



# **CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**A POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE WHOLE  
AUTHORITY SAFEGUARDING GROUP**

**APRIL 2020**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

As a Council over the last weeks we have been responding to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus as it impacts on every individual, family and community within Monmouthshire.

The entire look and feel of the Council, the way that services are organised and delivered, as well as the partnership landscape has changed dramatically.

Inevitably this has had an impact on Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk.

This position statement sets out some of the ways in which safeguarding may be impacted and how we want to approach Safeguarding from a whole authority perspective over the coming weeks and months, until this crisis is over.

## **2. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SAFEGUARDING**

**COVID-19 puts families under increased strain and increases risks to vulnerable individuals at the same time as decreasing the visibility of children and adults at risk.**

**2.1** Safeguarding depends on the *eyes and ears* of those who meet and work with children, families and adults at risk day in, day out within communities and within people's homes.

This type of *caring vigilance* is often how we identify and refer on concerns, yet it is simply no longer in place in the same way as it was before. This does not just apply to the Council workforce but to our statutory partners, particularly health, as well as third sector and voluntary agencies who are no longer able to deliver services into people's homes and communities in the way that they were before the crisis. Schools are a major example of this. At this point, we have seen a slight decrease in the amount of referrals into Children's services. The concern is that this does not necessarily equate to a reduction in abuse and neglect, but may mean that issues are not being *picked up* and referred in.

**2.2** The pressure on families experiencing the impact of 'lock down' is considerable particularly where there are additional worries around finances, the loss of employment and economic uncertainty, poor housing or over-crowding, not having access to support and basic amenities not to mention the risks and concerns around the virus itself. Families who are caring for individuals with heightened or additional needs such as mental health issues, additional learning needs or disabilities may experience these pressures even more intensely. The additional stress and strain on families' increases risks around Safeguarding and can place individuals at increased risk of abuse and neglect including domestic abuse.

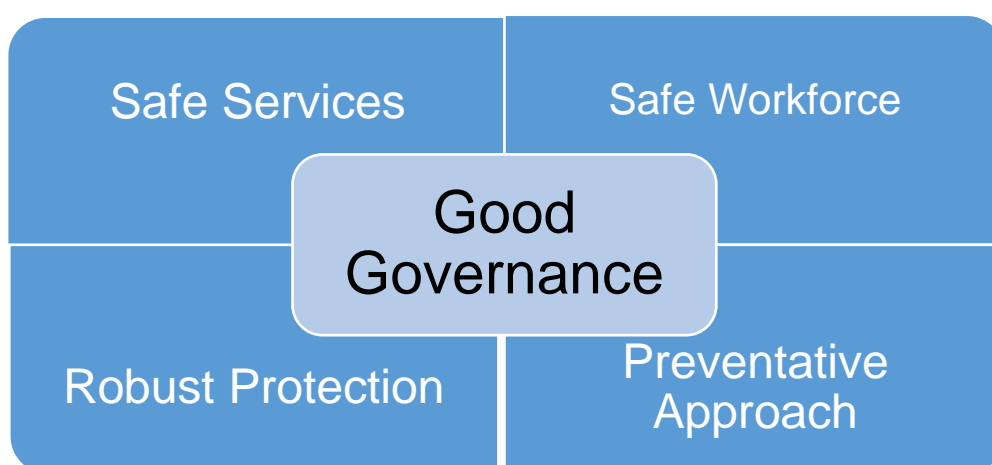
**2.3** Children and adults at risk now have considerably less contact with the outside world, or safe places available to them where they can report or share any concerns they have.

**2.4** COVID-19 can have an overall negative effect on individual well-being.

**2.5** When concerns are identified protective services have had to change the way that they respond and provide services this includes social care, health, education, probation and the police as well as other partner and voluntary agencies.

### **3. THE CORNERSTONES OF SAFEGUARDING**

During the crisis we will continue to organise safeguarding in Monmouthshire around the Cornerstones of Safeguarding.



### **4. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**4.1** Two paramount messages remain:

- 1. Safeguarding children and adults at risk from abuse is everybody's responsibility.**
- 2. The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy is still fully in force and the key objectives of the policy remain to:**
  - **Create and maintain a safe environment;**
  - **Identify where there are concerns and take action to address them in partnership with other agencies;**
  - **Prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and adults at risk;**
  - **Ensure the whole workforce understands safeguarding and their accountabilities and responsibilities;**
  - **Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice.**

**[SEE APPENDIX 1: Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#)**

**4.2** All Chief Officers and Directorate Heads of Service must continue to raise / report Safeguarding issues or concerns at either DMT or SLT level.

**4.3** The Chief Officer SCH as the statutory director for SG will continue to report to the Chief Executive and Lead Cabinet Member as necessary.

