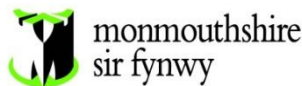


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Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

Dydd Llun, 30 Medi 2024

Hysbysiad a gyfarfod

Pwyllgor Perfformiad a Throsolwg

Dydd Mawrth, 8fed Hydref, 2024 at 10.00 am,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK

Nodwch y cynhelir rhag gyfarfod 30 munud cyn dechrau'r cyfarfod ar gyfer aelodau'r pwyllgor

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb	
2.	Datganiadau o Fuddiant	
3.	Datblygu Polisi Lleoliadau Plant Adolygu'r cynnydd o ran gweithredu'r polisi.	1 - 18
4.	Adroddiad Monitro Blynyddol y Prif Swyddog, Gofal Cymdeithasol Craffu ar y cynnydd a'r cyfeiriad strategol ar gyfer y gwasanaeth.	To Follow
5.	Adroddiad Blynyddol Diogelu Craffu ar berfformiad trefniadau diogelu.	19 - 68
6.	Cyfarfod nesaf: 15fed Hydref am 2:00pm	

Paul Matthews

Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

MAE CYFANSODDIAD Y PWYLLGOR FEL A GANLYN:

County Councillor Jill Bond, West End;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Rachel Buckler, Devauden;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor John Crook, Magor East with Undy;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Steven Garratt, Overmonnow;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Meirion Howells, Llanbadoc & Usk;, Independent
County Councillor Alistair Neill, Gobion Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Paul Pavia, Mount Pleasant;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Peter Strong, Rogiet;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Ann Webb, St Arvans;, Welsh Conservative Party

County Councillor Jan Butler, Goetre Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Christopher Edwards, St. Kingsmark;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Simon Howarth, Llanelly Hill;, Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones, Raglan;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell, Pen Y Fal;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Sue Riley, Bulwark and Thornwell;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Maria Stevens, Severn;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong, Caldicot Cross;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Laura Wright, Grofield;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Gwybodaeth I'r Cyhoedd

Mynediad i gopiâu papur o agendâu ac adroddiadau

Gellir darparu copi o'r agenda hwn ac adroddiadau perthnasol i aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n mynychu cyfarfod drwy ofyn am gopi gan Gwasanaethau Democrataidd ar 01633 644219. Dylid nodi fod yn rhaid i ni dderbyn 24 awr o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod er mwyn darparu copi caled o'r agenda hwn i chi.

Edrych ar y cyfarfod ar-lein

Gellir gweld y cyfarfod ar-lein yn fyw neu'n dilyn y cyfarfod drwy fynd i www.monmouthshire.gov.uk neu drwy ymweld â'n tudalen Youtube drwy chwilio am MonmouthshireCC. Drwy fynd i mewn i'r ystafell gyfarfod, fel aelod o'r cyhoedd neu i gymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod, rydych yn caniatáu i gael eich ffilmio ac i ddefnydd posibl y delweddau a'r recordiadau sain hynny gan y Cyngor.

Y Gymraeg Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu cyfraniadau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Gofynnwn gyda dyledus barch i chi roi 5 diwrnod o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod os dymunwch siarad yn Gymraeg fel y gallwn ddarparu ar gyfer eich anghenion.

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

i ddod yn sir ddi-garbon, gan gefnogi lles, iechyd ac urddas i bawb ar bob cam o'u bywydau.

Amcanion rydym yn gweithio tuag atynt

- Lle teg i fyw lle mae effeithiau anghydraddoldeb a thlodi wedi'u lleihau;
- Lle gwyrdd i fyw a gweithio gyda llai o allyriadau carbon a gwneud cyfraniad cadarnhaol at fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng yn yr hinsawdd a natur;
- Lle ffyniannus ac uchelgeisiol, lle mae canol trefi bywiog a lle gall busnesau dyfu a datblygu;
- Lle diogel i fyw lle mae gan bobl gartref maen nhw'n teimlo'n ddiogel ynddo;
- Lle cysylltiedig lle mae pobl yn teimlo'n rhan o gymuned ac yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi;
- Lle dysgu lle mae pawb yn cael cyfle i gyrraedd eu potensial.

Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.
- **Caredigrwydd** – Byddwn yn dangos caredigrwydd i bawb yr ydym yn gweithio gyda nhw, gan roi pwysigrwydd perthnasoedd a'r cysylltiadau sydd gennym â'n gilydd wrth wraidd pob rhyngweithio.

Canllaw Cwestiynau Craffu Sir Fynwy

1. Pam mae'r Pwyllgor yn craffu ar hyn? (cefndir, materion allweddol)
2. Beth yw rôl y Pwyllgor a pha ganlyniad mae'r Aelodau am ei gyflawni?
3. A oes digon o wybodaeth i gyflawni hyn? Os nad oes, pwy allai ddarparu hyn?
 - Cytuno ar y drefn holi a pha Aelodau fydd yn arwain
 - Cytuno ar gwestiynau i swyddogion a chwestiynau i Aelod y Cabinet

Cwestiynau'r Cyfarfod

Craffu ar Berfformiad

1. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â'r blynyddoedd blaenorol? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
2. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â chynghorau eraill/darparwyr gwasanaethau eraill? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
3. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â thargedau gosodedig? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
4. Sut cafodd targedau perfformiad eu gosod? Ydyn nhw'n ddigon heriol/realistig?
5. Sut mae defnyddwyr gwasanaethau/y cyhoedd/partneriaid yn gweld perfformiad y gwasanaeth?
6. A fu unrhyw awdid ac archwiliadau diweddar? Beth oedd y canfyddiadau?
7. Sut mae'r gwasanaeth yn cyfrannu at wireddu amcanion corfforaethol?
8. A yw gwelliant/dirywiad mewn perfformiad yn gysylltiedig i gynnydd/ostyngiad mewn adnodd?
Pa gapasiti sydd yna i wella?

Craffu ar Bolisi

1. Ar bwy mae'r polisi yn effeithio ~ yn uniongyrchol ac yn anuniongyrchol? Pwy fydd yn elwa fwyaf/leiaf?
2. Beth yw barn defnyddwyr gwasanaeth /rhanddeiliaid? Pa ymgynghoriad gafodd ei gyflawni? A wnaeth y broses ymgynghori gydymffurfio ag Egwyddorion Gunning? A yw rhanddeiliaid yn credu y bydd yn sicrhau'r canlyniad a ddymunir?
3. Beth yw barn y gymuned gyfan – safbwynt y 'trethdalwr'?
4. Pa ddulliau a ddefnyddiwyd i ymgynghori â'r rhanddeiliaid? A oedd y broses yn galluogi pawb â chyfran i ddweud eu dweud?
5. Pa ymarfer ac opsiynau sydd wedi eu hystyried wrth ddatblygu/adolygu'r polisi hwn? Pa dystiolaeth sydd i hysbysu beth sy'n gweithio? A yw'r polisi yn ymwneud â maes lle mae diffyg ymchwil cyhoeddedig neu dystiolaeth arall?
6. A yw'r polisi'n ymwneud â maes lle ceir anghydraddoldebau hysbys?
7. A yw'r polisi hwn yn cyd-fynd â'n hamcanion corfforaethol, fel y'u diffinnir yn ein cynllun corfforaethol? A yw'n cadw at ein Safonau Iaith Gymraeg?
8. A gafodd yr holl ddatblygu cynaliadwy, y goblygiadau cydraddoldeb a diogelu perthnasol eu hystyried?

	<p>Er enghraifft, beth yw'r gweithdrefnau sydd angen bod ar waith i amddiffyn plant?</p> <p>9. Faint fydd y gost hon i'w gweithredu a pha ffynhonnell ariannu sydd wedi'i nodi?</p> <p>10. Sut fydd perfformiad y polisi yn cael ei weithredu a'r effaith yn cael ei gwerthuso?</p>
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Cwestiynau Cyffredinol:

Grymuso Cymunedau

- Sut ydym ni'n cynnwys cymunedau lleol a'u grymuso i ddylunio a darparu gwasanaethau i gyd-fynd ag angen lleol?
- A ydym ni'n cael trafodaethau rheolaidd gyda chymunedau am flaenoriaethau'r gwasanaeth a pha lefel o wasanaeth y gall y cyngor fforddio ei ddarparu yn y dyfodol?
- A yw'r gwasanaeth yn gweithio gyda dinasyddion i egluro rôl gwahanol bartneriaid wrth ddarparu gwasanaeth a rheoli disgwyliadau?
- A oes fframwaith a phroses gymesur ar waith ar gyfer asesu perfformiad ar y cyd, gan gynnwys o safbwynt dinesydd, ac a oes gennych chi drefniadau atebolrwydd i gefnogi hyn?
- A oes Asesiad Effaith Cydraddoldeb wedi'i gynnal? Os felly a all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet /Uwch Swyddogion roi copïau i'r Aelodau ac eglurhad manwl o'r Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb (EQIA) a gynhaliwyd mewn perthynas â'r cynigion hyn?
- A all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet/Uwch Swyddogion sicrhau aelodau bod y cynigion hyn yn cydymffurfio â deddfwriaeth Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol? A yw'r cynigion yn cydymffurfio â Chynllun Cydraddoldeb Strategol yr Awdurdod Lleol?

Galwadau'r Gwasanaeth

- Sut fydd newid polisi a deddfwriaeth yn effeithio ar y ffordd mae'r cyngor yn gweithredu?
- A ydym ni wedi ystyried demograffeg ein cyngor a sut bydd hyn yn effeithio ar ddarparu gwasanaethau a chyllid yn y dyfodol?
- A ydych chi wedi adnabod ac ystyried y tueddiadau tymor hir a allai effeithio ar eich maes gwasanaeth, pa effaith allai'r tueddiadau hyn ei chael ar eich gwasanaeth/allai eich gwasanaeth ei gael ar y tueddiadau hyn, a beth sy'n cael ei wneud mewn ymateb?

Cynllunio Ariannol

- A oes gennym ni gynlluniau ariannol canolig a hirdymor cadarn yn eu lle?
- A ydym ni'n cysylltu cyllidebau â chynlluniau a chanlyniadau ac adrodd yn effeithiol ar y rhain?

Gwneud arbedion a chynhyrchu incwm

- A oes gennym ni'r strwythurau cywir ar waith i sicrhau bod ein dulliau effeithlonrwydd, gwelliant a thrawsnewid yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd i sicrhau'r arbedion mwyaf posibl?
- Sut ydym ni'n gwneud y mwyaf o incwm? A ydym ni wedi cymharu polisïau eraill y cyngor

i sicrhau'r incwm mwyaf posibl ac wedi ystyried yn llawn y goblygiadau ar ddefnyddwyr gwasanaeth?

- A oes gennym ni gynllun gweithlu sy'n ystyried capasiti, costau, a sgiliau'r gweithlu gwirioneddol yn erbyn y gweithlu a ddymunir?

Cwestiynau i'w gofyn o fewn blwyddyn i'r penderfyniad:

- A gafodd canlyniadau arfaethedig y cynnig eu cyflawni neu a oedd canlyniadau eraill?
- A oedd yr effeithiau wedi'u cyfyngu i'r grŵp yr oeddech chi ar y dechrau yn meddwl fyddai wedi cael ei effeithio h.y. pobl hŷn, neu a gafodd eraill eu heffeithio e.e. pobl ag anabledau, rhieni â phlant ifanc?
- A yw'r penderfyniad yn dal i fod y penderfyniad cywir neu a oes angen gwneud addasiadau?

Cwestiynau i'r Pwyllgor ar ddiwedd y cyfarfod ...

A oes gennym ni'r wybodaeth angenrheidiol i ffurfio casgliadau/i wneud argymhellion i'r pwyllgor gwaith, cyngor, partneriaid eraill? Os nad oes, a oes angen i ni:

- (i) Ymchwilio i'r mater yn fwy manwl?
- (ii) Gael rhagor o wybodaeth gan dystion eraill - Aelod o'r Bwrdd Gweithredol, arbenigwr annibynnol, aelodau o'r gymuned, defnyddwyr gwasanaeth, cyrff rheoleiddio...

Cytuno ar gamau pellach sydd i'w cymryd o fewn amserlen/adroddiad monitro yn y dyfodol.

SUBJECT:	Progress update in the development of children’s residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	8th October 2024

1. **PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress made in the development of in-house children’s residential and 16+ Supported Accommodation placements.
- 1.2 The strategy for developing placements was endorsed by the Council on Thursday 18th April 2024 and it was agreed that there would be a 6-monthly update provided to Committee.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For Performance & Overview Committee to scrutinise the progress made against the objectives of the strategy report presented to council 18th April 2024.

