibility for safeguarding across the region. Each agency must ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place to safeguard children and adults at risk.
- 4.4 A review of the Council's corporate arrangements for safeguarding was carried out by the Wales Audit Office in 2019. Overall, the findings set out in the WAO report found that the Council had met, or partially met, most of the previous recommendations and proposals for improvement. However, some further proposals for improvement were made to strengthen aspects of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements.
- 4.5 A report to Cabinet in February 2021 presented the progress made in relation to these recommendations.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 A new Corporate Safeguarding Delivery Plan for the period 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2023 was approved by the Corporate Safeguarding Group in August 2021. The Plan reflects how the Corporate Safeguarding Group will deliver the aims of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, which are based on the following themes:
- Safe Practice
 - Safe Governance
 - Safe Recruitment
 - Safe Workforce
 - Safe Procurement
- 5.2 Progress against these themes is detailed below.

5.3 Safe Practice

5.4 **Key Aim – to ensure all those employed by, or working on behalf of, the Council, including Councillors, are aware of their responsibilities to report concerns**

5.5 The latest version of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy continues to be promoted via the Intranet and links to the Regional Safeguarding Board website are available. Posters have been printed and shared as appropriate.

5.6 Plans are in place to promote corporate safeguarding via the new iTrent self-service landing page.

5.7 The Council-wide survey, recently circulated to all staff included questions to assess staff awareness of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and how to report concerns. The results of the survey were promising, indicating that:

- 97% of respondents were aware of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- 93% know how to report suspected or known abuse/neglect

5.8 An open question was asked with regards to how the Council can improve information and awareness raising about safeguarding and this generated almost 400 responses which will need to be considered in more detail at the next Corporate Safeguarding Group meeting.

5.9 The survey results will be used as a benchmark for future years and to identify any areas for targeted improvement.

5.10 Data relating to the source of safeguarding referrals indicates some evidence that staff and providers are reporting concerns (details below). The figures for Q4 are lower due to a change in the process of reporting in Adult Services. Changes in the way that the information is recorded for Children Services has meant that it was not possible to provide a comparison to last year's figures. This will be resolved in the coming year so that there is consistency going forward.

| SOURCE | 2021-2022 | | | | TOTAL |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | |
| Staff/Internal | 177 | 161 | 149 | 82 | 569 |
| School | 95 | 38 | 117 | 124 | 374 |
| Youth Offending Service | 4 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 17 |
| Other Local Authority | 23 | 17 | 18 | 1 | 59 |
| Provider | 61 | 74 | 49 | 0 | 184 |

5.11 Safe Governance

5.12 **Key Aim – to ensure that the Council carries out its safeguarding responsibilities**

through effective governance arrangements

- 5.13 The Group Director, as the Chair of the Regional Safeguarding Board, ensures that regional and national safeguarding work is reflected in the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Group. Corporate safeguarding arrangements are regularly reported to Council meetings and as part of the Director's Annual Report.
- 5.14 The Terms of Reference of the Corporate Safeguarding Group are regularly reviewed to ensure that the remit of the group is maintained.
- 5.15 Elected members and school governors are provided with information and training as appropriate. For example, RCT schools receive an updated Safeguarding Policy for schools each year which is presented to governing bodies at the start of the Autumn Term.

5.16 Safe Recruitment

5.17 Key Aim – to ensure that safe recruitment processes are in place to prevent, wherever possible, unsuitable people from working in or volunteering for certain roles, particularly roles that involve children or adults at risk

- 5.18 Regular reviews of recruitment and selection procedures are carried out to ensure that they continue to be compliant with safeguarding requirements. The new Job Description format now includes a safeguarding statement as standard.
- 5.19 A DBS process renewal map has been completed and performance data is provided in relation to the % of required DBS checks requiring renewal that are carried out in Adults and Children Services. This information for 2021-2022 is provided in the table below. This performance measure is new so will be used as a benchmark for future comparisons.

| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % of required DBS checks requiring renewal that are carried out in Adults and Children Services | 60% (45/74) | 61% (37/63) | 66% (38/57) | 66% (65/98) |

- 5.20 Delays in renewals include those who are on maternity leave or who are front-line and harder to reach. Arrangements are put in place to escalate to the line manager after the second chaser e-mail, following a recommendation by the Corporate Safeguarding Group. Previous quarters are continually revisited to ensure no renewals are left outstanding.
- 5.21 In Quarter 4 a regulatory registration exercise was carried out in Adult Residential Homes which accounts for the increase in the figures.
- 5.22 There were no referrals to the DBS for staff working in social care or schools during 2021-2022.

5.23 Safe Workforce

5.24 **Key Aim – to ensure that all employees undertake mandatory safeguarding training**

5.25 This year, a draft Safeguarding Competency Framework has been developed which sets out the levels of training required according to staff responsibilities and job roles. This is expected to be completed in the coming months and will link to the planned National Competency Framework which is being launched by Social Care Wales in November 2022.

5.26 At present, Level 1/Group A training completions can only be monitored via the RCT Source. This is an area for improvement and a new training monitoring mechanism will be developed as part of the new iTrent system. The completion figures for 2021-2022 are provided in the table below. Again, changes in the way that this information is reported has meant there is no comparison to last year's data. This will be addressed as a priority in the coming year.

| | Q1 | Q2 – Q3 | Q4 |
|--|--|--|--|
| % of staff trained on L1 Safeguarding | 69.6% (3,928 completed out of 4,410 enrolled) | 69.3% (4,130 completed out of 5,963 enrolled) | 72.1% (4,392 completed out of 6,094 enrolled) |
| % of staff trained on L1 Ask and Act | 72.9% (4,410 completed out of 6,051 enrolled) | 72.5% (4,621 completed out of 6,373 enrolled) | 75.3% (4,392 completed out of 6,094 enrolled) |

5.27 From September 2022, the new Group A training module, launched by Social Care Wales will replace the current module on the RCT Source, which will make the training across Wales consistent. For those that start the new module in September, they will be enrolled to refresh their learning 3 years after completion. Further consideration needs to be given to refresher training for those who completed the original modules in 2017 when they were first introduced.

