

**SUBJECT: SAFEGUARDING EVALUATION REPORT April 2019 – March 2020**

**MEETING: COUNCIL 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**DATE: DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

## **1. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is:

- To evaluate the progress of Monmouthshire County Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2019 / 2020, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2020 - 2021.
- 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 January 2019.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 For members to receive the Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report and Activity Plan.

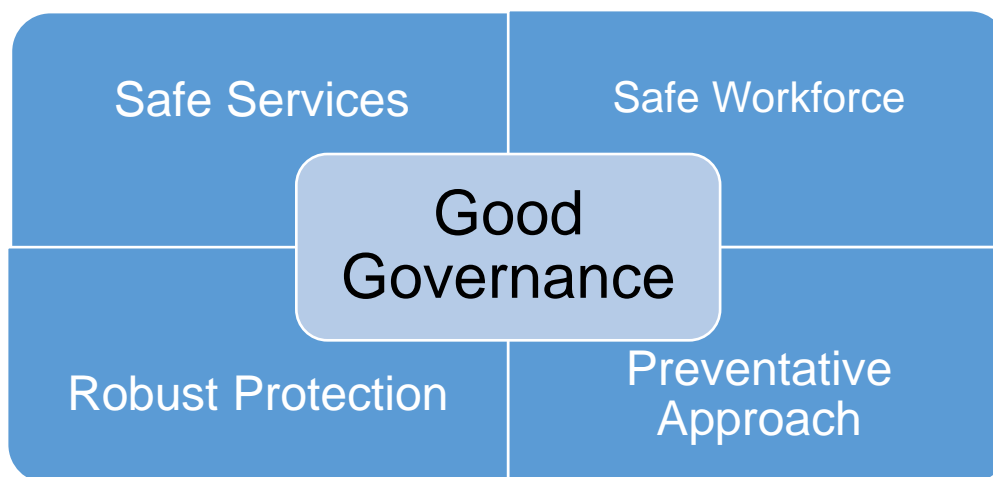
## **3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 This safeguarding evaluation (see appendix 2) is based on activity and information from April 2019 to March 2020, just prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. Where relevant, we have taken an 'as is' position and provided information regarding the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected safeguarding activity.
- 3.2 The report is developed within the context of the approved 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). The analysis within the report reflects progress against

priority areas set out within the policy and draws on data and information concerning both groups.

- 3.3 The 5 cornerstones of safeguarding within the Corporate Safeguarding Policy are set out below (Table 1).

### The Cornerstones of safeguarding in Monmouthshire



- 3.4 Embedding and sustaining the highest standards of safeguarding is a continuous endeavor. 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. The evaluation report seeks to balance qualitative and quantitative data as well as drawing in other sources of information to support the evaluation. The evaluation report is at appendix 2.
- 3.5 Relevant sources of external information were used to inform this evaluation including:
- Welsh Audit Office *Follow-up review of Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding of Children* (issued February 2020)
  - Estyn *Report on Education Services in MCC* (issued February 2020)
  - CIW Focused Activity Inspection Adult Safeguarding (February 2020)
  - CIW Focused Activity Inspection Children Safeguarding (February 2020)
- 3.6 The self-assessment score has been agreed by the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group on the basis of evidence reviewed to date and critical challenge. It uses the corporate scoring framework (Appendix 1) to provide an overall judgement of effectiveness. The current self-assessment is at Table 2.

**Table 2: Self-assessment scores as at March 2019**

<b>Cornerstone of Safeguarding</b>	<b>April 17 -Sept 17</b>	<b>Oct 17- March 18</b>	<b>April 2018 – March 2019</b>	<b>April 2019 – Sept 2020</b>
Good Governance	4	5	5	5
Safe Workforce	3	4	3	3
Preventative Approach	3	4	4	4
Robust Protection	4	4	4	3
Safe Services	2	3	3	3

- 3.5 Priority improvement actions arising from the evaluation form the basis of the WASG action plan which is implemented and monitored through the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (see appendix 3). The review of the previous year's action plan is at appendix 4.

#### **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.

#### **6. REASONS:**

- 6.1 This evaluation report is completed within the context of Monmouthshire County Council's background and history in respect of safeguarding as set out in brief below and represents a further opportunity for Members to consider the distance travelled by the Local Authority in improving safeguarding practice.
- 6.2 Council Members will be aware that in November 2012 the Local Authority was found to have inadequate safeguarding arrangements in place. Shortcomings

included a lack of safeguarding policy as well as operational weaknesses particularly within a schools based context.

