

# Scrutiny Report

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## Part 1

### Date:

**Subject** Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report

**Purpose** For Scrutiny and Cabinet Members to scrutinise, critique and comment on the Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report

**Proposal** To present an updated corporate safeguarding report, which monitors, scrutinises and objectively plans on the theme of “safeguarding” being fundamentally embedded within all aspects of council services, functions and duties.

To provide Scrutiny with essential and key information to allow effective scrutiny of the Councils’ safeguarding practice.

To update Cabinet members on the work undertaken to improve arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults who require specific Council services and to ensure that these arrangements are effective.

To scrutinise and review the progress of “safeguarding” being embedded within Council services, and to scrutinise and review the effectiveness of the proposed work plan for corporate safeguarding arrangements.

**Author** Head of Corporate Safeguarding  
**Ward** City wide

**Summary** 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 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.

This portfolio now sits with Finn Madell who came into post in January 2022. Respecting the wishes of the committee to provide only streamlined and targeted information within the report (February 2021), revisions to the format and data presented have been made to this report. Therefore the changes are as follows;

- Safeguarding team specific plans are no longer reported, only where key issues are identified will these be shared with members for their scrutiny.
- The following report structure will be presented:
  - Scrutiny Recommendations (from previous reporting year)
  - Safeguarding Training Data and outcomes
  - Developments this year, including a review of the Corporate Safeguarding Work Plan
  - Key data for Safeguarding
  - Annual Review of Newport City Council Corporate Safeguarding Self -Assessment Audit (New 2021)

- Future Work, Areas of stress/ risk, and Recommendations
  - Corporate Safeguarding Work Plan (Current/ Future Year)
  - Resource Implications
- Scrutiny have previously been advised of the new and increased number of Quality Standards (Key Performance Indicators) associated with 'Safeguarding' required to be reported to Welsh Government from April 2021 (from 3 to 26). As scrutiny of that data remains the responsibility of Scrutiny for the Annual Director's Report for Social Services, there is no expectation on members of this group to formally comment on the data however, where possible, a selection of this data has been shared for context purposes when considering how effective safeguarding performance is being achieved within Council services.

**Action by** Head of Corporate Safeguarding

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Service Managers
- Heads of Service

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## **1. Legislation and Scrutiny Recommendations**

### **1.1 Legislation and context**

Safeguarding is a statutory duty. We are governed by legislation, statutory guidance and local policies and procedures to ensure that we all do what we can to keep children and adults at risk safe from harm and risk of harm. The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 is clear in its expectation that the child/young person/adult must be at the centre of any safeguarding response and remain as much in control of decision making as possible. This person-centred approach is a critical element in the drive to ensure more personalised support that can only be offered by staff who fully recognise their roles and responsibilities concerning safeguarding.

As professionals and representatives of Newport City Council, we all have a legal duty to report any safeguarding concerns we may have. We are reminded that Safeguarding is Everyone's business. This report provides examples of how Newport City Council are embedding corporate safeguarding and helps to assure members of the pro-active arrangements which the local authority are undertaking in safeguarding provisions and service planning. The data within the report continues to evidence a rise in referrals to all front door pathways. The rise in part relates to better communication with and reporting from partner agencies, our own social work teams, and citizens of Newport. The rise in referrals is also suggestive of a more robust system which protects our citizens and again is a positive improvement in respect of safeguarding practices within Newport. However, the rise also reflects our improved knowledge and understanding of trauma and safeguarding, and increased complexity particularly for older children.

Newport City Council remains an active member of the "Gwent Safeguarding Board", which is an amalgamation of the two former age specific regional boards. Newport continues to host the regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) team and work closely with the regional Partnership Board (VAWDASVB). There has been a lot of work and engagement to look at Domestic Abuse and its clear link to safeguarding.

Newport officers are involved at all levels of the work of the boards. Heads of Children and Adult services are members at both Boards, the Head of Corporate Safeguarding for Newport is deputy chair of the Business Planning meeting for both boards and chairs the local safeguarding network meetings in Newport. The local safeguarding practitioner network meets in Newport bimonthly and is attended by all partner agencies working across Newport for Adults, Children, and specialist services. The local safeguarding network arranges 2 practitioner events per year, which are open to all practitioners in Newport. The events update practitioners on all local and regional developments such as learning/messages from Child/Adult practice reviews, new services and local developments, as well as introducing updated policies and/or procedures. The National Independent Safeguarding Board works alongside the regional boards to secure improvements in safeguarding policy and practice throughout Wales. All regional boards have duties and responsibilities to submit information to the National Independent Safeguarding Board.

## 1.2 Scrutiny Recommendations from 2023

- The Committee would like the data to be clear as the information in one section was misleading.
- The Committee recommended that Officers and training providers simplify training courses to ensure that they're accessible.
- The Committee felt that it would be beneficial for issues raised in reports to be highlighted in the following year's report to feedback progress and resolutions.
- The Committee were content with the work but would like a focus on outcomes.

## 2. Safeguarding Training Data and Outcomes

**2.1** Compliance rates with mandatory training for all employees is variable. There are 3 specific mandatory courses with associated regulatory requirements for council employees to complete, these are the General Data Protection Regulations Training (GDPR); Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and "Safeguarding Involves Us All- Awareness Training".

**2.2** The mandatory safeguarding training is under development and will be available on a more accessible platform. There are significant changes to Safeguarding training with the launch of the National Safeguarding Training Standards Framework. The Framework was launched in National Safeguarding Week 2023. Its purpose is to address some of the issues regarding clarity of training needs, to be specific in terms of expectations and to provide a framework for training delivery and implementation.

**2.3** Social Care Wales has been leading on the development of the national safeguarding training, learning and development standards. The standards have been co-produced by a multi-agency national development group as well as other groups focused on specific aspects of the work.

The standards were developed because there was no multi-agency, national standards for safeguarding training, learning and development in place. There will now be a tiered approach to safeguarding training, learning and development across organisations in Wales. There was confusion around the appropriate levels of safeguarding training, learning and development for the workforce. From this, there will now be a tiered approach to safeguarding.

**Group A** – this will be for everyone. They need to have a basic level of awareness of safeguarding and know how to report a concern. This will be mandatory and likely to be an improved E learning module.