3. **KEY ISSUES**

Context

- 3.1 Placement sufficiency for Children Looked After has been an ongoing issue. The number of children Looked After has increased locally, as well as nationally, over the last 10 years and provision has not grown sufficiently to meet this demand. This has resulted in more children residing outside of our county boundaries. Shortages in available placements has meant that we have not always been able to match children’s specific needs with the optimal placement for them. There has also been an over-reliance on the private “for profit” market.
- 3.2 Whilst we continue to work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to support the transition of Children Looked After into supported accommodation post 16 years, this provision is limited, which has resulted in young people becoming ‘blocked’ in children’s placements and not receiving the support required to transition into independence.
- 3.3 There is an unfailing commitment to the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers; however, the number of Local Authority foster carers has not increased sufficiently to meet our needs. Monmouthshire has a reliance on commissioning “for profit” foster placements for children from independent fostering agencies (IFAs). This is addressed within the Council’s fostering strategy and is not an area of focus within this report.
- 3.4 The Health and Social Care Bill which has been laid before the Senedd intends to eliminate profit from the care of children who are looked after. As it currently stands, in April 2026, it will no longer be possible in Wales to register as a ‘for-profit’ provider, and from April 2027 it will be illegal to make new placements for children with a ‘for-profit’ provider.
- 3.5 The private ‘for profit’ provider market has become significantly destabilised following the Welsh Government’s policy direction and subsequent Bill. The destabilisation of the current market has further decreased the sufficiency of IFA and residential placements, resulting in increased costs of placements and the number of unregulated homes operating, also at increased cost.

- 3.6 On April 18th, 2024, the Council endorsed the Children Services' strategy to respond to the current external context and the challenges associated with the provision of children's placements. The strategy sought to set out the pathway for increasing the availability of in-house residential and supported accommodation placements in a way which was both sustainable; would better meet the needs of Monmouthshire children and young people; and would decrease the Council's dependency on an uncertain provider market.
- 3.7 Predicted numbers of additional placements required to meet demand as at April 2024 were based on current trends and numbers of children looked after. The strategy also took account of the placements that the service had already developed i.e. 4 bespoke therapeutic placements via two, 2-bed residential children's homes, one in the North of the county and one in the South.
- 3.8 The policy laid out a requirement for the development of:
- Residential Placements – 12 additional placements via standard 3 -4 bed residential homes;
 - Bespoke Therapeutic – 2 additional placements required – via 1 small 2-bed home;
 - Supported Accommodation for 16plus – 20 additional placements required.
- 3.9 In respect of the provision of the care element for residential children's homes in the context of the eliminate agenda, there are essentially 2 service delivery models: - either through an in-house Local Authority residential service; or via a procurement route where the Local Authority tenders for a not-for-profit organisation to provide the care. The preferred approach agreed was to allow for both options to be pursued depending on the individual project. In respect of the Supported Accommodation provision, the preferred route for providing the care, was via a procurement process.
- 3.10 With regard to the accommodation element, the Council endorsed proposals to develop in-house residential and 16+ supported accommodation by looking to repurpose existing assets in the first instance. Where re-purposing is not viable, the Council endorsed the acquisition of suitable property or land for the development of residential placements or supported accommodation subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval.
- 3.11 The Council extended the borrowing headroom of up to £3 million to support direct acquisition of suitable properties subject to agreed business cases, and only in the event that grant money was not available.

Progress April-Sept 24

- 3.12 Children Services has appointed to a new post of Residential and Resource Service Manager to support the development of residential and supported accommodation. Mr Scott Hereford joined the service in August 2024. Scott has previous experience of working within a Gwent Local Authority in the acquisition of appropriate properties, development of care homes, working with the Regional Partnership Board regarding grant applications, recruitment of staff, the registration of care homes with CIW and acting in the role of Responsible Individual. This post is grant funded until March 2025 when it will be absorbed into core costs.

Residential Developments

- 3.13 **Property 1 in Caldicot** (Business Case Agreed by Cabinet – 22nd May 2024)
The aim of this project is to develop a **16+ Supported Accommodation** for up to 5 young people. The Service is scheduled to commence in Nov/Dec 24 which is in-keeping with the target date put forward in the Business Case. The development has progressed well. All finishes have now been agreed and internal plastering and painting has started. The front of the property is being prepared for renovation and to accommodate staff parking to avoid congestion in the area. The

rear garden and fencing are being renovated and the air source heat pump is installed. Preparation work has also been completed for the installation of a sprinkler system.

- 3.14 The scope of works is scheduled to finish week commencing 30/09/24. There is the possibility that the time scales for total completion may slip to the 11/10/24, this is being closely monitored by the project team.
- 3.15 The procurement process for the “not for profit” service provider concluded positively on the 17/09/24. It remains in the procurement process for notification, and introductory meetings have been set up in order to commence the recruitment of staff in readiness for opening November – December 2024. Young people currently in for profit care have been identified and transition support has commenced via the social work teams.
- 3.16 The property was an existing Council asset, so no funding was required to support an acquisition. A Housing with Care Fund Grant (HCF) application was submitted on 07/05/24 for £300,000 to cover the costs of the refurbishment. This comprised £220,000 for build costs, £30,000 for fees and £50,000 for furnishings and fittings. The grant application is waiting on approval but is likely to be approved and has been profiled into the Regional Partnership Board’s Capital Programme for this year (funding is retrospective). Accessing prudential borrowing was factored into the Business Case to cover the costs of the refurbishment on an interim basis. The project is currently well within budget.
- 3.17 A neighbour engagement event was held where 14 households were invited to meet the Children Services and local councillors. The event was attended by 1 household but during the renovation process neighbours have engaged contractors and members of the project team. At this time there have been no neighbour concerns raised and a further invitation will be made to neighbours when the property is completed.
- 3.18 **Property in Monmouth (Business Case Agreed by Cabinet 6th March 2024)**
The aim of this project is to develop a **registered children’s home for up to 4 children aged under 16 years**. The expected service commencement date is April 25, which is 6 months beyond the date put forward within the business case.
- 3.19 The property purchase was completed according to schedule (end March 2024). Delays arose because of lack of capacity within internal services to provide technical support over the summer period. To mitigate further delays, Caerphilly Council’s Technical Services, a team that has experience in supporting development of residential provision, were engaged to scope works and create plans for the property’s redevelopment. These arrangements took some time to be agreed and put in place. A number of exploratory works on the property, such as asbestos surveys and cavity wall inspections, fire suppression systems and solar panel installation have been undertaken. The full plans, Bill of Quantities and Schedule of Works are due by the end of September 2024 allowing for the tendering process for contractors to commence in October 2024.
- 3.20 The model of care and recruitment process for an internal staff team has commenced with job descriptions being drawn up. The recruitment of the Residential Manager is scheduled to start in December 2024. The timescales for stepping up a residential workforce are tight, and there remains a slight risk of further slippage against the new target date, depending on the response to the recruitment campaign. We are working closely with HR colleagues and the Workforce Development Team to help with this.
- 3.21 Slippage against the timelines on this project has meant that children’s progression planning is delayed, with a consequence for in-year savings against placement costs for identified children. Depending on individual care plans, children will either remain longer in their current placements or an alternative plan will be formulated. Other progression plans are being implemented to make-good the required in-year savings.
- 3.22 A HCF grant of £1,175,000 overall was approved by the Regional Partnership. This included £795,000 for the acquisition, plus fees at £72,500 and £7,500 for legal costs from the 2023/24 capital programme and has since been received. The remainder, £300,00 for the refurbishment

and fittings, is programmed into the capital programme for 24/25. The terms of the grant are that the property must be used for its stated purpose for 10 years to avoid claw-back.

- 3.23 A further grant application of £45,000 has been made to the Integrated Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) to support the costs of the Caerphilly Technical Team. If this is not successful these costs will be borne by Children's Services.
- 3.24 We have submitted a grant application seeking Regional Integration Funds for £112,966 to support the implementation of the scheme, which will be our first residential children's home using an in-house residential workforce for the service delivery. Grant funding would enable us to recruit, train and prepare a newly established staff team to ensure the smooth and efficient operational implementation of the home. Notification of the grant applications is due in late November, and indications are positive that it will be approved. This was an opportunistic grant application for unallocated funds; the time it takes to establish the workforce prior to opening was factored into the original business case.
- 3.25 A neighbourhood engagement event was held on the 06/06/24 where over 30 residents attended to speak with the project team, the Cabinet Member and the local ward Councillor. The event allowed neighbours and residents to ask questions, tour the property and have any concerns responded to. Subsequently, a newsletter has gone out to residents to keep them updated and they have a point of contact should they have any future questions of concern.
- 3.26 **Property 2 in Caldicot (Business Case Agreed by Cabinet 17th July 2024.)**
The aim of the project is to develop a **registered residential children's home for 4 children** in partnership with Pobl Housing Association, using an existing Pobl property. The proposed completion date is August 25 which is in-keeping with the target put forward in the business case. A Project Team is established between Pobl and Children Services to consider initial plans and the registration requirements under the regulations. Pobl have appointed Quatro Architecture consultants in order to support the feasibility assessment on developing the property. Over the next few weeks Pobl will be reviewing the Environmental Assessment tender returns with procurement, planning to have an Environmental Assessment for the scheme by week commencing 14/10/24. Quatro are also planning to have some drafted plans for our viewing by then. Once agreed Pobl are estimating that the build programme will be 18 weeks. There are some minor risks identified with regard to change of use planning and a proposed extension to the car park. It is anticipated that the service delivery model will be through an in-house residential workforce.
- 3.27 Pobl and Children's Services are meeting with the Regional Partnership Board to discuss the outcome of the feasibility assessment and to develop a grant application to finance the modernisation and refurbishment work that will be required. The Regional Partnership Board is keen to support partnership proposals and favours applications from RSLs.
- 3.28 Final clarity on both the capital and revenue costs (such as the cost of the lease) associated with this scheme are yet to be determined. Capital costs will fall to the RSL, and provision was made within the business case to accommodate the cost of the lease.
- 3.29 Once the plans are more developed a neighbourhood engagement event will be arranged.

Ongoing Property Searches

- 3.30 Children Services have explored other potential Monmouthshire assets including agricultural properties. Unfortunately, to date no other existing assets have been identified that would meet the specifications required for registration purposes without significant building development, the financial criteria for grant applications or accord with Children Services timescales.
- 3.31 Children Services continue to search for appropriate properties for one further residential children's home, and one further post-16 supported accommodation provision, particularly in the

North of the borough. It has been challenging to locate a suitable 4/5 bedroom property in the North of the borough due to the factors such as cost, condition of the building, registration requirements and community facilities.

4. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

The development of a panel of care experience young people is being developed to support their participation and inclusion in property and service development. Currently governance for this panel is being considered. Care experienced young people have been members of the selection panel for the Residential Service Manager post and also in the procurement process for a not for profit supporting living provider.

5. OPTION APPRAISAL

N/A

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Currently there are 3 projects under development and clear timescales which accord with care planning for children. Further opportunities are being explored.

6.2 There was a spike in the number of children becoming looked after in Quarter 1 of 2024; however, most of these young people were maintained with family settings or in-house foster care. Children's Services continue to plan for each child and a "horizon" list is kept to identify children who may need, at some point, to be accommodated. Predicting demand, however, remains a challenge because of the uncertainty in the care market nationwide and how providers will ultimately respond to the new Bill. Demand is also affected by potential movements / placement changes within our current looked after population, some of which cannot always be predicted.

6.3 Summary

Home	Care	Placements	Model	Operational
Monmouth	Standard Residential (age 8-16)	4	LA Owned Delivered by LA	April 25
Caldicot	16+ supported accommodation	5	LA Owned and 3 rd sector delivery	Nov-Dec 24

Pipeline

Home	Care	Capacity	Model	Operational
Caldicot	Standard Residential (age 8-16)	4	RSL Owned Delivery tbc LA preferred	Aug/Sep 25

Further Placements Desired in line with the original strategy

Home	Care	Capacity	Model	Operational
Emergency / Therapeutic	Therapeutic Residential	2	LA Owned Delivery tbc	2025/26

	Pre 16			
Residential	Standard (8-16)	4	LA Owned Delivery tbc	2025/26
Supported Accommodation	Supported and UASC 16+	15	LA Owned Delivery tbc	2025/26

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resource implications for the current schemes have been addressed above.

7.2 In terms of funding to support our future objectives we will continue to pursue grant options for the acquisition and refurbishing of any properties. Future business cases will set out the financial arrangements for individual projects with modelling based on either scenario, either with or without grant money, with a proposed mechanism for funding should grant money not be available.

7.3 The development of 'not-for-profit' placements for children remains a high priority for Government and for the Regional Partnership Board. It is understood that the Integrated Regional Capital Fund has been under-utilised to date. It is anticipated that shortly, there will be a relaxing of the application process to support increased capital applications from this fund. This may allow for future applications to be made against this fund.

8. REASONS

8.1 This report is being brought into Committee to provide members with assurance that the policy objectives are being pursued and that value for money is being achieved for the Council in terms of property acquisition and use of Council assets.

9. CONSULTEES

Children Service Leadership Team

Nick Keyes, Head of Estates

Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services.