**4.4** WASG meetings will not be prioritised during this period, unless on an 'exception basis' i.e. when a Corporate Safeguarding issue arises that requires discussion or needs to be specifically addressed.

**4.5** During the crisis issues pertaining to safeguarding and risk will additionally fall within the Council's emergency planning structures that have been put in place.

**4.6** Key functions of the WASG will continue, particularly around the completion and collation of the 'SAFES'. Feedback around directorate 'SAFES' into the WASG will resume once the crisis is over.

**4.7** The Safeguarding Unit continues to operate as a priority one service and is available to provide support into directorates through 'directorate leads' as before.

**4.8** The Annual Safeguarding Report will be prepared for Year end 2019 and presented to Scrutiny / Council prior to the summer recess. Data collection and collation regarding safeguarding performance information will continue in order to support this.

**4.9** All reports prepared for Members must continue to include an explanation of any safeguarding or Corporate Parenting implications in regards to any Council decision which is proposed.

**4.10** The Gwent Safeguarding Board and VAWDASV will not be fully operational but Monmouthshire County Council will continue to work through the Safeguarding Unit to ensure that the work of the Boards is delivered into The Council where this is required.

**4.11 Welsh Government has confirmed that there is to be no delay in the implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.**

<https://safeguarding.wales/>

## **5. SAFE WORKFORCE**

**5.1** Workforce is defined as those engaged by the Council, including permanent and temporary employees, students, volunteers, workers employed by employment agencies, contractors and consultants.

**5.2** The responsibilities for all council employees remains as per the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

### **5.3 Recruitment, Selection and Management of the Workforce**

The recruitment of staff continues at pace for priority 1 service areas. Safe recruitment practices are not relaxed and the requirement to undertake full DBS checks to the relevant level, obtain references and conduct a selection process remains the same.

5.4 For staff who are re-deployed there are 'fast-track' arrangements in place to respond to the operational requirements. It is acceptable to use a 'fast-track' approach to DBS certification for temporary re-deployments. Never-the-less, prior to the redeployment the individual must be subject to the same level of checks and references that correspond with the re-deployment: No direct 'read-across' should be assumed. Any convictions or cautions must be risk assessed in the normal way. In situations where full checks to the required level have not been completed for the redeployed individual a risk assessment can be undertaken if it is in an emergency situation (i.e. when to not re-deploying an individual to undertake work would pose a greater safeguarding risk than proceeding with the re-deployment without the full checks having been completed).



SCH Recruitment  
Strategy COVID-19 -

## **5.5 TRAINING**

All of the workforce are expected to undertake training relevant to the position that they hold and to renew their qualifications to the highest level. Re-deployed staff must ensure that their level of training accords with the standards of the new role.

<b>Training Programme</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Key Contact</b>
<b>Safeguarding Basic Awareness</b>	<b>NO CHANGE</b>	<b>Corporate Training Unit</b>
<b>Level 1 combined children and Adult Safeguarding</b>	<b>Now available through virtual methods and workbook</b>	<b>Contact: Katie Jacobs, Quality Assurance Officer</b> <a href="mailto:Katiejacobs@monmouthshire.gov.uk">Katiejacobs@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>RENEWAL level 2 – CHILDREN</b>	<b>Now available through virtual methods</b>	<b>Contact: Heather Heaney, Lead Officer Safeguarding in Education</b> <a href="mailto:HeatherHeaney@monmouthshire.gov.uk">HeatherHeaney@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Level 2 Children – for those</b>		<b>Contact: Heather Heaney</b>

completing for the first time	Workbook in Development	<a href="mailto:HeatherHeaney@monmouthshire.gov.uk">HeatherHeaney@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>
VAWDASV Group 1	Available on line	<p>The eLearning module can be accessed here:  <a href="https://learning.wales.nhs.uk/course/view.php?id=1410">https://learning.wales.nhs.uk/course/view.php?id=1410</a>  Your username will be mcc. and your payroll number (e.g. mcc.000000)  The default password is changeme01%  The enrolment key is Monm111%</p> <p>Support with issues accessing the module is via  <a href="mailto:joeskidmore@monmouthshire.gov.uk">joeskidmore@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>This e-learning is also now available that does not require the password and enrolment key should this be required:  <a href="https://learning2.wales.nhs.uk/login/index.php">https://learning2.wales.nhs.uk/login/index.php</a></p> <p>(note this version will not keep a record of who has completed it)</p>
Prevent (extremism and terrorism)	Courses suspended	<p>Advice available via Heather Powell  <a href="mailto:Heather.Powell@newport.gov.uk">Heather.Powell@newport.gov.uk</a> and PC Dave Castree  <a href="mailto:david.castree@gwent.pnn.police.uk">david.castree@gwent.pnn.police.uk</a></p>

The other training covered within the policy is currently suspended, however, each course is under review to consider the potential for developing programmes virtually (depending on the current demand).