**Group B** – this is for people who work directly with people. They should have a higher knowledge of safeguarding, know who to talk to if they notice something is wrong and how to report a concern.

**Group C** – this is for people who work directly with people and have safeguarding responsibilities. They need to be able to respond to safeguarding concerns.

The other groups are:

**Group D** – this is mainly for statutory agencies with higher-level decision-making powers.

**Group E** – this mainly consists of social services personnel in strategic leadership roles, along with their key statutory partners.

**Group F** – this includes all public sector leaders.

The implementation of this national framework does not have a starting date, but a national package should be rolled out by the end of 2024.

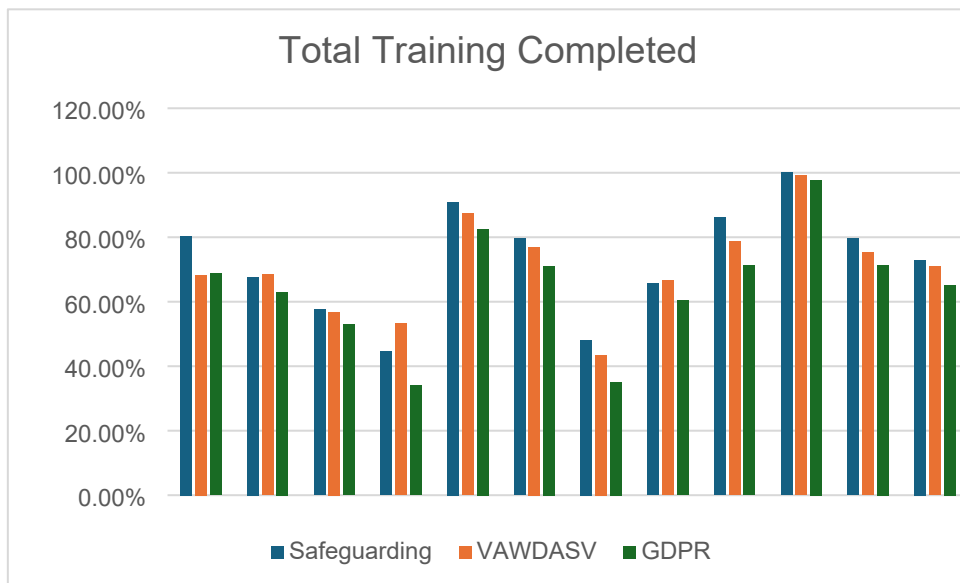
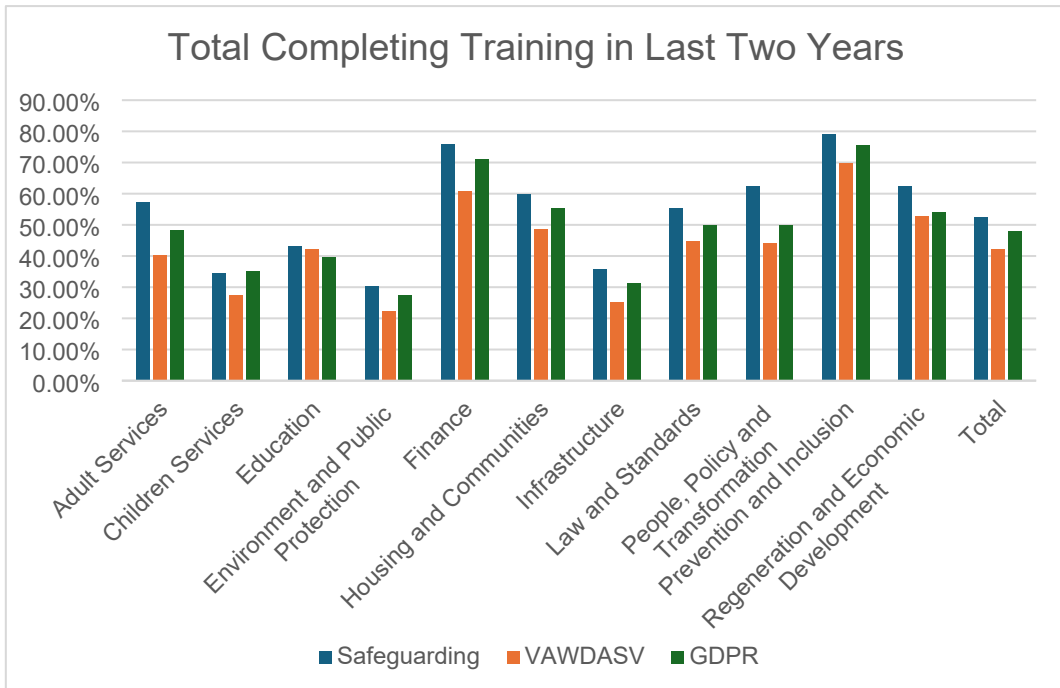
The proposed changes will mean that safeguarding training will be better targeted, notwithstanding the ongoing need for mandatory training. There will need to be some thought given to the best way to evidence the compliance within the groups A-F.

- 2.4** It is noted that 26 out of 51 Newport City Councillors have attended Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Training in September 2023. The PowerPoint Training slides from presentations are usually circulated to all members for information and for those that were not able to attend.

There is sometimes more than one date offered for councillors to attend the same training/presentation to make sure that most councillors attend, but this is also dependant on person providing the training having availability. There will be further developments on this matter in due course to ensure compliance, that the quality of training and delivery is appropriate for members. Group F is generally considered to be able to do Group A along with other bespoke training for this groups such as VAWDASV.

WLGA has recommended the Group A e-learning module as part of the induction for all new elected members. More details will be circulated when we have them.

- 2.5** It is respectfully acknowledged that Scrutiny Committee members requested half yearly updates in the training figures and that these were requested in percentage format. The reporting cycle for this report was brought forward at the request of the Strategic Director to better align with the Director's Report. This report therefore follows some 12 months from the last meeting with the Scrutiny Committee and the data is updated within. The graph shows the percentage of staff that have completed the mandatory training in the last 12-month period. The mandatory training for staff being Safeguarding training, Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Training (VAWDASV) and GDPR training.
- 2.6** Consideration to be given as to whether whistleblowing as mandatory training should also be recorded and shown within the annual safeguarding report as this relates closely to Safeguarding.
- 2.7** Mandatory safeguarding training needs to be refreshed every two years. The chart below shows good compliance but also that a high number of staff will need refresher training soon.