10. BACKGROUND Papers

Developing Children's Residential and 16+ Supported Accommodation Placements Report

18th April 2024

11. AUTHOR

Scott Hereford -Service Manager Residential and Resource Management

scotthereford@monmouthshire.gov.uk



Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and
Socio Economic Duty)

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Diane Corrister E-mail: dianecorrister@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To review the progress of the Children Services strategy for the development 'in-house' residential placements and 16+ supported accommodation placements for Looked After Children endorsed by Cabinet 16/4/24</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Children's Services</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>8th October 24</p>

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7. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
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Age	The proposal seeks to support children and young people who are looked after or care experienced to live closer to their homes and communities and to be appropriately supported to develop their independence. Children of any age between 0 - 17 years can need to be cared for by the Local Authority. Currently the impact of the operating context, where there is a significant shortage of placements is having an adverse impact on children: Children may be impacted by the lack of placement choice and availability Children may feel that there is an expectation that they leave placements before they are ready.	None identified at this point	Individual care planning for children is in place which takes into account children's individual needs and personal outcomes in line with the stage of development. Schemes such as supported lodgings and When I Am Ready are encouraged Support services are in place to help children develop skills and personal resilience. This proposal concerns the expansion of placement choice and availability.
Disability	Children with more complex needs and disabilities are disproportionately impacted by the lack of suitable placements – this proposal is seeking to address this through the development of bespoke services and provision.	None identified at this point	Individual care planning for children is in place which takes into account children's individual needs and personal outcomes in line with the stage of development. Schemes such as supported lodgings and When I Am Ready are encouraged Support services are in place to help children develop skills and personal resilience. This proposal concerns the expansion of placement choice and availability.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
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Gender reassignment	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Pregnancy or maternity	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Race	When matching placements for children who are looked after this should take account of race, religious, cultural and identity needs – the proposal seeks to continue to ensure that suitable placements are available for children in line with their race, culture and identity needs including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.	None identified at this point	Increase training and awareness across the service to ensure that services, practitioners and carers are skilled and trained to support all children in their race, religious, cultural and identify needs.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Religion or Belief	.When matching placements for children who are looked after this should take account of race, religious, cultural and identity needs – the proposal seeks to continue to ensure that suitable placements are available for children in line with their race, culture and identity needs.	None identified at this point	Increase training and awareness across the service to ensure that services, practitioners and carers are skilled and trained to support all children in their race, religious, cultural and identify needs.
Sex	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	
Sexual Orientation	When matching placements for children who are looked after this should take account of their sexual orientation and identity needs – the proposal seeks to continue to ensure that suitable placements are available for children in line with their identity needs.	None identified at this point	Increase training and awareness across the service to ensure that services, practitioners and carers are skilled and trained to support all children in their race, religious, cultural and identify needs.

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socioeconomic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>Children who are looked after and care experienced young people often face social economic disadvantage and a paucity of support networks – the proposal seeks to provide the best support for young people as they approach adulthood through the provision of appropriate accommodation, support and services.</p> <p>The proposal seeks to arrest the amount of money that is being spent on profit-making organisations and encourage the development of not-for-profit provision, including in-house services, so that further investment can be kept in Wales and retained for the benefit of children.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p> <p><i>Describe any negative impacts that your proposal/s will have on people or groups of people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage.</i></p>	<p>Ensure that practitioners and carers understand the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on individuals who are care experienced and how these may be overcome.</p> <p>Work with the corporate parenting panel to consider ways in which the whole council can support children who are looked after and care experienced.</p> <p><i>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage.</i></p>

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p>	<p><i>The proposal will allow for more children to remain in Wales which will support their Welsh culture and identify and support their Welsh language skills</i></p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>Ensure that workforce is trained in the Welsh active offer</p>
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>	<p><i>Any recruitment activity as a result of the proposal will be shared in Welsh. There are Welsh language learning opportunities for the workforce and some training is offered in Welsh medium. Consideration will be given as to Welsh speakers are specifically required depending on the needs of children who are looked after.</i></p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	<p>We will continue to ensure that the Welsh active offer is made for all children and their families who require services.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>Continue to promote the use of Welsh and Welsh language skills within the service</p>




4. **Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The proposal seeks to support young people who are care experienced to develop the skills and personal resilience required to live prosperously	Further development of supported living accommodation
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and land, river and coastal ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	The proposal seeks to support children who are looked after and care experienced young people to develop healthy lifestyles and to be placed in safe and nurturing environments that support their overall physical and emotional health. The development of increased in-house placement options supports an integrated approach to ensure that children's needs are met.	Further development of placements and support services available to carers and children
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	The proposal recognises that children and young people particularly those with more complex needs are often those who are placed away from their homes and communities, and sometimes outside of Wales. This is disruptive and potentially damaging to the young persons long-term needs and sense of belonging. The placement seeks to address this by developing placements where children can be closer to their homes and communities.	Further development of in-county placements and the support services available.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	The proposal recognises that children and young people particularly those with more complex needs are often those who are placed away from their homes and communities, and sometimes outside of Wales. This is disruptive and potentially damaging to the young persons long-term needs and sense of belonging. The placement seeks to address this by developing placements where children can be closer to their homes and communities.	Further development of in-county placements and the support services available.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The proposal seeks to address some of the disadvantages experienced by children and young people who are looked after by providing them with the right services and support to allow them to overcome early adversity and go on to lead fulfilled lives as adult citizens.	Further development of in-county placements and the support services available.

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

 <p>Long Term</p>	<p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The proposal is focused on developing sustainable support and accommodation services for children who are looked after</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The proposal includes working together with a range of partners at a local and regional level, including the other Gwent LAs, Foster Wales, Regional Social Landlords and not-for-profit organisations.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Involvement</p>	<p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The views, wishes and feelings of Children and young people are at the centre of their care planning, and are always taken in to account. The proposal seeks to ensure that children have increased and better options in terms of their personal goals including where and with whom they want to live.</p> <p><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?</i></p>	<p>Children have the right to independent advocacy – the service needs to ensure that training is up to date so that all practitioners are aware and support an active offer of advocacy.</p>
<p>Sustainable Development Principle</p>	<p>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</p>	<p>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>	

	<p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The proposal supports the on-going development of preventative family support and support for care experienced young people</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
	<p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, requires local authorities to provide a range of services designed to promote all aspects of wellbeing (as defined by the Act) and prevent the need for care and support. The proposal is made in accordance with and in partnership with the Regional Partnership Board and together with Foster Wales and the WG programme board for eliminating</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>

Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	<p>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has</p>	<p>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has</p>	<p>What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>Children’s safeguarding needs are prioritised in their placements and care planning</p>	<p><i>None identified at this point . Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and vulnerable adults, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those</i></p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>

Corporate Parenting	This proposal supports the work of the corporate parenting board in ensuring that the council works to get the best outcomes for children and young people who are looked after and care experienced young people through the development of placements and support accommodation	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
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7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template

It is a statutory requirement to provide appropriate and sufficient placements for children who are looked after that meet their holistic needs. National shortages of placements lead to some children being inappropriately placed and separated from home and communities – this affects children with more complex needs disproportionately. The proposal seeks to address this through the further development of placements, particularly those within Monmouthshire.

17 The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on care-planning and placement provision for children who are looked after and care experienced children. The projects are being informed by consultation with Care Experienced Young People and with community engagement where appropriate

An integrated impact assessment was undertaken prior to acquisition to determine the social, economic, cultural and environmental effects of the proposed development. The assessment found overwhelming benefits in all identified categories. The opportunity to develop a provision that repatriates and reconnects our young people with their communities has huge benefits for their social and cultural identity and development. Alignment of values and cultural belonging will provide a solid foundation for our children and young people. Economic benefits include the development of 14 full time positions in the children's residential sector, providing quality, well paid jobs for residents. The children will be engaging in the community, accessing groups, entertainment venues and amenities which will further enhance and support the local economy. The development of the home to an aspirational EPC rating A will not only improve the internal and external fabric of the home but also reinforce our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, making our homes, sustainable homes for the future. We will be installing PV to utilise solar energy which will offset our fossil fuel usage.

8. **ACTIONS:** As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Continue to develop the properties identified in the review within the timescales and financial envelop identified	March 2025	Diane Corrister
Acquire suitable properties that can provide residential placements and 16+ accommodation schemes	By March 2025	Diane Corrister
Develop an in-house residential service to provide care and support	By March 2025	Diane Corrister

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VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	People Scrutiny	6 th Feb	No amendments made



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SUBJECT:	Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	8th October 2024
Division /Ward Affected : All	

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is:

- To evaluate the progress of Monmouthshire County Council’s key safeguarding priorities during 2023 / 2024 highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2024 - 2025.
- To inform Members about the effectiveness of safeguarding in Monmouthshire and the work that is in progress to support the Council’s aims in protecting children and adults at risk from harm and abuse.
- To inform Members about the progress made towards meeting the standards in the Council’s Corporate Safeguarding Policy approved by Council in July 2017, amended July 2022 and November 2023.

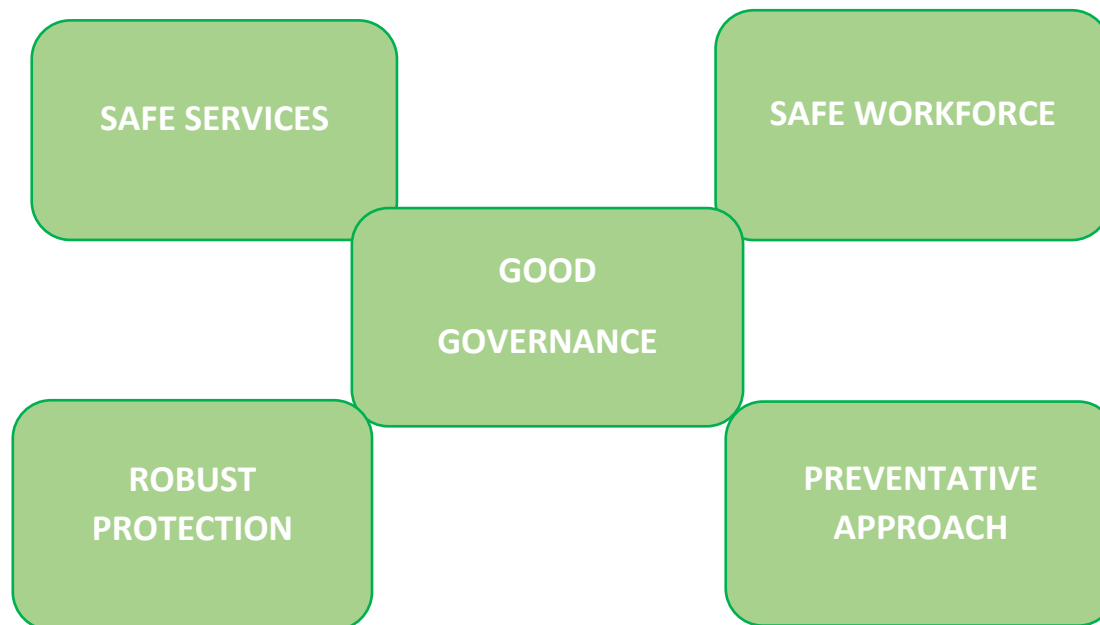
2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- For members to scrutinise the annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report prior to its presentation at Council in October 2024.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1** Monmouthshire County Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy, which covers duties for both children and adults at risk in line with the Social Services and Well Being [Wales] Act [2014] and Wales Safeguarding Procedures, has helped to inform this evaluation report. The analysis reflects progress against priority areas set out within the policy and draws on data and information regarding both children and adults at risk.
- 3.2** 2023-24 was a period of time when there were key pressures on service provision with increased demand for assessment and services for both children and adults at risk. The financial context required savings to be implemented across the Council creating additional pressure on services and resources. Budget pressures across the public sector resulted in partner agencies seeking to make service changes and reductions in order to make savings. During this period the Welsh Government continued to progress their agenda to remove profit from the care of children by 2027. The disruption in both the residential and private fostering markets have exacerbated placement insufficiency resulting in challenges to meet the needs of children looked after. Long-term sickness during the year within the Safeguarding Unit, resulted in some reduction in capacity and ultimately the need to recruit to the posts of Quality Assurance Officer and Safeguarding Service Manager. Despite these challenges, the overall self-assessed scores across the 5 domains of safeguarding either remained the same or improved by 1.
- 3.3** This evaluation report forms an integral part of the continual development of safeguarding practice across the Council and drives the work of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG). The report seeks to balance qualitative and quantitative data and draw in other sources of information to support the evaluation.

THE CORNERSTONES OF SAFEGUARDING IN MONMOUTHSHIRE:



- 3.4** The self-assessment score has been agreed by the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG] through critical challenge on the basis of evidence reviewed to date. It uses the corporate scoring framework to provide an overall judgement of effectiveness between 1 [major weaknesses] and 6 [excellent / outstanding]. The WASG seeks to triangulate the self-assessment process by drawing on a number or sources of information:

- (1) A shared understanding of “what good looks like” based on experience, professional judgement, and representation on national and regional safeguarding boards;
- (2) Data provided to and produced by Care Inspectorate Wales on both a national and regional basis;
- (3) Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection of Children Services Feb 24;
- (4) Review of performance data monthly to track trends and highlight performance issues against local, regional and national targets;
- (5) Data and information from the regional safeguarding board and its subgroups;
- (6) Quarterly Safeguarding reports produced by Independent Reviewing Officers.

