

SUBJECT:	MODERN DAY SLAVERY AND EXPLOITATION PROTOCOL
MEETING:	Individual Cabinet Member Decision – Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Safeguarding
DATE:	21st August 2019
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider the 'Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation Protocol' for adoption by Monmouthshire County Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation Protocol, as attached in Appendix One, is approved for adoption.
- 2.2 That a progress report is presented to Strong Communities Select Committee in six months' time.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 County Councillors attended a policy development workshop on 18th April on Modern Day Slavery (MDS) and Exploitation. This provided an opportunity to discuss the Council's response to what is becoming an increasing problem.
- 3.2 One response has been to develop a Protocol to ensure Officers and Members of the County Council are consistent in their approach to this issue. The draft protocol was presented to Strong Communities Select Committee on 11th July for pre-decision scrutiny. Members of that Committee commented on the draft protocol and it has been amended to incorporate those views, as per version attached in Appendix One.
- 3.3 Modern slavery encompasses forced labour, human trafficking, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. It impacts on both children and adults, for example, children can be sexually exploited, involved in organised theft and drug dealing.
- 3.4 The Modern Day Slavery Act 2015 has consolidated and strengthened previous legislation. This Authority is a 'First Responder' under the Act, which means there is a duty to identify and refer modern slavery victims through the National Referral Mechanism, (NRM). The NRM is a framework for identifying victims of modern day slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

- 3.5 Various Officers of the Council may witness, or have suspicions, of modern day slavery practice, so it is crucial they know what to do in such circumstances. Officers could see exploitation in a number of settings, including the Authority's role in housing, environmental health, trading standards, licensing and Children and Adult Social Care Safeguarding teams. Councillors may also be notified of concerns, for example regarding local businesses or properties in their areas. The proposed Protocol provides clarity on what to do in specific circumstances.
- 3.6 Process maps are provided as part of the Protocol, providing guidance on what to do and who to contact when suspicions are raised by Officers or Members.
- 3.7 The Protocol identifies existing Designated Safeguarding Leads as MDS Champions, and outlines the level of training required. The Cabinet Member for Social Justice & Community Development has agreed to act as 'Member MDS Champion'. This fits well with her responsibilities for supporting people, poverty, disadvantage and equality.
- 3.8 Basic awareness will be available via a corporate video which is currently being developed with our Training Unit. Welsh Government have specifically requested Councils identify MDS Champions and provide appropriate training across the organisation.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION, (includes social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting):

- 4.1 The completed 'Equalities & Future Generations Evaluation' form is provided as Appendix Two, attached.
- 4.2 The proposed Protocol provides a positive contribution as it endeavours to protect highly vulnerable members of society. It provides a consistent approach and will be supported by appropriate training for Officers and Members.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- 5.1 Do nothing – the Authority could rely on staff, and Members, finding out what to do when instances discovered. This would be high risk, with potential reputational damage for not intervening correctly, and not making proper referrals as legally required as a 'First Responder' organisation.
- 5.2 Adopt the 'Modern Day Slavery & Exploitation Protocol' for Monmouthshire, as provided in Appendix One. This provides clarity on what to do and when, for the safety of highly vulnerable children and adults, working with our partners such as Gwent Police.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 6.1 The Protocol can be evaluated for its' effectiveness in twelve months' time. Feedback from anyone who has used the Protocol would help in refining further. As per 2.2 above, an update on progress will be provided to Strong Communities Select Committee.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 Welsh Government have requested that all Local Authorities in Wales ensure they are aware of their responsibilities as First Responders, and put into place MDS Champions, provide suitable training etc. The proposed Protocol services to bring these requirements together in one place, to ensure consistency and clarity.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 None as a consequence of this report. There will be some costs relating to the corporate 'MDS awareness video' (see 3.6), and specific training for certain front-line Officers. These costs are not likely to be significant and will be borne via existing service budgets.

9. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)
Cabinet
Social Care & Health Safeguarding Unit
Social Care & Health DMT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Home Office and Welsh Government guidance

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Appendices

Appendix One – Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation Protocol

Appendix Two – Equality and Future Generations Evaluation