## 2.8 VAWDASV Training Data

| NTF Group                |         | Year Total | Year Staff % | Live / Roll out Total | Total Staff as of 07/03/24 | Total Staff % |   |
|--------------------------|---------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---|
| eLearning                | Group 1 | 855        | 14.87%       | 3263                  | 5750                       | 56.75%        | This number is the total number of staff who have received Group 1 training. This is what WG have as a 100% Staff requirement under the NTF Statutory Guidance.   |
| Ask and Act Awareness    | Group 2 | 48         | 0.83%        | 558                   | 5750                       | 9.70%         | This training is recommended for anyone who has a public facing role. The rolling total here is a total of staff trained from September 2016 - March 2024.  |
| Ask and Act Champions    | Group 3 | 4          | 0.07%        | 85                    | 5750                       | 1.48%         | The NTF guidance states that Group 3 trained staff should be 10% of the number of Group 2 trained staff to function as a support service. We are currently just under target at 8.33%. However, another group 3 training is due to run 29th March which may improve the percentage further.   |
| Senior/Strategic Leaders | Group 6 | 0          | 0.00%        | 70                    | 5750                       | 1.22%         | This is solely aimed at the those in senior and strategic leadership positions. There have been no sessions run this year due to 30 attending last year and the vacant regional trainer post. There are additional resources for this Group via online YouTube videos, but these cannot be tracked. Group 6 will be delivered again in 2024/2025 as it run every 2 years. |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Child and Adolescent Abusive Behaviours               | <b>2</b>  |
| Male Victims of Domestic Abuse Awareness              | <b>12</b> |
| Understanding Child and Adolescent Abusive Behaviours | <b>3</b>  |
| Understanding Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control     | <b>2</b>  |
| Understanding Effect of DA on Children                | <b>2</b>  |
| Understanding HBA, FM and FGM                         | <b>1</b>  |
| Understanding MARAC and Risk                          | <b>1</b>  |
| Understanding Perpetrators                            | <b>2</b>  |
| Understanding Sexual Violence                         | <b>1</b>  |
| Understanding the Effects of DA on Children           | <b>1</b>  |
| Working with Multiple or Co-Occurring Needs           | <b>3</b>  |

The VAWDASV team have stated that their specialist additional training has had a low uptake across 2023/24 period however there was attendance by Newport employees to all courses offered. The VAWDASV team have has some staff shortages during 2023 but are now fully staffed and the training will be given a priority focus for 2024/25.



### **3. Developments this year**

#### **3.1 Children's Services Hub**

The Children's Services Hub has seen further increased demand. This has been a focus and there is now additional resource being allocated to the team. This will create two teams that will work on a rota basis to be able to suitably manage the demand and give staff time to finish the referral checks and assessments that are time sensitive before looking at new referrals coming into the Hub. This is very welcomed by Children's Services and the impact of this will be monitored. The Hub will also have a representative from Prevention and Inclusion attending to look at referrals that could have needs met by this part of the service.

#### **3.2 Adults IAA (Information, Advice and Assistance)**

The recent restructure within adult services included developing 4 social work teams who manage all the assessment and services for those individuals with eligible needs for care and support. The 4 teams are generic ensuring that a widespread of expertise and experience is available throughout the city.

IAA is the first contact team. Cases are then moved into Managed Care when ongoing support needs are identified.

The Information Advice and Assistance / First Contact (IAA/FC) A robust service for all individuals, families and carers who require information advice or assistance. The service has strong links with adult safeguarding, community reablement and community connectors as well as Carers support.

To strengthen Newport City Council's safeguarding arrangements a single pathway for all adults at risk will be developed with the IAA service. This will bring greater consistency and best practice in meeting statutory duties under the Social Services Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, and Part 7.

The single pathway for all adults at risk (duty to report) will be managed through one point of access to determine the initial action, assess the risk, and make s126 enquires. Dependent on the outcome will determine if the formal coordination of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures is required. This single pathway will also provide much needed resilience to a very small team.

The reliability of data will be stronger and more accurate for annual reports, and we will also be able to focus on emerging trends and areas that we may need to focus on as a council, for example if there is more financial abuse reported how we may consider tackling that

Due to recruitment and workforce pressures, it has taken longer than usual to recruit. The team will be fully staffed by June 2024 and work will continue to be developed on a single point of access for all adult safeguarding referrals.

The quality measures (performance indicators) for the Newport Safeguarding Hub are now the reporting responsibility of the Annual Director's Report for Social Services. However, as discussed there are safeguarding performance measures captured at The Safeguarding Hub which will be presented for Member's awareness to assure them of the authority's performance in terms of statutory responsibilities; Children's safeguarding processes (contacts/strategy discussions/ initial conferences); Adults at Risk (duty to

enquire); and the data around professional strategy meetings which will be presented here for overview.

### **3.3 Safeguarding Champions**

Until recently, the Safeguarding Champions met biannually. This has now increased to quarterly and has been well received by the Champions. More regular meetings enables a more frequent flow of information and helps to keep Safeguarding in people's radar. This has proved to be invaluable to the Champions. It has also led to an improvement in the Self Assessment audit ratings. (Role profile for Safeguarding Champions and Designated Safeguarding lead in Appendix.)

#### **Channel Panel (Prevent)**

The Head of Corporate Safeguarding is now the Chair of the Channel Panel, previously vice Chair. This is a Prevent led process and looks at cases of radicalisation and extremism within Newport and relates to children and adults. This has strengthened awareness of vulnerability and safeguarding within Community Safety and Communities. We have seen that most referrals come from schools and relate to adolescent males in the main. Channel Panel meets monthly and key themes and trends tend to reflect national news stories.