3.5 The current self-assessment is set out below:

SELF ASSESSMENT SCORES:

CORNERSTONE	April – Sept 2017	Oct 2017 – March 2018	April 2018 – March 2019	April 2019 – March 2020	April 2020 – March 2021	April 2021 – March 2022	April 2022 – March -2023	April 2023 – March 2024
GOOD GOVERNANCE	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
SAFE WORKFORCE	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
PREVENTATIVE APPROACH	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	5
ROBUST PROTECTION	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	5
SAFE SERVICES	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
TOTAL	<u>16</u>	<u>20</u>	19	18	21	21	21	23

3.6 THE CORPORATE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK:

The evaluation score from 1-6	The evaluative context
Level 6 Excellent	Excellent or outstanding
Level 5 Very Good	Good Major strengths
Level 4 Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
Level 3 Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Level 2 Weak	Important weaknesses
Level 1 Unsatisfactory	Major weakness

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3.7 Priority improvement actions arising from the evaluation form the basis of the action plan which is implemented and monitored through WASG.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

Not applicable to this report

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Each 'cornerstone' section of the report opens with descriptors of 'what good looks like'. These descriptors provide the basis of how we measure the standard over time using both qualitative and quantitative sources.
- Safeguarding progress is reported on an annual basis to full Council.
- Safeguarding vulnerable people is central to the Council and requires strong leadership and governance. An evaluation of Safeguarding within Monmouthshire County Council is, therefore, reported to the Council on an annual basis.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no resource implications to this report.

7. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS [INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING]:

This report is critically concerned with the effectiveness of safeguarding and corporate parenting (for children looked after) in Monmouthshire County Council.

8. CONSULTEES:

Members of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG]
Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Scrutiny Committee October 2024

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#)

10. AUTHOR:

Head of Children's Services – Diane Corrister
Safeguarding and Early Help Service Manager – Jess Scarisbrick

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Diane Corrister

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jessiscarisbrick@monmouthshire.gov.uk

THE EVALUATION:

1. GOOD GOVERNANCE

SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 5
<p><u>WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?</u></p> <p>In Monmouthshire County Council we ensure that safeguarding for children and adults at risk is understood as “everyone’s responsibility”. With strong leadership there is a continuous focus on embedding safeguarding culturally across all parts of the Council at a “hearts and minds” level. Safeguarding is supported by robust policies and operating procedures which are embedded within all settings and services. We work effectively with the Gwent Safeguarding Board to ensure good alignment and maximise our resources.</p>
ANALYSIS
<p>Despite resource pressures across directorates and capacity issues within the Safeguarding Unit, safeguarding has remained a priority for the Council with key strengths within directorates and across council relationships. The SAFE (Safeguarding Assessment Framework for Evaluation) process has continued to roll out across directorates and reviews have taken place in a timely manner. The Safeguarding Unit continues to be available to offer support and advice as well as being the conduit for new and developing safeguarding policy and guidance from the Regional Safeguarding Board. Issues raised within the previous SAFE assessment led to the strengthening of support in the safe recruitment process, specifically in risk management following DBS certifications.</p> <p>Monmouthshire representation and engagement in the work of Gwent Safeguarding Board remains strong and the priorities set in in the regional board’s annual plan are reflected in the priority work of the Council’s Safeguarding Unit. The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group continues to receive, review, and implement developments in safeguarding flowing from regional and national policy.</p>

Within this period there was a change of Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services from Cllr Tudor Thomas to Cllr Ian Chandler. There are reporting mechanisms in place into Scrutiny and Council strengthened by positive relationships between officers and Council Leaders.

The CIW inspection report of Children’s Services found that *‘safeguarding is understood at many levels of the organisation’*.

For these reasons our self-assessment score remains at 5.

KEY STRENGTHS:	NEXT STEPS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding Audit Framework for Evaluation [SAFE] is in place and a regional form has now been implemented. - Continuous positive relationships between Safeguarding Unit and Directorates with ongoing provision of advice and guidance for individual safeguarding issues. - Committed participation by Monmouthshire Safeguarding Unit in the Regional Safeguarding Board groups and subgroups, this influences and shapes regional plans and supports the quality assurance of local practice. - Monmouthshire’s Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been updated (ratified November 2023) following the introduction of the National Safeguarding Training Standards. - The Core Data Set for safeguarding has been agreed by WASG and is now being collated on a regular basis to support increased oversight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete the SAFE process 2023 - 2025 - Directorates to develop increased autonomy in completing their individual SAFEs, with advice and guidance to be sought from the Safeguarding Unit where necessary. - Recruitment of a Safeguarding Service Manager. - Ensure correct link between Thinqi and the implementation of the National Training Standards to include Safeguarding training for Elected Members and School Governors. - Continue to develop the core data set as a standard agenda item for WASG to ensure whole council scrutiny.

- Mechanisms are in place to ensure the Council and Cabinet are informed about the progress of safeguarding issues via:
 - Chief Officer of Health, Social Care and Safeguarding’s Report to Council (previous 7/12/23)
 - Corporate Parenting Panel
 - Monthly meetings between Children and Adult Heads of Service, Chief Officer and Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member.

PROGRESS AND EVIDENCE:

SAFEGUARDING AUDIT FRAMEWORK EVALUATION [SAFE]: The Safeguarding Unit oversee the SAFE process to ensure that all directorates undertake their self- assessment in line with the Local Authority’s Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the Social Services and Safeguarding Act (2014). SAFEs are completed within every directorate by those services / teams that work with adults at risk, children, young people and families. A ‘tracker’ is in place to allow escalation to directorate leads or WASG should the self-assessment be delayed, or if there are significant concerns. During last the last SAFE process, no matters required escalation.

Directorate Safeguarding Leads have developed an understanding of safeguarding and how it applies in their own service areas, seeking advice and guidance from the Safeguarding Unit when required. Whilst the SAFE is a self-assessment, the outcomes are reviewed by the Safeguarding Unit. The SAFE process originally developed in Monmouthshire has now been adopted across the other Gwent Authorities resulting in a regional tool. This assists in being able to compare and contrast good practice in safeguarding at a regional level.

SAFEGUARDING CORPORATE POLICY: The Safeguarding Corporate Policy was reviewed in July 2022 and in November 2023 and is due for review in July 2024, when it will be updated to include the introduction of the revised National Exploitation Plan.

GWENT SAFEGUARDING BOARD [GSB]: There is prominent representation of Monmouthshire on the Gwent Safeguarding board with Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer Social Care & Health being co-chair of the Board and Diane Corrister, Head of Children’s Services, and Jenny Jenkins, Head of Adults Services representing Monmouthshire at Head of Service Level. The Gwent Safeguarding Board [GSB] delivers its strategic priorities through a number of subgroups that manage the core business and other more specific pieces of work, such as devising multiagency

guidance and protocols, undertaking case reviews, and devising safeguarding training modules. Members of the Safeguarding Unit either chair or are members of the subgroups and working groups of the Safeguarding Board. Membership of these groups also provides good links into the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence [VAWDASV] Board.

WHOLE AUTHORITY SAFEGUARDING GROUP [WASG]

The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG] has continued to meet bi-monthly on a digital platform. The group ensures that corporate Safeguarding has oversight at a senior level, with membership from each directorate lead. These meetings identify safeguarding concerns and themes; share knowledge around safeguarding issues and, where required, promote a strategic and coordinated approach. A Core Data set has been agreed by WASG. Moving forward, this should provide increased opportunity to inform WASG members of safeguarding performance at a whole authority level.

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2. SAFE WORKFORCE

SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 4

WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?

We ensure that safe recruitment and human resource (HR) practices operate effectively and are embedded across the Council for the whole workforce [paid and unpaid]. We ensure that individuals working with children and adults at risk are suitable for the role they are employed to do and are focused on outcomes for people. The whole workforce is clear about their duty to report concerns and to keep children and adults at risk safe.

ANALYSIS

There has been significant development of the Thinqi system across the council to support the management of training across the workforce. The system is now being implemented across all areas. The National Training Standards for safeguarding have been adopted in Monmouthshire. Whilst there are delays in the development of a regional safeguarding training offer (in line with the new standards), safeguarding training continues to be effectively delivered within Monmouthshire through collaboration between Safeguarding Leads and the Training and Workforce Development team. The right level of safeguarding training has been identified for the workforce based on role, task and regulatory requirements. Safeguarding Training continues to be offered to all new starters as part of their induction either digitally or in person via the Safeguarding Unit. This supports and informs a workforce “who are the eyes and ears” of the council in recognising the signs and symptoms of safeguarding concerns - knowing how and when to respond helps keeps our communities safe.

Monmouthshire has continued strong arrangements to ensure safe recruitment. There are good processes and systems in place, which are reviewed and monitored to ensure that safe recruitment practice is followed. Monmouthshire's Safe Recruitment Policy is aligned to the Gwent Safeguarding Board's Multiagency Policy (March 2024)

There is a well-developed process in place to respond to any concerns raised about a professional or person in a position of trust (paid or unpaid) working with children or adults at risk (known as Practitioner Concerns). The process is aligned to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) and the Gwent Safeguarding Board protocol. There have been some concerns about delays within the process, much of which are beyond the influence of the local authority, and sit primarily with the police and Criminal Prosecution Service. Delays are escalated to the Safeguarding Board; however, this remains an issue which impacts all of the Gwent Authorities.

We have retained the score at 4 because we are currently transitioning into a revised training offer (in line with the national standards) and onto a new training management system (Thinqi). The various levels of the training offer are being developed and will need to be fully embedded into Thinqi so that mandated safeguarding training records can be monitored. There is still more to do to fully implement Thinqi across the Council. Currently, this has meant that we are hampered in reporting accurate safeguarding training data.

KEY STRENGTHS:	NEXT STEPS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous priority given to safe recruitment practice which is well embedded. - Gwent Safeguarding Board has ratified the Safer Recruitment Policy and Safer Employment guidance (March 2024). - The Thingi training management system is being implemented across the council which will provide accurate information on completion rates of mandated safeguarding training. - Monmouthshire has adopted the National Safeguarding Framework. - Multi Agency Local Practitioner Forums run biannually by the Gwent Safeguarding Board raise issue of wellbeing and safeguarding to staff from a range of agencies and are well attended in Monmouthshire. - The Practitioner Concerns process is well embedded with a strong multiagency presence, and effective communication with the Safeguarding Unit regarding advice over thresholds and required actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thingi system to be fully implemented across all areas of the council to support full and accurate safeguarding training data. - National Training Standards to be embedded within Thingi - To review and implement any actions arising from the national task and finish group developing further guidance around Practitioner Concerns.

PROGRESS AND EVIDENCE:

- The Gwent Safeguarding Board has ratified their Multiagency Safe Recruitment protocol (March 2004) which sits alongside Monmouthshire's own internal guidance and is well aligned.
- People Services have reported a faster turnover of DBS checks, which means that new staff are able to on-board in a timely way.
- Systems and processes which provide notifications for people and their managers who require DBS checks are automated via Power Bi processes.
- Safe Recruitment processes are part of the considerations within the SAFE assessment within all directorates.

PRACTITIONER CONCERNS / ALLEGATIONS:

Monmouthshire's Safeguarding Unit has overall responsibility for the management of the Practitioner Concerns / People in a Position of Trust process as set out in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. A practitioner concern is when an allegation of potential or actual harm or abuse is made against a person working in a position of trust, either in their personal or professional life.

- Practitioner Concerns are managed via a tracker which identifies the status of each case, including what investigation is required, and the outcome of each process. This is reviewed monthly by the Safeguarding Unit with the view to preventing delays, recognising the impact this has on individuals and on wider employment issues within the council. The primary cause of delays are due to the length of time police take to conclude criminal investigations and delays in CPS advice. Police and CPS delays are caused by pressure within that system and reprioritisation based on levels of risk. A further issue is the increase in on-line / digital abuse which is time and resource heavy to investigate.
- The safeguarding unit supports all decision making within the practitioner concerns process - intervening where possible to expediate the conclusion and ensuring that staff wellbeing is a main consideration throughout and that appropriate support is offered.
- The Safeguarding Unit members work closely across all 5 Gwent Local Authorities to ensure consistent thresholds around practitioner concerns, which helps to benchmark local practice.