5.28 Pilot work has been undertaken with Vision products and catering staff to make the e-learning modules more accessible.

5.29 New staff are required to complete the mandatory safeguarding induction training within commencing employment. The data available for 2021-2022 is:

Q2 – 44% (112/252)

Q3 – 93.7% (119/127)

5.30 Data is also collected on the number of taxi drivers that complete the SQA Level 2 Certificate in the Introduction to the role of the Professional Taxi Driver and Private Hire Driver. This training includes an element of safeguarding. Figures provided by Licensing indicate that all 33 new drivers completed the training in 2021-2022.

5.31 Safe Procurement

5.32 Key Aim – to ensure that for those contracts where the Corporate Safeguarding Policy applies, the Council has in place appropriate arrangements whereby awareness of the Council’s corporate safeguarding requirements is monitored

5.33 This monitoring requirement has been carried out centrally by the Council’s Procurement Service whereby a sample of contractors/suppliers are contacted to establish if their staff are aware of what to do in the event that they observe an issue that may be of concern. This does not relate to social care contracts.

5.34 A pilot exercise was undertaken in April 2021. Having reviewed the outcome of the pilot, the survey was amended and the approach to capturing feedback was formalised. Rather than contacting suppliers from across different categories/service areas of the Council, specific categories were selected for each survey.

5.35 The following table summarises those areas that were contacted:

| Category | Number of Suppliers |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Construction | 106 |
| Supplies | 88 |
| Transport | 76 |
| Services | 64 |
| ICT | 38 |

5.36 Embedded within the body of the survey was the safeguarding poster. This poster has previously been communicated to suppliers asking them to place it in the workplace (where possible) – this with the aim of raising awareness amongst staff on how to report safeguarding concerns.

5.37 Each supplier was asked to share the survey link to all their staff for them to complete. A total of 212 responses were received from across our supply chain. The responses to each question have been summarised as follows:

5.38 Q1. Do you know that as you work for a company that works on behalf of the Council, you can help protect children, young people and adult at risk?

Yes 92%

No 8%

5.39 Q2. Have you seen this poster in your workplace (or as part of other communication) that tells you that in Rhondda Cynon Taf keeping people safe is everyone's business?



Yes 55%
No 45%

5.40 Q3. If you saw or heard something while you were at work that concerned you about the safety of a child/adult at risk, or the behaviour of a colleague towards others, who would you contact?

- Your manager 62%
- A colleague 2%
- The Council 27%
- The Police 5%
- Somebody else 3%

6. OUTCOME OF INTERNAL AUDIT

- 6.1 An Internal Audit of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements was completed by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) on behalf of the [Regional Internal Audit Service](#) in August 2022.
- 6.2 The scope of the audit reviewed the risks and controls in place, including a review of the compliance with legislation, policies, procedures, monitoring activities and training. In addition, two service areas were sampled to review local levels processes.
- 6.3 The outcome of the audit reported a reasonable assurance opinion that identified a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control.
- 6.4 Recommendations for improvement have been identified relating to the following areas:
- Actions from the Corporate Safeguarding Group need to include timescales and formal resolutions of decisions should be recorded

- The Corporate Safeguarding Policy needs to be more visible on the public facing website and include version control
- With regards training, updates on the development of the iTrent system are required to progress towards a central record of staff training. The draft Training Framework needs to be finalised and improvements are required to the quarterly data report to clearly reflect the Council's position in regards to safeguarding training.

6.5 The results of the audit will be factored into the next iteration of the Delivery Plan to enable recommended improvements to be implemented

7. FURTHER WORK AND NEXT STEPS

7.1 The Corporate Safeguarding Group will continue to monitor the delivery of the actions contained in the Delivery Plan which runs up to 31st March 2023. In addition, we have noted the following key areas of work that will be factored into the work of the group during 2022-2023:

- The Welsh Government has published a Corporate Safeguarding guidance as part of its National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Abuse. This will be used to inform a refresh of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
- A new risk related to Digital Exploitation has been identified and, as a result, a representative from the IT Department has been added to the membership of the Group. This additional member will assist the Group in updating the Corporate Safeguarding Policy to address this area of concern.
- A Corporate Safeguarding Performance Framework is in development to provide consistency in relation to data gathering.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 All members of the Corporate Safeguarding Group have approved this report and take ownership of its content.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1 There are no additional costs associated with this report.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 Extracted from the Corporate Safeguarding Policy:

- Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Education Act 2002 – plus 'Keeping Learners Safe' -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

12. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL' S CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 12.1 Safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk is a key priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and 'is everyone's business'. By keeping our residents, both young and old, safe, the Council is contributing to the National Well-being goals, in particular a Healthier Wales, a More Equal Wales and a Wales of more cohesive communities in particular.
- 12.2 The Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements support the 'PEOPLE' priority of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, '[Making a Difference](#)', particularly "... supporting our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities to remain independent and have a good quality of life...and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do".

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 The Council continues to make progress in delivering its Corporate Safeguarding responsibilities as evidenced by the information provided in this report and the ongoing nature of the actions being delivered.