### **3.4 Transitional safeguarding**

This describes an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learning from both children's and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives. It is a model of safeguarding that does not stop because a child has become an adult as they have turned 18. We know that children who are exploited do not stop being exploited at 18. Exploiters know this too. Transitional safeguarding means that services and support continue without the confines of 'Children' or 'Adult' services safeguarding thresholds and that professionals remain involved with young people beyond the arbitrary cut off 18 years old. This approach is evidence based and is gathering momentum throughout the UK. The Gwent Safeguarding Board has recognised this and made it a key strategic priority in its 3-year development plan. Newport is leading the way with this work and piloting some of the implementation of this approach. Newport Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MASE) Meetings take place bi-monthly. In these meetings we use a VOLT (Victim, Offender, Location, Themes) to understand and assess risk of children who are known as victims of exploitation, or who are at risk of exploitation. The meetings are co-chaired between police and Children's Services. The meetings have been reviewed and improved and have assisted considerably with sharing the approach around Contextual Safeguarding. This is when the harm is not familial, but extra familial and taking place amongst adults and peers outside of the family home. The MASE meetings consider children in this cohort up to the age of 18. When a young person becomes 18, much of the statutory safeguarding stops. The risk to the young person does not. Soon, we intend to increase the age of young people being discussed at MASE up to the age of 25. This will prevent the 'cliff face' of support ceasing when someone becomes 18 years old. We know that the cohort of often vulnerable young people need more, not less support at this important life stage.

A workshop was held in mid-March with key stakeholders, this included the Head of Adult Services, children and adult social care managers and senior practitioners, senior representatives from Prevention and Inclusion, Housing, Police, Health and the Safeguarding Board. The aim of the workshop was to explore Transitional Safeguarding and what this could look like in Newport. The workshop evidenced that there was a will amongst stakeholders to support and explore this model to keep our most vulnerable young people safer as they approach adulthood. Good transitional support can prevent further harm, as well as identifying other types of harm such as Cuckooing/Home Takeovers. This is a cost effective way to keep citizens safe and a model that is gathering traction in the UK. A further Pan Wales workshop took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> April where Newport presented on the work thus far. This was well received and generated a lot of positive feedback on our approach to implementing this model.

### **3.5 Housing**

#### **Rough sleeper Taskforce**

In the last year the Rough Sleeper Taskforce has been established. This was as a result of some tragic deaths in the rough sleeper community. The Taskforce meet fortnightly and worked on a Terms of Reference and a work plan. Separate Multi Disciplinary Meetings were also established to look jointly at the cohort of rough sleepers and their often acute, multi needs. This work has led to a greater shared understanding of the issues as well as better multi-disciplinary oversight of the gaps in provision and an action plan of short medium- and long-term solutions to better meet the often-complex needs of this of this vulnerable group where Safeguarding is often an issue.

### **3.6 Relationship with police and health**

There are bi-monthly meetings with senior safeguarding leads in Police (Public Protection Unit) and Health. Here honest conversations are held and any issues that need to be escalated are discussed and resolved. It has been acknowledged that this working relationship is very positive, effective and constructive.

### **3.7 Safer Newport Community Safety Partnership**

The Head of Corporate Safeguarding attends and contributes fully to these meetings. There have been separate meetings with the Chair to look at governance in relation to Contextual Safeguarding and the wider strategic oversight. This is now a part of the Safe Newport meeting structure.

#### **Serious Violence Duty 2022**

The Serious Violence Duty has now been implemented. Serious violence has a devastating impact on the lives of victims and families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. The Duty is a key part of the Government's programme of work to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence: taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence. The Duty aims to ensure that agencies are focussed on their activity to prevent and reduce serious violence whilst also providing sufficient flexibility so that the relevant organisations will engage and work together in the most effective local partnership for any given area.

In Newport we have worked collectively to coordinate a Strategic Needs Assessment, looking at Crime data and local data to help us to understand the needs and the vulnerabilities of citizens with three key considerations, all of which are linked to safeguarding.

- 1) Anti-Social Behaviour
- 2) Serious Violence
- 3) Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

### **3.8 Human Resources**

There has been a further revised "Use and Management of Volunteers Policy" has recently been published and includes:

- Guidance for managers on ensuring that all volunteers are onboarded to the organisation to ensure we have a central record in iTrent. This is the Human Resources recording system.
- Improved recruitment processes to attract and induct volunteers into the organisation.

The policy includes guidance on determining whether the volunteer requires a DBS check:

- One-off volunteering opportunities i.e. parent supporting a school trip – requires a DBS risk assessment.
- Regular volunteering i.e. books readers – requires DBS check

DBS statement will be included in any volunteer job description (where relevant)

All volunteers, as part of onboarding, will complete safeguarding training, in written format (to overcome the practicalities of non-staff accessing NHS portal)

The database of volunteers (in iTrent) will be kept under review in collaboration with appointing managers.

Further promotion of the revised policy has been sent to managers in April to ensure greater awareness within the organisation and compliance with recruitment processes to support safeguarding.

#### **All staff**

"Safeguarding Involves Us All" must now be refreshed every 2 years (approved by CMT as part of suite of mandatory training for staff and managers)

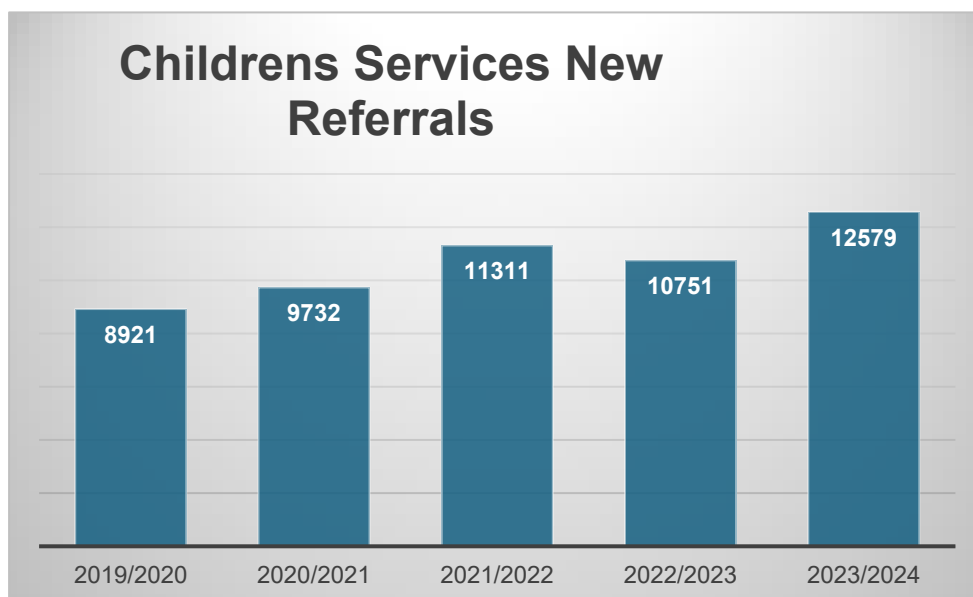
All other business as usual safeguarding work i.e. DBS processing, supporting Council with safeguarding issues (PSM etc.) continues.