PCM DELAYS:

Here is the breakdown of PCM cases and the time taken to conclude during this period:

Length of time to conclude	No. cases
<1 month	15
1 month	19
2 months	6
3 months	4
4 months	3
5 months	4
6 months	1
7 months	1
12 months	1

Out of the 10 cases that took 4+ months:

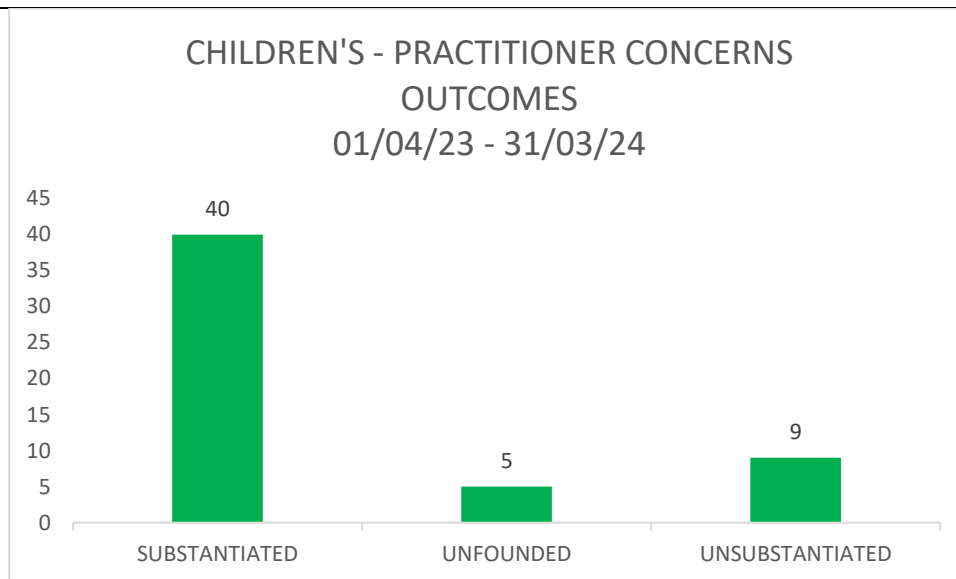
8 related to Police investigations (awaiting advice from CPS)

2 related to internal investigations (delays caused through the circumstances of the individuals concerned)

During this time, risk assessments for the person involved, are continually reviewed [i.e. the persons position in work and whether suspension or re-deployment is required].

Children Services:

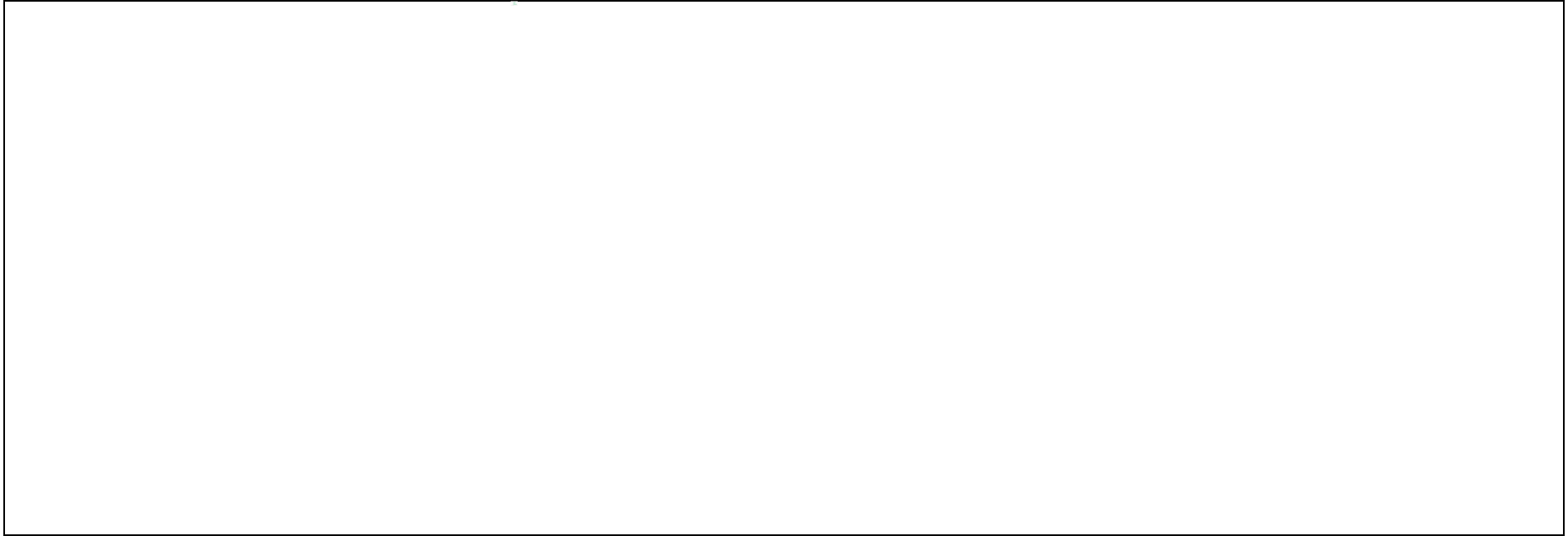
During 01/04/23 – 31/03/24 the Unit held Practitioner Concerns Strategy Meetings about **75** practitioners, relating to **87** children. During the same period **54** Practitioner Concerns Strategy Meetings were concluded, resulting in 74% cases concluding with a Substantiated outcome. In terms of the professionals subject to allegations, education staff are the largest of group followed by sports instructors.



Adults:

During 01/04/23 – 31/03/24 the Safeguarding Unit held Practitioner Concerns Strategy Meetings about **89** practitioners, relating to **57** adults at risk following practitioner allegations. During the same period **68** Practitioner Concerns Strategy Meetings were concluded, resulting in 50% cases concluding with the Substantiated outcome.

Domiciliary care workers are the professional group subject to the highest numbers of allegations, followed closely by hospital support workers and registered nurses.



3. PREVENTATIVE APPROACH**SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 5****WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?**

We work collectively and with partners to identify emerging issues, risks and challenges within our communities. We demonstrate clear multiagency approaches to developing practice in how we respond to emerging safeguarding issues. We support access to universal and targeted support services to reduce risks through early intervention and preventative approaches.

Within Children's Services, we develop services at all levels aimed at preventing children from experiencing harm - supporting the development of parental understanding and skills to prevent the need for children to be looked after and support their safe exit from care.

ANALYSIS

There remains a strong multi agency approach to early help and prevention, seeking to support vulnerable people stay safe and reduce the risks of abuse and harm. **The self-assessed score has therefore remained at 5** for the following reasons:

There are a number of partnership forums (for example, the Homeless Intervention Panel, SPACE Wellbeing panel and the Monmouthshire Exploitation Group) which support information sharing and partnership working – helping to shape service development and active risk management in the face of issues affecting communities.

Monmouthshire Exploitation Group (MEG) is chaired by the Safeguarding Service Manager, and attended by a wide range of council partners including Community Policing, Public Health, Safer Communities, Children and Adult Safeguarding, Education Safeguarding, Housing and Registered Social Landlords, Youth Offending Services and St Giles Trust (a charity using expertise and real-life past experiences to support people who are hard to engage). MEG has co-ordinated approaches to emerging issues such as the exploitation of young people to sell Vapes within schools. The group has also started to consider how to develop safeguarding practice around young people vulnerable to exploitation during their transition to adulthood, particularly when ‘children’s’ support services cease at 18.

Monmouthshire utilises regional framework and toolkits to support practitioners in recognising and managing issues of child and adult exploitation. The regional forums such as MACE (Multi-agency child exploitation meetings) have allowed for a wider focus on perpetrators and locations across county boundaries where addressing risks require a multiagency approach. MACE is also now the forum for considering the potential exploitation of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The Police have recognised Monmouthshire’s good practice and management of the exploitation of young people and vulnerable adults and seek to hold the Authority’s work as an exemplar across Gwent.

Early help support services for children and families are well maintained and have managed to reduce waiting times, seeing a level of normal business resuming following the challenges raised during the pandemic. Whilst there is always more to do, Monmouthshire’s community-based teams are committed to building safer and more resilient communities. Feedback from CIW during inspection of Children Services (Feb 24) noted that there were high levels of service user satisfaction and participation related to the services provided outside of the statutory arena, as well as strong partnership working at this level. The dependency on grants to support many elements of early help and preventative services remains a risk.

There has been a wider lens applied to “prevention” using available grants to develop services aimed at supported children exit safely from statutory services (child protection of child looked after) and to avoid repeat referrals.

KEY STRENGTHS:

- Preventative safeguarding and partnership working remains strong.
- There has been a wider lens applied to “preventative services” supporting vulnerable people to exit from the statutory system and continue to live safely within their communities.
- The INFACCT service has been developed to support and shape Children and Families involvement in community-based support, build on established approaches.
- MEG supports the Council to address issues around exploitation, and the Council has been recognised for its good practice in tackling exploitation.

NEXT STEPS:

- Strengthen the links between the Wellbeing Team, the Safeguarding Unit and MEG.
- MEG to work with partners both regionally and locally to develop transitional safeguarding to support young adults vulnerable to exploitation.
- Complete the Modern-Day slavery statement and update the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
- Support Gwent Police in recruiting for MARAC Chairs across the 5 LA’s (to support consistency of practice).
- Include Neuro Diversity in the training profile for PREVENT.
- Implement Thingi to support compliance with VAWDASV training.

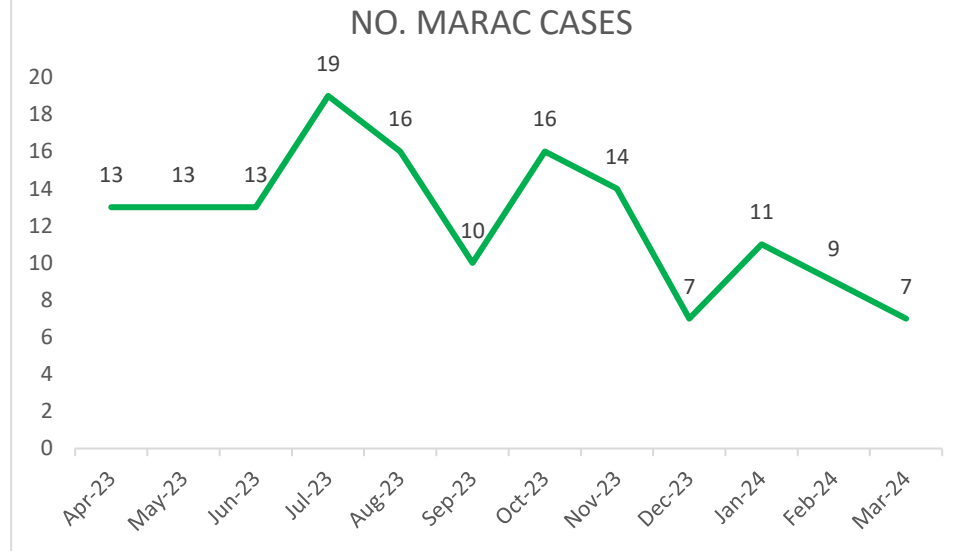
PROGRESS AND EVIDENCE:

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ABUSE [VAWDASV] Monmouthshire remains committed to the prevention of Violence Against Woman, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence [VAWDASV]. VAWDASV training is mandatory for all employees of the council and elected members. The council has continued to ensure that employees have the relevant level of VAWDASV training and modules are embedded within Thingi. Once Thingi is implemented across the Council training needs including refresher training will be flagged automatically.

MULTI AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CO-ORDINATION [MARAC]: The Safeguarding Unit currently shares chairing the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Committee (MARAC) with the police. MARACs consider high risk domestic abuse cases. MARAC is held on a fortnightly basis in Monmouthshire and the digital platform promotes multi-agency attendance to aid information sharing and shared safety planning. The number of cases discussed per month generally remains around 10-12. The number of people being referred into MARAC have decreased to 148 [from 159 last year]. However, the underlying trend is upward. Out of the 5 Gwent Local Authorities, Monmouthshire, whilst still the lowest, has seen the most significant increase over recent years. It is felt that the rise in numbers is linked to training generating a greater understanding of the risks related to domestic abuse and how to respond.

There have been no Domestic Abuse Homicide Reviews for Monmouthshire during this period.

The number of cases discussed at monthly meetings during the year is shown below:



MODERN DAY SLAVERY / NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM:

Following the role out of the Modern-Day Slavery Protocol, there has been additional training delivered in Exploitation, Modern Day Slavery and trafficking including the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). This training is provided by Gwent Police as well as through the Gwent Safeguarding Board. Along with the other Gwent authorities, Monmouthshire continues to host children’s NRM panels as part of national pilot. This means that decisions about NRM threshold will be made by local Safeguarding partners, including Children’s Services, Police and Health. Adult’s suspected of being exploited are managed and supported by Gwent Police with the NRM applications being reviewed by the Home Office.

From April 2023 to March 2024, 71 NRM child referrals had been submitted throughout Gwent, 8 of which were regarding children from Monmouthshire [11%]. All referrals were processed within the 90-day limit although there are still significant delays in the Home Office ratifying decisions.

Of the 8 Monmouthshire children referred to NRM, 5 met the criteria for exploitation and were awarded an advocate. The remaining 3 children were retained within the Monmouthshire exploitation process under Operation Quartz. Of the 8 children, 5 were male and 3 were female.

The panels are well attended by Monmouthshire Local Authority and the First Responders (SW/Police/Education etc). The panels enable a high level of information sharing around the cases which assist panels in making informed decisions. The NRM regional coordinator attends regular Monmouthshire Children Exploitation Strategy Meeting meetings on a consultation basis which supports discussions to determine whether a referral to NRM should be submitted.

Criminal exploitation of children is the main category for referral into the NRM across England and Wales.