Managers must keep accurate records of individuals undertaking virtual programmes.

## **5.6 VOLUNTEERING**

All elements of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, including Safe Recruitment, continues to apply to all volunteers who engage with adults at risk, children and young people in their volunteering role.

<http://corphub/initiatives/VolunteersToolkit/Shared%20Documents/Volunteering%20Policy%202017.doc?Web=1>

The COVID-19 crisis has seen a tremendous response in relation to the mobilisation of volunteering and community groups. The Council is working with over 80 volunteer co-ordinators across more than 60 local groups with over 650 volunteers undertaking activities from delivering meals, dog walking to providing a friendly call. Some of these groups have sprung up quickly. Through the Enterprise Directorate the Council is making every effort to

ensure that these groups, and individual volunteers, some of which have mobilised very rapidly, have the correct advice, support and guidance regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.



Guidance for  
Voluntary Informal



MCC Community  
Volunteer Safeguar

## **6. PREVENTATIVE APPROACH**

**6.1** One of the Council's corporate priorities is to support Monmouthshire residents to be safe, stay well, and to live independently within their community. The Council remains committed to this aim during the current crisis through the mobilisation of community based resources, volunteering and redeployment. Whilst the focus and emphasis of the work changes to respond to the crisis situation, maintaining a positive and proactive culture for Safeguarding remains as critical as ever.

**6.2** This will include:

- Good information sharing and partnership working;
- Being alert to the possibility of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Recognising and acting on concerns;
- Routinely promoting and discussing safeguarding issues within the workforce.

**\*\* See Corporate Safeguarding Policy for information around Risk of Radicalisation, Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery / Trafficking, Self-Harm / Suicide Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV).\*\***

**6.3** A range of resources have been developed to help all families, children and adults at risk cope with the psychological and emotional impact of COVID19. These can be accessed via

<http://infohub/teams/childserv/Covid%2019%20Staff/Forms/Family%20Tool.aspx>



USEFUL RESOURCES  
List up to date (004).d

## **6.4 ONLINE ENVIRONMENT**

As we have less face to face contact with children and adults, we may as paid and unpaid workers have more contact via technology.

In the same way that we should be aware of anything that would cause us concern in the real world, we need to be as vigilant in noticing safeguarding concerns when in contact with people via other methods – through telephone calls, emails etc. Any cause for concern regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child or adult should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This would include possibly abusive behavior by parents or family/household members, indications of self-harm or bruising, or change in mood or behavior of the person in question.

## **6.5 ONLINE CONDUCT**

People are usually aware of how they should act in everyday environments, however the rules can feel different and many people behave differently or may push the boundaries when communicating online. Sometimes people are emboldened by the ability to hide behind a screen and can behave differently because of it. It is important to ensure a professional and respectful approach at all times.

Make sure that your contact with people is appropriate and appropriate to your role, do not share personal information, and make contact within reasonable hours as agreed by your line manager. The nature of the relationship should remain clear to everyone involved. Be aware of what is happening in the background when you are making contact – make sure that confidentiality is observed (do not have your family members in the background).

[Online safety guidance and support](#) for parents' carers of children can be accessed via this link.

## **7. ROBUST PROTECTION**

### **7.1 PLEASE NOTE THAT THE WALES SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES 2019, NOW APPLY**

<https://safeguarding.wales/>



'What's Different' Quick Guide Children   'What's Different' Quick Guide Adults

### **7.2 Child and Adult Safeguarding are priority 1 services and remain fully operational.**

**7.3** The process for receiving and responding to referrals has not changed. **This includes referrals regarding allegations or concerns against adults who work with children and adults at risk.**

**7.4** Risk assessments will be undertaken where any direct working / home visiting is required to follow up on child or adult protection concerns, or to provide interim safeguards as part of a care and support plan. Some direct work may be undertaken virtually or using social distancing methods.

**7.5** The *Duty to Report* actual or suspected abuse or neglect of adults and children deemed to be at risk remains. In other words 'Duty to Report' means *Making a Referral*.

## **7.6 KEY SAFEGUARDING DEFINITIONS REMAIN THE SAME**

For the purposes of this policy, children and young people are defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

An adult at risk is defined as an adult who is experiencing, or who is at risk of, abuse or neglect, has needs for care and support (whether or not the Council is meeting any of those needs) and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

## **7.7 DATA PROTECTION**

The Council's duties under Data Protection legislation **does not prevent** the lawful exchange of information without consent when this is proportionate and justifiable in regards to safeguarding a child or vulnerable adult, or in the prevention of a crime. Similarly, there are specific provisions within the legislation which allows the Council to refuse to release safeguarding information where to do so would not be in the interests of the child or vulnerable adult involved.