### **3.9 Coroner Court lunch learn briefings.**

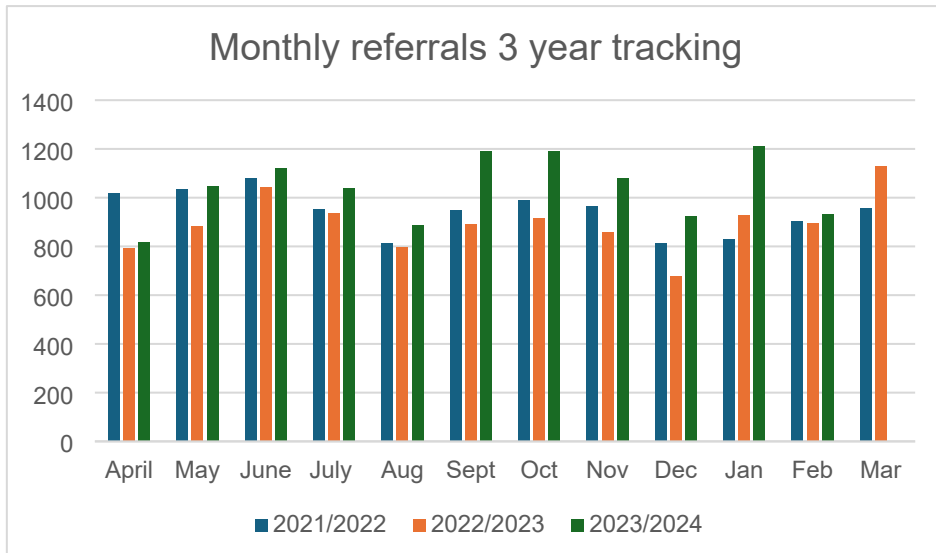
There are planned lunch and learn sessions in April for all social care staff to better understand the work of the Coroner's Court. Staff are sometimes asked to write a statement for the Coroner's Court and to attend an inquest. These sessions will be delivered by the Senior Coroner for Gwent and the Head of Corporate Safeguarding. They will help understand the work of the coroner's court and the interface from social care.

## **4. Key Data for Safeguarding**

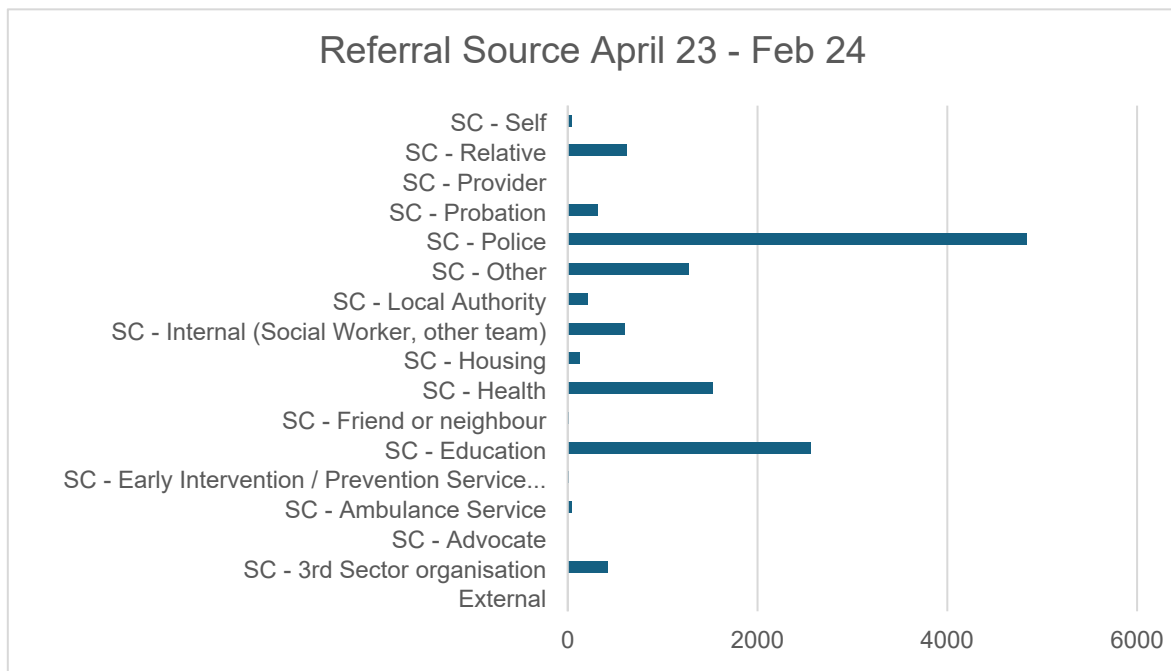
#### 4.1 Referral Data



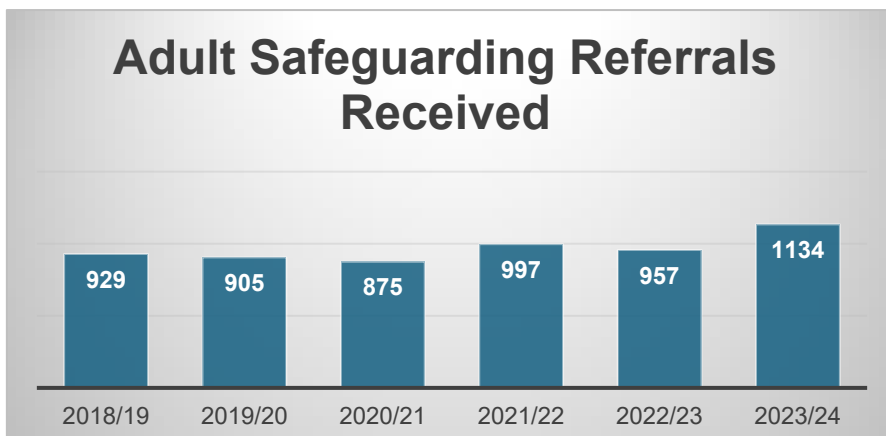
**Children's services Referrals (note 2023/24 figures up to 29/2/24 i.e. exclude March)**