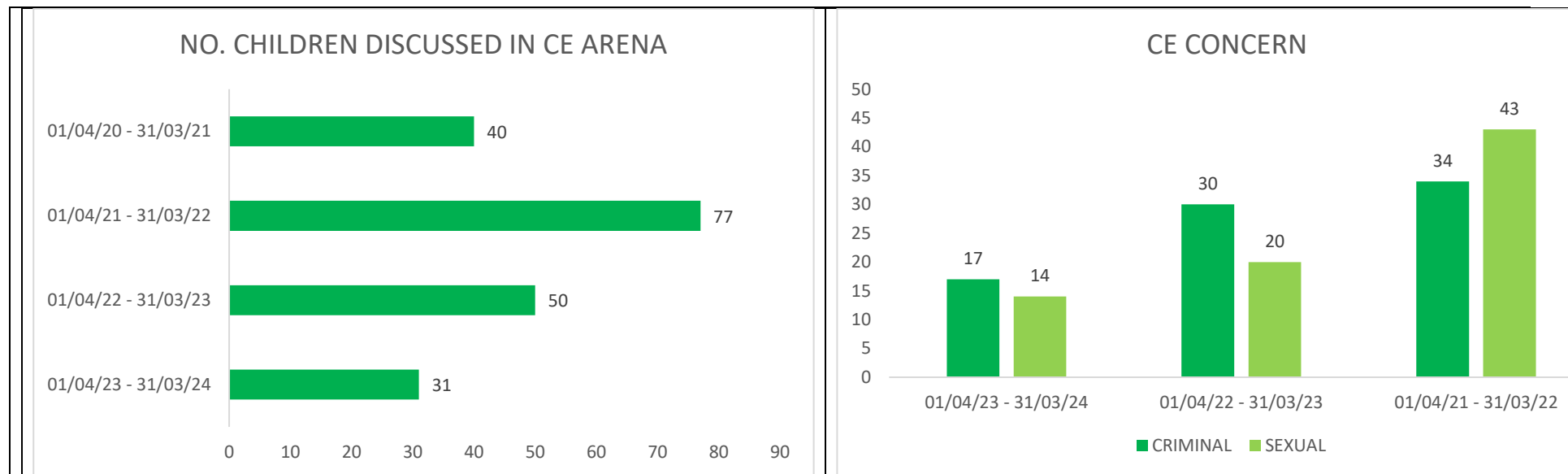
EXPLOITATION:

The exploitation of children is considered under 2 broad categories of Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation:

Child Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation

During 01/04/23 – 31/03/24, 31 children [a decrease from 50 children last year] were subject to Child Exploitation Meetings, where consideration is given for children to become part of a specialist Gwent Police Operation named Quartz. The decrease in numbers relates to professionals having a clearer understanding of the referral criteria. 17 children were considered at risk from Criminal Exploitation and 14 from Sexual Exploitation (although often children can be at risk of both).

During this period more males were discussed, which is a change to previous years. This is linked to the increasing focus and recognition of Criminal Exploitation (which is on the increase). Over half of all children considered were at risk of criminal exploitation rather than sexual exploitation.



The youngest child discussed was aged 12 with the largest age group being those children aged 16 years old. This can prove difficult when young people turn 18, when issues around ‘capacity’ and consent come into play. Gwent Police intend to undertake some work focussing on the vulnerable group of 16-23year olds. Monmouthshire Exploitation Group [MEG] now has a standing agenda item relating to the transition of vulnerable young people where there are concerns about exploitation. Members are considering how information can be appropriately shared and services improved with the aim of reducing risks to young adults.

Most of the cases being discussed, relate to criminal exploitation, and of those cases the majority are males involved in “drug running” (movement and transport of drugs). In some situations, it has been found that these exploited young men are themselves sexually exploiting young women/girls. Strategy meetings consider groups of young people who are linked to help formulate the most appropriate interventions at both a peer group and individual level. Chepstow/Caldicot are the areas within the County where there are most concerns over young people being at risk of exploitation, particularly around the secondary schools. These areas have been a focus of work being undertaken by Operation Quartz Officers.

Additional Information

- The majority of children being discussed in the exploitation arena, are those residing at home with parents, followed by those residing in residential settings/placements.
- Most children are supported under a Care and Support Plan, rather than a child protection plan.
- Input from the Engagement and Intervention Workers, as well as the Youth Homeless Co-ordinator supports positive outcomes for young people. 81% of children discussed remained in some form of education or training.
- The regional Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings continue to provide oversight of child exploitation cases. These meetings enable the region to share intelligence on linked cases, locations of concern and case escalations, the numbers of children being considered, as well themes and emerging trends.
- Monmouthshire is recognised within Gwent, as managing and responding well to children at risk of exploitation through timely and effective responses. This has led to a reduction of risks with no children needing to be re-referred into the exploitation arena following case closure. Gwent Police are seeking to replicate these strategies with other Gwent Local Authorities.
- Public Health Wales have taken a lead on the issue of exploitation and its links to Vapes including those being sold on school premises. Trading Standards remain active in trying to disrupt the flow of vapes from shops to school premises; however, much of the acquisition remains on-line. There are plans for Public Health Wales to co-ordinate Local Authority safeguarding leads, Trading Standards, Community Partnerships, Drug and Alcohol Services and the Police to form a Tobacco and Vaping Alliance (TVA) in order to tackle the issue.
- The Monmouthshire Exploitation Group (MEG) reports directly to the Public Service Board's Safer Monmouthshire Group and Whole Authority Safeguarding Group, meeting on a quarterly basis.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) has remained stable over the year. The numbers of UASC the Local Authority is required to support is capped at 16, although there has been up to 19 young people arriving here either via the National Transfer scheme or young people arriving 'spontaneously' under their own steam.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) have increased vulnerability to exploitation due to their life experiences and lack of appropriate community services.

Children's Services has increased the support provided to UASC aged 16+ whilst they await decisions regarding their asylum applications. These services include 2 semi-independent living properties with floating support in Newport and Cardiff and a dedicated support worker with experience in supporting asylum claims, and in ensuring that the education, religious, dietary and cultural needs of the young people are met.

SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOLS:

- Each school/setting has its own Safeguarding Policy, using a shared template that is based on statutory guidance including Keeping Learners Safe.
- Monmouthshire continues to apply a proactive approach to responding to issues of sexual harassment in schools and has worked with colleagues from other agencies, coordinated by the VAWDASV team, to promote a Whole Education Approach.
- There have been a number of initiatives implemented aimed at developing the understanding of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and how to manage (and reduce) incidences. Where children raise concerns about sexual harassment or sexually harmful behaviours a report is made to Children's services (for the victim and alleged perpetrator) and reported to police. Schools then manage risks in school via risk assessments and support plans, aiming to ensure that all children can continue to access education provision.
- A challenging bullying group (CBG) was established in 2022 in MCC. A challenging Bullying Action Plan is the framework for the work of the group whose aim is to develop best practice in preventing and challenging bullying behaviours (including sexual harassment).
- The central funding for the School Police Liaison Officer role was withdrawn by WG this year. Partner agencies, together with Gwent Police, are considering how to manage the absence of this role moving forward, so that key elements of the role (such as delivering sessions to groups in schools) are not lost.
- The schools remain informed about issues affected young people such as Emotions and Behaviour, School connectedness, Sleep, Friendship and bullying, Sexting, Body image through participating in SHRN (School Health Research Network). The outcomes of the report are evaluated by a task and finish group to identify areas of concern and to inform how we support learners.
- Multi Agency Meetings [MAMs] are in place to consider what support can be offered to pupils identified as vulnerable. There is good multiagency attendance including Building Stronger Families Team [BSFT], Young Carers, School Based Counselling and other partners across the pre statutory system. The MAMs play an important part in preventative safeguarding.

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE EARLY HELP:

SPACE WELLBEING AND FAMILY SUPPORT PANEL (single point of access for children’s emotional wellbeing):

Monmouthshire SPACE Well-being and Family Support Panel facilitates the co-ordination of early intervention services and preventive support for children, young people and their families. This helps to reduce the escalation of concerns to statutory thresholds. Partners include Families First projects Families Services Team, Creative Therapies and Acorn Project, Primary and Secondary CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Family Intervention Team (FIT), School and Community Counsellors, as well as council led projects

Total Number of Referrals in Quarter 1	Total Number of Referrals in Quarter 2	Total Number of Referrals in Quarter 3	Total Number of Referrals in Quarter 4	Total Number of Referrals in 2023/24
305	262	325	235	1127

- Quarterly Average referrals received are 282. The main theme of referrals being received is for support around Anxiety, Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA), Emotional Dysregulation, Sensory Needs, Traumatic Stress and non-compliant/defiant behaviours.
- The total number of referrals has dropped by approximately from 16% to 1127 from 1345 in 2022/2023. This is consistent with a further drop of approximately 16% from 1603 in 2021/2022. This continued drop in referrals could be attributed to families being able to return to a more stable routine coming out of the period impacted by the pandemic; as well as the introduction of a CAMHS In-Reach Service which provide consultation and support for schools regarding children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- There was no waiting list for referrals being processed for a Panel discussion.
- Children’s services working in the preventative arena have very short waiting lists, and evaluation at the end of service provision indicates high levels of service user satisfaction for years 23/24.

INTEGRATING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TEAM (InFaCT):

The Integrating Families and Community Together (InFaCT) service works to help people navigate existing resources and also to come together to support each other and create community responses to local challenges. In 2023/24 InFaCT responded to 72 requests for support; 92% of these requests were closed with a successful outcome i.e. InFaCT was able to source a solution to the problem or need. 54% of the requests were closed with a successful outcome within 4 weeks.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION:

2023-2024 marks the first full year since the adoption of Monmouthshire's 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to tackle homelessness in the county. Progress is being made against the plan to make homelessness rare, brief, and unrepeatable. The strategy cements previous work to increase the prevention of homelessness; minimise any time spent in temporary accommodation when homelessness cannot be prevented; and to provide timely support at the level and type required for households to maintain settled accommodation. The Prevention Officers offer support around affordability, property searches and landlord mediation, and achieved a prevention success rate of 71% for 2023-2024, an increase on 50% from the previous year.

- The Discretionary Homelessness Prevention Fund has remained available to the Housing Options Team for the 2023-2024 financial year.
- Monmouthshire Council continues to enjoy a positive relationship with the Registered Social Landlords operating in the county. Allocations to homeless households remain amongst the highest in Wales and there has been a recent review of some policies that have been identified as barriers to some households obtaining settled accommodation.
- The council agreed to supplement the availability of temporary accommodation through purchasing homes and repurposing existing Council owned assets subject to Cabinet approval.
- The Council has completed the purchase of one property and one former agricultural property is due to be repurposed as temporary accommodation. In addition, a former care home has been approved for adaptation and use as temporary accommodation as well as providing a hub for other community organisations. This provision should become operational, subject to planning approval, in 2024-2025 and will benefit from the additional resources of an in-house support worker and scheme manager.

PREVENT: (Counter Terrorism and Radicalisation)

The majority of referrals into Monmouthshire are from schools – reflecting the positive impact of radicalisation awareness training to ensure that schools are aware of when to make a referral.

10 referrals were received in 2003 [six of which were from schools] and a further 4 between January – April 2024. Referrals were received across the year groups from Year 7 to Year 13; there were no referrals received for younger pupils. Adult referrals can come from a range of sources.

Concerns often start with children accessing the internet, which was particularly the case coming out of the pandemic. When referrals are initially received the Police visit families and talk about internet access, particularly around the dark web. The threshold of concern around an individual's need is high for them to be adopted by the Channel Panel, and Police check, for example, whether an individual has been previously open to a 'Pursue' intervention.

There has been a recent emergence of Autism traits in the referrals received. An Autism provider has been engaging to work with those people who are identified at potential risk. This also provides a level of assessment / understanding around behaviours and autistic traits.

There is a specific issue with Llanarth Court, which is a medium secure independent Psychiatric Unit in Monmouthshire. English Health commissioners can place an individual at Llanarth at very short notice, some of whom have been identified as very high risk of radicalisation. The Forensic Psychiatrist from Llanarth attends all Chanel meetings to discuss the level of treatment being received, and there are good links maintained with the Counter Terrorism Police Unit.

There has been positive work undertaken with Housing to ensure people's needs are assessed thoroughly and that they are then supported appropriately.

Safeguarding is always at the forefront when cases are explored, as inevitably there are some extremely vulnerable people. For those who are managed via Channel Panel we review each closed case after 6 months. Of those cases reviewed after 6 months, there have been no re-referrals into Channel due to further concerns around radicalisation. This indicates the effectiveness of the interventions made in reducing harm in this area.

4. ROBUST PROTECTION**SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 5****WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?**

We operate best practice in protecting children and adults at risk and ensure that all concerns about possible abuse or neglect are recognised and responded to appropriately. Multi-agency plans and interventions reduce risks and needs for children and vulnerable adults including those at risk of significant harm.

ANALYSIS

This year has seen significant increase in demand at the ‘front door’ of children’s safeguarding services. Despite this, performance in meeting statutory timescales for responding to referrals has been maintained. More now needs to be done to understand what is driving safeguarding referrals, demand and resource requirement.