## **8. SAFE SERVICES**

### **8.1 Commissioning Arrangements**

Accreditation processes for new providers remain the same.

8.2 Contract monitoring and good communication with providers must be in place to ensure that a provider's capacity to deliver services in accordance with good safeguarding practice during this current crisis is not compromised.

8.3 Where there are concerns that the provider is compromised this needs to be raised with directorate leads and a risk assessment / partnership approach put in place to mitigate any risk.

8.4 Each Directorate remains accountable for ensuring that all organisations with whom it works are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities and have arrangements /procedures in place to discharge them during the current crisis.

### **8.5 SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION**

Arrangements for safeguarding for pupils now being educated at home have been put in place following Welsh Government guidance.

<https://gov.wales/stay-safe-stay-learning>

8.6 Local arrangements for safeguarding pupils of key-workers and vulnerable learners have been put in place following Welsh Government guidance.



Vulnerable Groups  
Monitoring Final Draft

8.7 The council has set out its definitions of vulnerable pupils and the safeguarding arrangements for these individual learners in Appendix 1 of the above document.

8.8 School Safeguarding policies have this addendum based on Welsh Government guidance.



Suggested update to  
school safeguarding :

## RECORD OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Corporate Safeguarding Policy
Appendix 2	Safeguarding Role of all Council Staff
Appendix 3	Relevant Contacts
Appendix 4	Definitions of Abuse

### Appendix 1



safeguarding policy  
Amendment Jan19 ((

### Appendix 2

#### **SAFEGUARDING ROLE FOR WORCEFORCE PAID & UNPAID**

Every service area of the Council has a role to play and must take full ownership of their safeguarding responsibilities. The Council expects every member of the workforce to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of any child or adult at risk involved in Council activity.

Managers must proactively analyse where risks to safeguarding are most likely to arise in their particular service(s) and ensure they have appropriate operational procedures and supporting systems in place to manage these well. They are accountable for understanding the training needs of their workforce and ensuring there are appropriate operational arrangements for people to access the right training.

Any person responsible for, or working with, children or adults at risk in any capacity, whether paid or unpaid, is considered to have a duty of care towards them both legally and contractually and as a responsible moral citizen. This includes a duty to behave in a manner that does not threaten, harm or put people at risk of harm from others.

All parts of the workforce have a responsibility to conduct themselves in their private lives in a manner that does not compromise their position in the workplace or call into question their suitability to work with children or adults at risk.

All members of the workforce should:

- Be alert to the possibility of harm, abuse and neglect;
- Participate in relevant safeguarding training and multi-agency working to safeguard children and adults at risk;
- Be familiar with local procedures and protocols for safeguarding and follow the Councils Code of Conduct and other professional codes;
- Report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or adult at risk.

Everybody working for or on behalf of the Council has a duty to report any concerns they may have for the welfare and/or protection of children and adults at risk. The duty to report is a legal requirement and failure to report appropriately will be considered a serious matter under the Council's personnel policies.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Relevant Contacts**

Social Services Duty – Children Services	01291 635669 during office hours  0800 328 4432 out of office hours
Social Services Duty – Adult Services	Monmouth/Usk/Raglan – 01600 773041 Abergavenny – 01873 735885 Chepstow/Caldicot – 01291 635666
PREVENT	<a href="mailto:Heather.Powell@newport.gov.uk">Heather.Powell@newport.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:HeatherPowell@monmouthshire.gov.uk">HeatherPowell@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>
South East Wales Safeguarding Board	<a href="http://www.sewsc.org.uk">www.sewsc.org.uk</a>
Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board	<a href="http://www.gwasb.org.uk">www.gwasb.org.uk</a>
Buddy Support and Advice	<a href="http://www.buddyapp.monmouthshire.gov.uk">www.buddyapp.monmouthshire.gov.uk</a> .
Modern Slavery /Trafficking – Training and Victim Support	BAWSO <a href="http://www.bawso.org.uk">www.bawso.org.uk</a> .

## **Appendix 4**

### **Definitions of Abuse**

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, for example by witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or, the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

In addition, neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

#### **Financial Abuse**

Financial or material abuse is any theft or misuse of a person's money, property or resources by a person in a position of, or expectation of, trust to a vulnerable person. Common forms of financial abuse are misuse by others of a vulnerable adult's state benefits or undue pressure to change wills. Financial/material abuse may also be perpetrated by one vulnerable adult upon another.