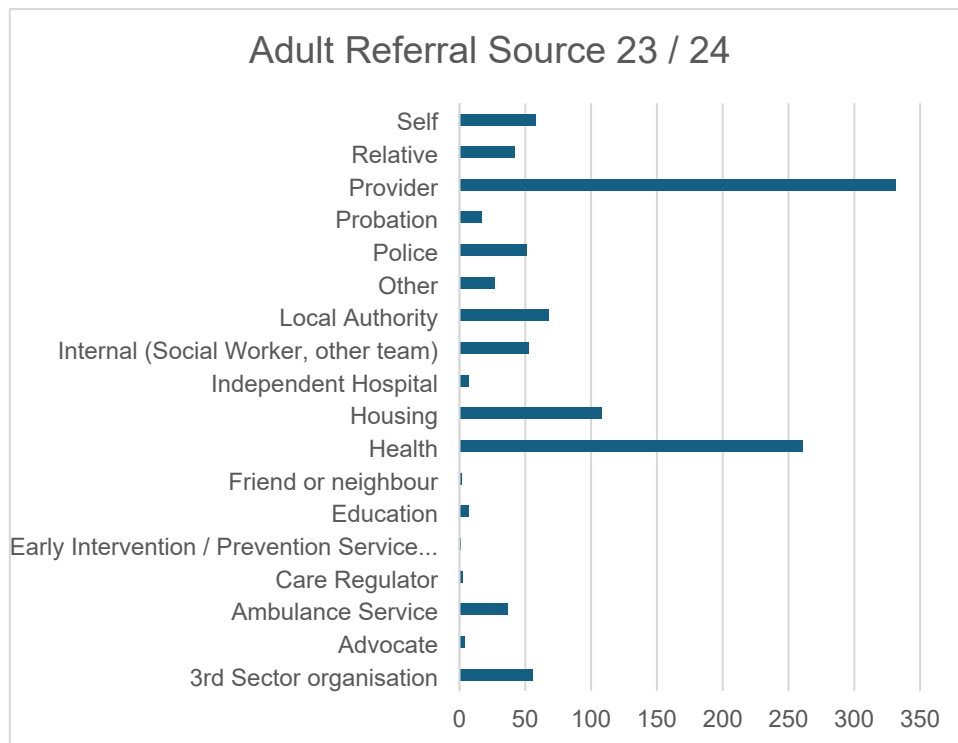


**Childrens services referrals by month (no data for March 2024)**



**Children's services referral source (up to 29/2/2024)**





## 4.2 Professional Strategy Meetings

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 s.128, specifies the duty placed on 'relevant partners' under section 162 of the Act to report both adults and children, including unborn children, they have reasonable cause to suspect are at risk of abuse.

It is important that practitioners do not ignore or dismiss suspicions about another practitioner or colleague who may be abusing, neglecting, or causing harm to a child or adult at risk. Every practitioner has a responsibility to safeguard adults at risk and that includes protection from abuse by a professional, paid carer or volunteer. Therefore, the duty to report any concerns about suspected abuse and neglect applies in these situations. This duty also covers situations when abuse is only suspected.

Professional Concerns (Section 5 Wales Safeguarding Procedures) Managing cases under Section 5 applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to believe a child or adult at risk is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm. It also applies to concerns that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children or adults at risk in their present position or in any capacity. It should be used in all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children or adults at risk has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or adult at risk.
- May have committed a criminal offence against a child or adult at risk or that has a direct impact on the child or adult at risk.
- Behaved towards a child, children, or adults at risk in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with either/ or children and adult.

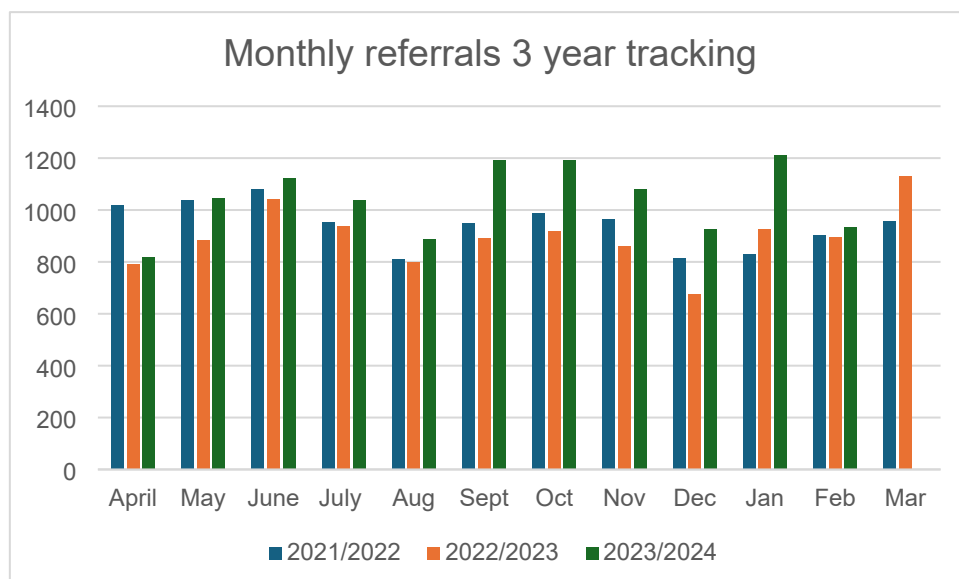
In Newport there are robust processes in place to manage Professional Concerns. Please see data below.