In adult safeguarding, improvements made to ensure safeguarding enquiries are undertaken in a timely way has been sustained.

The physical presence of some partner agencies within the safeguarding hub has been reduced due to budgetary pressures. The Safeguarding Hub is using digital means to ensure that multi-agency decision making and sharing of information remains in place to support good practice.

Care Inspectorate Wales Service Inspection of Children’s Services (Feb 24) reported that the leadership team are well informed of the pressures within the system, and that they had put in appropriate measures in order to respond effectively. The inspectorate commented positively on the practice framework, Keeping Children Safe and on the positive practice that was observed within child protection and with families who were within a legal (pre-court) framework.

A temporary post has been created in children’s services to promote good safeguarding practice in ensuring statutory child protection timescales are met and to support the role out of the ‘Keeping Children Safe’ practice framework.

Children’s Services continues to experience challenges in locating appropriate placements for children due to insufficiency of placements and instability within the provider market. There are plans in place to increase the Council’s in-house provision.

For these reasons we have moved the evaluation score from 4 to 5

KEY STRENGTHS:	NEXT STEPS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The safeguarding hub uses digital platforms to ensure both Child and Adult safeguarding processes are managed effectively through multi-agency arrangements and within statutory timescales. - The revised Child Protection practice framework ‘Keeping Children Safe’ - Ongoing commitment to improving the quality of practice with key focus on development and training for practitioners. - Adult safeguarding has maintained improvements in compliance to timescales and there is an increased understanding of adult safeguarding within the service and across partner agencies. - Services are developed in response to priority risks (e.g. Family Resolution Team). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake an analysis of demand data at both front door of adults and children to identify trends, resource need and to inform partnership approaches. - Undertaken further planned engagement with Adult Services to promote safeguarding statutory compliance and understanding - Utilise a 12-month Implementation Officer post to support the roll out of Keeping Children Safe practice framework and to support compliance with statutory timescales; - Appoint to Safeguarding Service Manager position - Recruit a 4th Service Manager to take forward the development of Monmouthshire Children and young people placements. - Review of grant funded services to understand risks and resource need post 2025. - Implement the Safeguarding QA Framework

PROGRESS AND EVIDENCE:**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK:**

The CIW inspection report notes that *“overall, safeguarding is understood at many levels of the organisation. The local authority has a local policy for Keeping Children Safe within the child protection process. This supports internal staff to have a clear understanding of local guidance and standards. It includes arrangements for managers and leaders to have line of sight on the lived experience of children.”*

Adult’s and Children’s safeguarding practitioners continue to have a physical presence within the hub with attendance on separate days by representatives of Women’s Aid, Space Wellbeing, Police, and Safeguarding in Education. Health have reduced their physical presence and created a shared regional resource from a central point. CIW Inspection Feb ‘24 reported that there remains a commitment from all safeguarding agencies to work together via digital technology to ensure the safe sharing of information and compliance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

There have been no adult or child practice reviews held in regard to Monmouthshire cases during this period.

CHILDREN’S SERVICES:

This year has seen an unprecedented increase in referrals to the Early Help and Assessment Team (EHAT) who form the ‘front door’ entry point into Children Services. There was a 22% increase in Duty to Reports (DTR’s) into Children Service’s, against a national rise of 11% across Wales. Of this 22% increase, 68% were considered of a Child Protection in nature. The impacts of this increase was noted in the CIW inspection (Feb 2024) which reported that whilst Child Protection Enquiries were completed in statutory timescales and children safeguarded there was less time for strength-based engagement with parents and children.

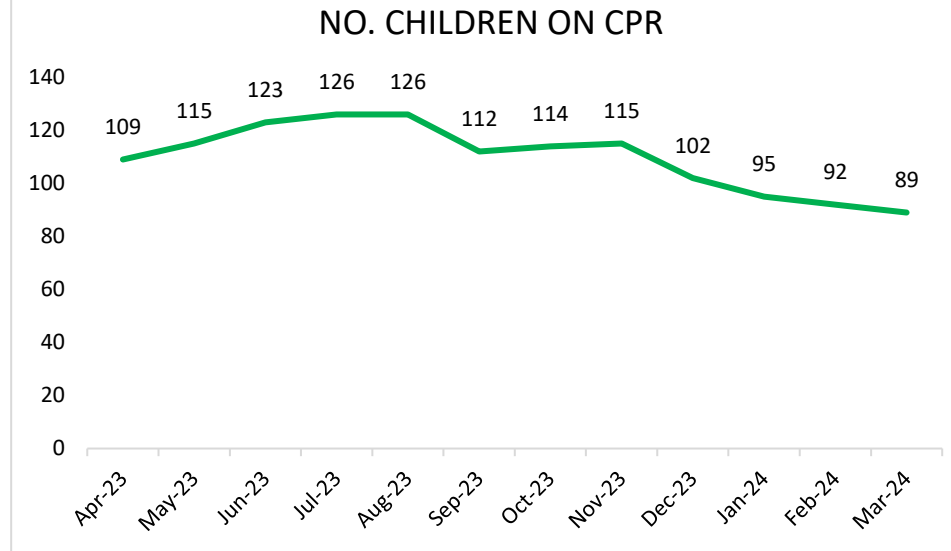
There has been a year-on-year increase in reports to both the EHAT since the Covid pandemic with limited increase in resource to manage the demand; however, the Service continues to demonstrate that 100% of reports are appropriately managed within the 24hour statutory guidance.

The Police remain the source of the highest number of DTR's, however, there has been a significant increase in reports from Health and Education. To better understand the increase in DTRs, a review of demand at the front door is scheduled to commence May 2024 with the appointment to a Safeguarding Implementation Lead and the recruitment of a new Safeguarding Service Manager in process to assist with this.

During the period, 67% of Child Protection visits were undertaken within statutory timescales against a national average of 73%. Whilst noting this did not mean that children subject to a Child Protection Plan were not being visited or safeguarded, improving statutory compliance is a key recommendation of the inspection report. This has led to an increased focus on digital technology to support the recording of statutory visits, as well as increased training and mentoring for social workers.

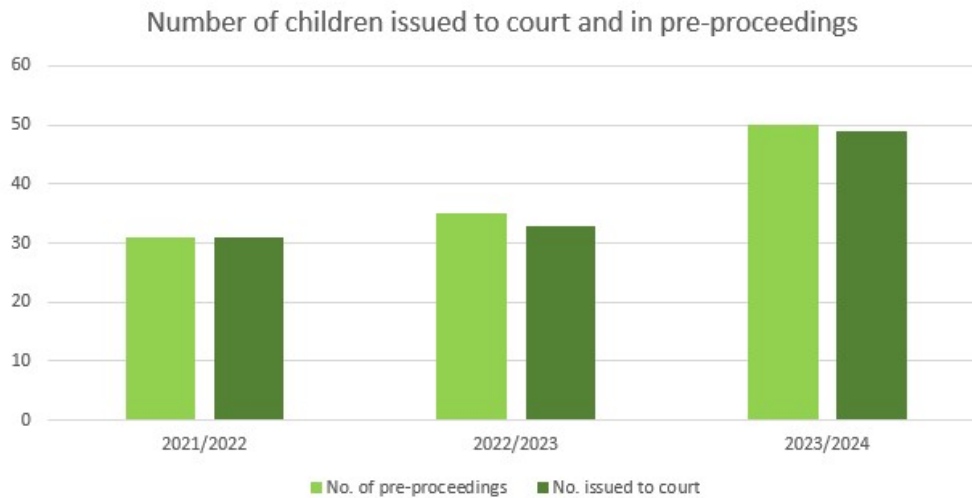
CHILD PROTECTION:

- During this period there was a reduction in the number of children on the Child Protection Register at year end, however this fluctuates each month as children, sometimes large sibling groups, either come onto, or off, the register.
- In some cases, preventative work of around 12-weeks is undertaken with families so that if it is possible to do so, children can be safely diverted from formal child protection arrangements. 210 children received this support during the year, with 122 children's cases either closing or stepping down to universal services. 56 children were transferred to the longer-term teams for continued support with 32 children subsequently progressing to Child Protection Conference.
- The graph below demonstrates number of children registered over the year.



- In 78% of cases, children were de-registered because of a reduction of risk rather than matters escalating through Care Proceedings and/or children becoming Looked After.
- Emotional Abuse is now the highest category of registration which relates to the impact of Domestic Abuse, Interparental conflict, Substance Misuse of parents and parental mental health. Child neglect remains the 2nd largest category of registration.
- Sexual abuse has always presented as a category with the least number of children registered, although under reporting is likely to mask prevalence. There had been an increase in child protection cases where parents [normally fathers] are under investigation or convicted of online offences, such as possession of indecent images of children.
- The Safeguarding Unit lost 2 key members of the team later in the year which led to a reliance on agency chairs being utilised for Child Protection Conferences. This led to a lack of consistency in the quality of engagement with families by the chair during the conference process. These posts are in the recruitment process.
- Delays in some conferences occur when the right agencies relevant to the family’s case are not able to attend. This is something that is being looked at through the regional Safeguarding Board.

Children Services continue to experience increased levels of complexity for children and families, which is indicated by an increase in pre-proceedings work and numbers of applications made to court in order to keep children safe.



For Children on the Child Protection Register and in pre legal proceedings CIW Inspection report (Feb 24) notes: “leaders *provide constructive challenge to support consideration of all options. Social workers consistently create assessment plans which support analysis of the core risks relating to threshold, the impact on the child, and parental capacity to change. This **positive practice** supports robust analysis and proportionate decision making in the latter stages of a child’s journey through safeguarding processes*”

CHILDREN’S PLACEMENTS:

Sufficiency of Children’s Placement remains a key risk for the Council with instability within the provider market and on-going uncertainty as to the full impact of the new Social Care and Health Bill.

Insufficiency can mean that children are not as well matched to placements as we would want. Insufficiency of foster carers has meant that some children are entering residential children's homes, when the need is actually for a foster placement.

On occasions the service has had to operate an unregulated OWR placement (Outside of Welsh Regulation) to ensure that the child is safeguarded, whilst an alternative registered placement can be found. Children Services proactively engage with CIW in these situations.

Children Services have improved the way that the service responds in situations where an OWR placement is required through temporarily redirecting resources and co-ordinating multiagency support. The service has developed a 'bank' of trained support workers who can support children within OWR homes at short notice. This allows Children's Services to ensure the staff managing the placements are appropriately trained and supervised, and work collaboratively to meet the needs of the child whilst placed. In 2023/24, 5 children were placed temporarily in OWR arrangements prior to transitioning to a regulated placement.

In response to the challenges of placements, and in line with the Government's Elimination of Profit agenda, the service has developed a placement development strategy and is planning to appoint an additional Service Manager to support this area of work.

ADULT SAFEGUARDING:

The Adult Safeguarding Team remains relatively stable. Since the last evaluation the team has consolidated systems and process changes implemented in 2022/2023. This has helped to improve communication, recording and efficiency within adult safeguarding.

- In 2023/2024, 84.3% (334 of 396) of adult safeguarding enquiries were completed within 7 working days from receipt of the DTR compared to 86.4% last year. Although this is a slight reduction on last year, the improvements made in collaboration and partnership working across Adult Services and with relevant stakeholders, to ensure enquiries are undertaken in a timely way has been sustained.
- The number of referrals made and accepted to Adult Safeguarding has reduced slightly since the last evaluation, (from 418 to 396). However, the level of activity remains fairly consistent.
- The Team continues to improve how reports are responded to supporting and promoting preventative practice where it is safe to do so.
- The Adult Safeguarding Team, in collaboration with the Workforce Development Team, has developed a suite of Safeguarding Practice Exchange presentations on various topics to address learning needs. Further take up now needs to be promoted. The presentations developed are now also being taken forward by the wider workforce development agenda of the Gwent Safeguarding Board.

- The Team has continued to see an increase in relation to safeguarding concerns about People in a Position of Trust (see Safe Workforce). This increase is also seen within the other Gwent Local Authorities.

5. SAFE SERVICES – delivered through commissioning arrangements, grants, partnerships and volunteering

SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 4	
<u>WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?</u>	
We use our influence to ensure that services operating in Monmouthshire, including commissioned and those outside the direct control of the Council, do so in ways which promote the welfare and safety of children and adults at risk.	
ANALYSIS	
There are clear operating processes in place within Social Care and Health to ensure a robust approach for all social care commissioning for children and adults. There is good evidence of safeguarding practice within Licensing, Public Protection and Passenger Transport Units. Outcomes from SAFEs indicate that safe commissioning and good safeguarding practice with contractors is in place within schools and other services within the Council. Arrangements are in place to support safeguarding within volunteering and third sector organisations.	
The score remains at 4.	
KEY STRENGTHS:	NEXT STEPS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commissioning team and the Safeguarding Unit have positive relations and the 'Provider Performance' and 'Escalating Concerns' processes continue to work well. - The processes for reviewing commissioned services within Children and Adult Services are well defined and embedded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of SAFES to continue learning and improvement in safe commissioning practice within Directorates. - Undertake a further check to ensure that Hiring and Letting processes adhere to Safeguarding policy.