### Professional Strategy Meetings in children's services since 2019

|      | Total Referrals | Substantiated | Unsubstantiated | Unfounded | Deliberately invented or Malicious | Threshold not met / awaiting outcome |
|------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2019 | 93              | 33            | 22              | 5         | 0                                  | 33                                   |
| 2020 | 90              | 22            | 17              | 10        | 0                                  | 41                                   |
| 2021 | 81              | 31            | 11              | 5         | 1                                  | 33                                   |
| 2022 | 95              | 33            | 30              | 6         | 0                                  | 26                                   |
| 2023 | 120             | 35            | 43              | 7         | 1                                  | 34                                   |

### Professional Strategy Meetings in 2024 in Social Services

|   | Total      | Childrens  | Adults    |
|---|------------|------------|-----------|
| Substantiated                                   | 44         | 35         | 9         |
| Unsubstantiated                                 | 50         | 43         | 7         |
| Unfounded                                       | 8          | 7          | 1         |
| Deliberately invented or malicious              | 1          | 1          | 0         |
| Did not meet threshold for professional concern | 8          | 8          | 0         |
| Null  | 37         | 26         | 11        |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>148</b> | <b>120</b> | <b>28</b> |





The number of children named on Newport's Child Protection Register is 120 as at 2.4.24, compared to the as at total for 18.4.23 at 137.

The number of children "looked after" as at 2.4.24 was 352, a decrease from 379 previously (on 18/4/23).

The figures are reducing due to an intense rapid intervention at the front door complimented by a culture shift to design and review care plans that enable children to remain with wider family if birth parents are unable to care. There is a strong emphasis on maintaining lifelong links with family and friends in order to support reunification where appropriate. This is what is best for children.

## **5. Annual Review of Newport City Council Corporate Safeguarding Self -Assessment Audit**

### **5.1 Review Period**

Each year all Directorates are required to undertake a self-assessment of the arrangements they have in place to support corporate safeguarding. The self-assessments identify areas and actions for improvement for each Directorate, to be reported through to the Head of Corporate Safeguarding. In addition to the self-assessment audit, this year we have completed a regional Safeguarding Maturity Matrix self-assessment. This was a request from the Gwent Safeguarding Board for all Board members to complete. This will be completed every three years (copy of SMM in appendix) and helps us all to understand how embedded Safeguarding is within our respective organisations.

### **5.2 Quality of Returns**

Service areas returned their self-assessments in March 2024. It has been useful to capture positive practices that are already fully embedded across the council. The process has highlighted to managers areas of improvement to refine safeguarding practices for their staff and the citizens who use their services. The method of completion was varied and resulted in different quality returns. Corporate Safeguarding will need to provide tailored support and guidance for the next completion of returns, to ensure there is a better level of scrutiny across all teams, to gain accurate insight and to help improve practices. Individual feedback with specific goals for each service area has been provided to colleagues leading on this. Corporate Safeguarding have plans to work in partnership with the Gwent Safeguarding Board and neighbouring local authorities to create a South East Wales regional self-assessment tool for safeguarding. This will enable common themes and gaps to be identified and tackled across the region as well as sharing good practice. This work is ongoing and has been delayed due to other safeguarding developments such as Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR), and the Safeguarding Training Standard Framework this year.

### **5.3 Themes Per Standard**

**Standard 1 Policy & Practice (Robust) How robust are your safeguarding practices in your service area?**

Directorates and service areas reported that all knew where to find corporate Safeguarding policies and who their Safeguarding Champion was. This standard was ragged far more as green, with 78% than amber, 18% or red 4%. This is an improvement on last year's responses. There were some actions that were identified and there will be follow up on these. Some reflections on this standard from directorates

'The Safeguarding Hub daily work is around safeguarding and having knowledge of legislation and policy and procedures is fundamental to the running of the team' The Children's Safeguarding Hub

'Generally, officers are aware of safeguarding responsibilities and requirements, however matters need to be put on a formalised basis to ensure consistency.' Trading Standards

'Safeguarding officer nominated – please can safeguarding get in touch so we can determine training and responsibilities on the basis they will continue in that role. /Comms around safeguarding displayed in communal areas on site.' Waste and Cleansing Services

'Having a safeguarding champion disseminating the information regularly and making safeguarding a standing item in team meetings means safeguarding is kept at the forefront in the service. Actioned points from last self-assessment.' Prevention and Inclusion

### **Actions**

Continue to refresh and cascade the relevant policies and procedures in relation to safe employment via the Designated Safeguarding Person.

Support Designated Safeguarding Person's in conducting management audits to provide assurance that the safe recruitment practice is being followed.

### **Professional Concern referrals**

No area holds data on how many referrals are made from that service area, in relation to concerns about professionals who work with children or adults at risk. This is not currently available on WCCIS.

### **Actions**

Corporate Safeguarding to raise with WCCIS team, the new recording mechanism (from 2026) must have this as a function. This will evidence that the policies in place are effective, and employees are following the duty to report process.

### **Standard 2 Environment (Safe)- How safe does your service area feel to citizens that access your services, and to your staff working in your service area?**

Service areas are confident that citizens and staff feel safe and informed when at sites and accessing services. It was reported that 81% felt that this was working well and that there was confidence in this. 14% of the returns raised this as Amber in their scoring and 5% considered this to be a red risk. Whilst this has improved from last year, there is still work to do and assurances to be provided. Security measures are complied with in terms of those on premises as well as risk assessments. Staff who work directly with the public have additional and specific safeguarding training suitable to their role. Services areas were able to provide examples of how they have managed any concerns received by other citizens or professionals. Service areas were reflective of procedures in relation to contractors attending properties and identified areas of improvement. Two directorates

have asked for assistance from Corporate Safeguarding in relation to their service area and this has been prioritised. Some reflections from Directorates

'All sites should clearly display safeguarding information and an audit on the availability of public and staff information needs to be undertaken. Complaints and compliments for safeguarding related issues are not automatically referred to the Safeguarding Champion for collation and monitoring. Having this process in place would enable patterns and commonalities to be identified and addressed infrastructure.