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- There are regular safeguarding meetings with individual directorates to offer ongoing advice and guidance.

PROGRESS AND EVIDENCE:

COMMISSIONING & QUALITY ASSURANCE

Children’s Services

Standard quality assurance monitoring processes continued during the year for residential and supported accommodation placements. This includes an annual monitoring visit to all in-county providers (for those new in placement this occurs between 6-12 months after placement start date) with additional follow up visits as needed. For those children placed out of area desktop monitoring is carried out for all providers, starting from 6 months after placement start date, and revisited 6 monthly - physical visits will occur as needed on a risk assessed basis. The national commissioning consortium supports good exchange of information about provider performance and any safeguarding concerns across local authorities.

During the 23 – 24 period we had:

- 1 Disability Support Service Provider in Provider Performance this concluded positive in April 2024
- 1 Residential Home in Provider Performance which is ongoing

Adults Services

Standard quality assurance monitoring processes continued during the 23-24 year for all commissioned Adult Social Care placements. For in-county placements this includes an annual monitoring visit and one to two relationship visits per year (if needed, dependent on provider size) with additional follow up visits as needed. In most circumstances, out of county providers are monitored via their host authority; in exceptional circumstances where no one from the host authority is placed we will liaise accordingly to ensure that monitoring occurs. Our regional commissioning group ensures that there is good exchange of information about provider performance and so that any concerns are responded to.

During the 23 – 24 period we had:

- 1 younger adult nursing home – managed through provider performance and then escalating concerns – the home was closed in April 2024
- 1 older adult residential provider in Provider Performance – this is ongoing

VOLUNTEERS: Regular volunteers in Monmouthshire are subject to the same recruitment procedures as the paid workforce. In the 2023-24, Be Community (part of the Wellbeing Team) provided substantial support to 244 volunteers and 135 community organisations in Monmouthshire, enhancing their resilience and sustainable growth through a diverse array of training which includes mandatory safeguarding training. A total of 38 training courses were provided to volunteers. 2 Voluntary workers were subject to the Professional Concerns Safeguarding processes in 23-24, where the concerns were “Substantiated”. Appropriate steps were then taken to ensure that the risks posed by these individuals were mitigated.

LICENSING and PASSENGER TRANSPORT:

Good safeguarding practice is embedded within licensing services and the Passenger Transport Unit (PTU). Licensing & Regulatory (L&R) Committee members are trained and competent in making decisions about suitability of taxi drivers, etc. New Members in the Licensing and Regulatory Committee were also trained prior to dealing with cases brought before them, to ensure that only ‘fit and proper’ drivers are licensed.

DBS checks are now required every 6 months for drivers, rather than 3 years. This also includes operators who have access to book records or dispatch vehicles. This was implemented October 2021 and continues. Drivers are required to undertake safeguarding training which must be updated every 3 years when they reapply for their licence.

Responsible Authority meetings are well attended and continue to review any licensed premises with safety issues.

HIRING AND LETTING:

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy highlights that managers have responsibility for ensuring organisations letting or hiring rooms are operating to clear safeguarding policies, such that would reflect the Monmouthshire Safeguarding policy. This recognises that when rooms or buildings are let by the Council for clubs or activities, the public may well assume the same safeguarding standards are in place. There is a model hire agreement for schools for when other organisations use or hire sites. This includes reference to safeguarding standards such as having a

safeguarding policy, DBS checks being in place, safeguarding training and regulatory bodies etc. Arrangements are monitored by Governing Bodies.

Physical site security and incident planning:

School site security continues to be a paramount consideration for schools and services operated by MonLife – ensuring that those on site are safeguarded and that effective arrangements are in place.

In January 2024 the review of the Schools Critical Incident Plan (SCIP) was launched, and every school attended the launch event. Following this, each school reviewed their SCIP and reinforced how the arrangements were embedded into schools – for example ‘safe and secure’ (school lockdown) is routinely practiced, which is the opposite to evacuation procedures.

Schools assure themselves in relation to site safeguards and security via the SAFE assessment –with some sections amended to reinforce Estyn standards and monitoring arrangements.

APPENDIX 3 - SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY PLAN [2023 – 2024]:

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RAG RATING	NOTES
GOOD GOVERNANCE				
Regional SAFE roll out 2023 – 2025.	All Directorates	March 2025		Commenced
Corporate Safeguarding Policy to reviewed when updates arise i.e. the National Safeguarding Training Framework 2023/4 and Modern-Day Slavery Statement.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		Modern Day Slavery Statement almost at completed with one further meeting scheduled between Commissioning and Safeguarding Unit (bring forward) Policy amended in line with new National Training Standards (Nov '23)
Consideration for further training and understanding of safeguarding priorities for all elected members.	Training Unit	March 2024		Awaiting module under the National Standards Training framework and will be addressed via this mechanism (bring forward)
SAFE WORKFORCE				
Ongoing development of 'Thingi' to ensure training records are centrally managed	Systems and Data Team	March 2024		On-going
Training Policy needs to look at mandatory training and consider other areas that need to be recorded, including VAWDSV, Prevent and GDPR	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		This is included as part of Thingi development.
Regional Safeguarding Leads will continue to meet to review the Practitioner	Safeguarding Unit Gwent Safeguarding Board	March 2024		A task and finish group is established under the regional board to look at this. This action will be managed via that process.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RAG RATING	NOTES
Concerns process and review the effectiveness of the “outcomes” of the process				
Undertake an audit of the adapted arrangements for digital recruitment to ensure safeguarding is at the forefront	Systems and Data Team	March 2024		Sequenced to 24-25 due to ongoing developments in other areas (Bring Forward)
Training to be developed around understanding of Practitioner Concerns, for those who are employers and those who are at greater risk of being discussed in the arena, e.g. Education, Foster Carers and Health professionals	Safeguarding Unit Gwent Safeguarding Board	March 2024		(Bring Forward)
Training Standards to be considered from a Monmouthshire perspective. Consideration to adopt this national framework.	Safeguarding Unit WASG Training Unit	March 2024		Adopted and policy amended
PREVENTATIVE APPROACH				
Development of VAWDASV refresher course for all staff and to be rolled out across the Council.	Training Unit	March 2024		VAWDASV training is incorporated into Thingi mandatory training requirements and will be reviewed alongside the National Safeguarding Training Framework 24-25
There will continue to be promotion of all mandatory training across the Local Authority to be completed by staff members.	Training Unit Workforce Development Team	March 2024		This will be achieved via Thingi

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RAG RATING	NOTES
Remainder of Directorates to be included in Modern Day Slavery training.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		This is ongoing.
Wellbeing Team to continue to support the community in ensuring robust support and effective links with services are provided based on the changing needs of the community.	Wellbeing Team	March 2024		Business as usual
Wellbeing Team to evaluate the effectiveness of their support to inform future decisions about the Team.	Wellbeing Team	March 2024		Wellbeing Team has undergone significant changes over the course of the last 12 months. The team, known now as The Community Development Team, operate geographically across the County, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention
The Modern-Day slavery statement needs to be completed and embedded across the council.	Procurement Safeguarding Unit to offer advice and guidance	March 2024		Modern Day Slavery Statement almost at completion; one further meeting scheduled with Commissioning and Safeguarding Unit.
NRM pilot and change in threshold to be understood in greater depth.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		Pilot on-going, this will be taken forward at a national level
ROBUST PROTECTION				
The Hub will be evaluated following successful tender, which is being commissioned by Gwent Police.	Safeguarding Unit Gwent Police	March 2024		This is the remit of Gwent Police; hubs are now embedded with West and East oversight boards established.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RAG RATING	NOTES
Continue to expand the Hub to include further agencies.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		This remains on going and has been enhanced through digital platforms.
Continued improvement of the Section 126 enquiries being held within timescale through further discussion with other professionals and agencies, such as Health.	Safeguarding Unit [Adult] Health Safeguarding	March 2024		Improved performance and compliance to statutory timescales has been maintained over 2 years.
Safeguarding Unit to continue improving Quality Assurance arrangements and identify workshops for practice improvement.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		This is being taken forward via the implementation lead.
Increased development of Safeguarding understanding across Adult Services.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		This has been achieved with practitioner modules being developed.
SAFE SERVICES				
To further strengthen the working relationship between Safeguarding and Commissioning for both Children and Adults and also include better attendance at meetings.	Safeguarding Unit Commissioning	March 2024		There are strong working relationships between Children’s Services and Commissioning. In regard to Adult Services there are improved relationships and understanding with the Commissioning Team and better attendance at all levels of Safeguarding meetings.
Commissioning to review services on provider list and provider feedback.	Commissioning	March 2024		Continuous review process; ongoing.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RAG RATING	NOTES
Further promotion and understanding of SAFE process across the whole Local Authority.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2024		Ongoing, and will be reinforced during next roll out
Safeguarding Unit to promote that Directorates have more autonomy in completing their individual SAFEs with advice and guidance to be sought from the Safeguarding Unit where necessary.	Safeguarding Unit All Directorates	March 2024		Ongoing – brought forward into Good Governance
Continued learning and improvement with Directorates to further embed good Safeguarding practice.	Safeguarding Unit All Directorates	March 2024		WASG is used as a mechanism to identify any learning.
Evaluation of the Wellbeing Team.	Wellbeing Team	March 2024		Wellbeing Team has undergone significant changes over the course of the last 12 months. The team, known now as The Community Development Team, now operates geographically across the County, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention.

APPENDIX 4 - SAFEGUARDING PROPOSED ACTIVITY PLAN [2024 – 2025]:

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
GOOD GOVERNANCE		
Regional SAFE roll out 2023 – 2025.	Directorate Leads Safeguarding Unit	March 2025
Directorates to develop increased autonomy in completing their individual SAFEs, with advice and guidance to be sought from the Safeguarding Unit where necessary.	Directorate Leads	March 2025
Recruitment of a Safeguarding Service Manager.	Head of Children’s Services	July 2024
Ensure correct link between Thinqi and the implementation of the National Training Standards to include Safeguarding training for Elected Members and School Governors	Workforce Development Team and Safeguarding Unit	March 2025
Continue to develop the core data set as a standard agenda item for WASG to ensure whole council scrutiny.	Safeguarding Unit	Sept 2024
SAFE WORKFORCE		
Thinqi system to be fully implemented across all areas of the council to support full and accurate production of safeguarding training data.	Systems and Data Team Workforce Dev Team Safeguarding Unit	Dec 2024
National Training Standards to be embedded with Thinqi	Workforce Development Team and Safeguarding Unit	March 2025
To review and implement any actions arising from the national task and finish group developing further guidance around Practitioner Concerns.	Safeguarding Unit Safeguarding Board	March 2025
Undertake an audit of the adapted arrangements for digital recruitment to ensure safeguarding is at the forefront (brought forward from 2023-24)	Systems and Data Team HR	Jan 25
Training and Guidance to be developed around understanding of Practitioner Concerns, for those who are employers and those who are	Safeguarding Unit Gwent Safeguarding Board	March 2025

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
at greater risk of being discussed in the arena, e.g. Education, Foster Carers and Health professionals (brought forward from 2023 -24)		
PREVENTATIVE APPROACH		
Strengthen the links between the Wellbeing Team, the Safeguarding Unit and MEG.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2025
MEG to work with partners both regionally and locally to develop transitional safeguarding to support young adults vulnerable to exploitation	Safeguarding Unit	March 2025
Complete the Modern-Day slavery statement and update the Corporate Safeguarding Policy	Safeguarding Unit and Community Development Service	Dec 2024
Support Gwent Police in recruiting for MARAC Chairs across the 5 LA's (to support consistency of practice)	Procurement Safeguarding Unit to offer advice and guidance	Dec 2024
Include Neuro Diversity in the training profile for PREVENT		March 2025
Implement Thinqi to support compliance with VAWDASV training	Safeguarding Unit	Dec 2024
ROBUST PROTECTION		
Undertake an analysis of demand data at both front door of adults and children to identify trends, resource need and to inform partnership approaches.	Safeguarding Unit	Oct 2024
Undertake further planned engagement with Adult Services to promote safeguarding statutory compliance and understanding	Safeguarding Unit [Adult] Health Safeguarding	Dec 2024
Utilise a 12-month Implementation Officer post to support the roll out of Keeping Children Safe practice framework and to support compliance with statutory timescales	Safeguarding Leads Children Services	July 2024

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Appoint to Safeguarding Service Manager position	Head of Children’s Services	July 2024
Recruit a 4th Service Manager to take forward the development of Monmouthshire Children and young people placements.	Head of Children’s Services	July 2024
Review grant funded services to understand risks and resource need post 2025	Head of Children’s Services	Dec 2024
Implement the Safeguarding QA Framework	Safeguarding Service Manager	Dec 2024
SAFE SERVICES		
Use of SAFES to continue learning and improvement in safe commissioning practice within Directorates.	Safeguarding Unit	March 2025
Undertake a further check to ensure that Hiring and Letting processes adhere to Safeguarding policy.	WASG	March 2025