'The service area provides high levels of assurance, that there are safe systems and processes in place, for citizens accessing our service and for staff working in the area.'  
Central Education Service

'We have recently begun to undertake far more citizen engagement around climate change. Most of these interactions have been without incident, but we did have a situation recently where an individual (who unbeknownst to the officer involved was already known to the authority as someone who had harassed our Cabinet Member at a number of her events) approached a member of our team at a library engagement event and spoke to them at length about their conviction that climate change is a hoax. This individual was not aggressive but was very forthright and did make the officer feel uncomfortable. We will ensure that this officer is accompanied by someone else from the team for future events but any other advice in this area would be gratefully received.' Climate Change

'Feedback obtained from our residents and their relatives in quality assurance questionnaires and in meetings suggest that they feel safe. Staff who have raised issues have been engaged and review undertaken. As a result, improvements were made, and reassurances provided.' Internal/Provider Services

## **Actions**

Corporate Safeguarding to work specifically with the 5% red responses to ensure that this risk is supported, understood, and minimised.

More Safeguarding information posters and information to be made available to services to display in all work locations, even those that are temporary.

Ensure that the DSOs/Safeguarding Champions are appraised of some of the current themes that they may come into contact within their interaction with citizens. This needs to be proportionate and relevant.

## **Standard 3 Culture (Effective) - How Effective is your service area approach to safeguarding?**

All areas stated that their strategic planning takes into account the need to safeguard citizens and to promote their welfare. Some were able to reflect on what has gone well and areas for improvement. 82% of responses said that they were competent in this, 18% rated themselves as amber and 0% as red. Most areas were able to demonstrate that new learning is embedded into practice and planning in relation to consent to share and safeguarding children and adults at risk. Gaps in service area approach to safeguarding were mainly identified, showing willingness to accept change will be required to improve and uphold safeguarding standards. Some reflections on this standard from Directorates

'The Licensing Team work closely with a number of internal and external to ensure safeguarding within the Licensing trade, clear procedures are in place to make referrals and matters of Safeguarding are future in all Licensing policy(s)'. Licensing

'Waste and cleansing would welcome a review of the services with a focus on Safeguarding – is this included in H&S audits?' Waste and Cleansing Services

'Feedback from managers (see below) suggests that we are operationally effective. However, there is a need to become more structured and systematic and to ensure that messages are well communicated. //Housing Needs: //GDPR and safeguarding is a primary concern within the HNU//Community Regeneration: //Good procedures in place for management of information and adhering to GDPR. Safeguarding is treated appropriately for the nature of our work. Progress made during 2023-24 on monitoring the need for refresher training. Work needs to be completed on training for volunteers and embedding safeguarding in staff check-ins and team meetings. //Housing Strategy: //Community Cohesion://Housing Support://More rigorous monitoring re safeguarding has been introduced. Still require development of Safeguarding Champions and Designated Safeguarding Person roles for some.' Housing and Communities

### **Actions**

Prioritise work with service areas that have asked for assistance with a review of their approach. Work alongside services areas to ensure they are clear and confident in their safeguarding responsibilities.

Consider a more robust governance framework for Corporate Safeguarding to ensure that Heads of Service/Designated Safeguarding Officers are more involved in the work programme and have better oversight of this in relation to their service area strategic planning.

## **6. Future Work, Areas of Stress/ Risk, and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Consideration to be given to further strengthening the Corporate Safeguarding Governance.**

Biannual meetings with Heads of Service/Designated Safeguarding Officers

Each Directorate has a nominated Safeguarding Champion and Designated Safeguarding Person whose roles and responsibilities include:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of the 'Duty to Report' function of their role.

Acting as a source of advice and support and signposting for staff in their Service on all safeguarding issues, including:

- Safeguarding Adults and Children
- Violence against Women
- Prevent
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Modern Slavery
- Supporting staff or taking the lead in referring safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring all staff are aware of who the Directorate Safeguarding Lead is within their department.
- Co-ordinating the annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment and ensuring that appropriate actions are contained within Directorate Delivery Plans.

- Ensuring safeguarding is regularly considered at Directorate Management Team meetings and that appropriate performance detail is provided to support the discussion.
- Attending and contributing to the quarterly Corporate Safeguarding Delivery Group. Sending a deputy if unable to attend.
- Publicising and promoting national campaigns, including through organisations websites, social media, or other mediums.

## **6.2 Mandatory Training.**

The National Safeguarding Training Standards Framework will change the way that Safeguarding Training is delivered, monitored, and collated. The Councils internal Learning Management System has been updated and refreshed to better deliver user experience. Single sign on into the system is currently being considered to avoid the password reset issue. Any national review may include a national learning management system which will support delivery and compliance further. This will need to be considered alongside an already underway review of NCC's Learning Management system.

## **6.3 WCCIS, the Social Care recording system is ceasing its operation in Wales in 2026.**

The Authorities that use WCCIS are currently looking at replacement systems. this. the migration of sensitive data from WCCIS to whichever model is chosen will have to be managed very carefully. This is a potential risk, and it has been escalated to Heads of Service, corporately and to Welsh Government. This has been added to the Newport City Council Risk Register.

## **6.4 Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)**

Members have previously discussed changes to the Practice Review process and the incoming Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR), This was led by Newport and is now almost ready for rollout in Wales. This will simplify the Practice Review/Domestic Homicide/Mental Health/Offensive Weapons review process and mean that the stands of work within these processes are standardised and importantly connected. This will mean that families will not be subject to more than one review at a time when there has been a tragedy and that the anonymised learning from this will be held centrally for access by professionals across Wales. Ther dates for the SUSR Chair and Reviewers training for Gwent are in May 2024.

## **6.5 Build the Council's White Ribbon Action Plan into the Corporate Safeguarding.**

Work with colleagues in Community Safety to embed this and create a Calander of events to disseminate to Safeguarding Champions.

## **7. Resource Implications (Employment and Financial)**

There are no resource implications currently other than corporate Safeguarding being a part of everyone's role. This is being managed without a budget.

## **Appendices**

1. [Case study Safeguarding .docx](#)
2. [Glossary of Terms.docx](#)
3. [Draft policy statement Adult Safeguarding 2024.docx](#)
4. [Updated 2020 Final NCC Safeguarding Policy Statement Jan 2024FM.docx](#)
5. [Safeguarding Champions doc.docx](#)
6. [DSP 2022.pdf](#)