- 6.3 The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit was established within Children's Services in 2012 quickly extending its role to supporting the Authority's improvement journey around children's safeguarding.
- 6.4 In February 2014 an Estyn monitoring visit recognised that the council had appropriately prioritised safeguarding and 'set the foundations well for recovery' particularly at service and practitioner. However, the authority still did not have 'effective enough management information systems and processes to enable it to receive appropriate and evaluative management information about safeguarding'. This criticism was echoed by a subsequent Welsh Audit Office review of safeguarding in March 2014.
- 6.5 In response to this the council established the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG) initially chaired by the Chief Executive with a focus specifically on children. The inaugural meeting took place in July 2014.
- 6.6 The Local Authority came out of Special Measures in November 2015 when strong progress in safeguarding was recognised.
- 6.7 A recommendation was subsequently made to Cabinet and endorsed in July 2016 allowing the work of the WASG to incorporate safeguarding for adults at risk so that good practice and learning could be mutually shared, and marking the statutory basis of adult safeguarding as a consequence of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 6.8 Members will also be aware that Wales Audit Office issued statutory recommendations in respect of safeguarding in respect of the Council's Kerbcraft service in January 2017. This was followed by a Wales Audit Office led inspection which took place in January 2018, in partnership with both CIW and Estyn. The report to this was issued in August 2018 and scrutinised by CYP Select in October 2018. There were 4 main proposals within the report including further strengthening of the policy framework; further steps to ensure a safe workforce and safeguarding within commissioning.
- 6.9 The WAO conducted a follow up 'light touch' inspection to this in September 2019. The written outcome was received 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020. There are no further recommendations and the partially addressed actions which are being followed up form part of the WASG action plan in appendix 3, with the review of the previous year's plan at appendix 4.

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no resource implications to this report.

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

This report is critically concerned with the effectiveness of safeguarding in Monmouthshire County Council.

**9. CONSULTEES:**

Whole Authority Safeguarding Group  
Julie Boothroyd – Chief Officer

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Corporate Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 5)

**11. AUTHOR:**

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## Appendix 1

### The Corporate Evaluation Framework

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

**APPENDIX 2**  
**The Evaluation**

**1). Good Governance**

**SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 5**

**What does good look like?**

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 regional safeguarding boards to ensure good alignment and maximise our resources.

**Progress and Evidence**

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and updated in Jan 2019 to include a clearer link to Data Protection issues and Whistleblowing.

The safeguarding policy framework within MCC was highlighted as positive within the Estyn inspection (Feb 2020).

A safeguarding position statement was issued as part of emergency arrangements for COVID. The risks to safeguarding during the pandemic were highlighted as a risk and mitigating actions were put in place.

The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group was suspended briefly during emergency, but re-summed July 2020

The safeguarding ‘self-assessment’ is undertaken every other year on a directorate basis via the Safeguarding Assessment Framework for Evaluation (SAFE). The 2019 – 2021 process saw the development of a ‘workshop’ check and challenge approach for directorates to share the outcomes of their SAFEs using real case studies from their service areas to demonstrate safeguarding in action. This appears to have worked well, and has facilitated the sharing of practice, collective problem solving and the identification of safeguarding issues / themes to emerge. There was some interruption of this process because of COVID-19. The next self-assessment process will recommence in April 2021.

The directorate links into the safeguarding unit were clarified as an outcome of the current SAFE process.

Additional resource has been provided to the Safeguarding Unit to enhance the business support capacity. This should allow for some strengthening of data and information management within the Unit to inform the function / role of the WASG.

Safeguarding is included within the timetable of Internal Audit, with specific areas of audit being discussed and agreed with the WASG. The most recent audit concerned safeguarding training, the outcomes of which have yet to be formally received.

The Welsh Safeguarding Procedures came into force in April 2020. There was good awareness raising across the Council regarding the new procedures with the Safeguarding Procedures App being pinned to all Council laptops. Training has been made available for relevant employees.

Regional safeguarding boards have continued to operate during the pandemic at an executive level however, Monmouthshire continues to be represented and maintains good links into both the Gwent Wide Safeguarding Board and the VAWDSV board.

There is strong engagement in regional approaches to Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting (MASE) Child Sex Exploitation (CSE), Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) and Contest (PREVENT anti radicalisation).

### Analysis

The work of the WASG continues to be a major strength, which is reflected in our self-assessment score as 5.

#### Key Strengths:

- Policy framework including SAFEs
- Response to launch of Welsh Safeguarding Procedures
- Safeguarding response and risk assessment during COVID-19 pandemic

### Next Steps

- Evaluate summative learning and outcomes from current (2019) process and ensure this informs future planning
- Plan and implement next SAFE process (2021 – 2023)
- Ensure that any learning and actions from the IA report are taken forward
- Development / implementation of core data set for WASG including comparative data
- Develop the process for 'learning in action' for the WASG based on case scenarios / areas of concern to replace the SBAR approach.

## 2). Safe Workforce

### SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 3

#### What does good look like?

We ensure that safe recruitment and human resource 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.

#### Progress and Evidence

##### Safe Recruitment

In response to the pandemic, safe recruitment checks were adapted to reflect WG guidance regarding digital recruitment. Elements of this continue to be utilised across the whole authority.

An emergency recruitment process was put in place to ensure that changes to the workforce required by the pandemic followed safe recruitment practices.

Routine performance reports regarding DBS certification prior to employment, where this is required, continue to be issued across the whole authority.

##### Volunteers



In regards to volunteers, a Volunteer Kinetic digital management system is in place. This means we have a live central record of volunteer safe recruitment information and activity. The system is structured so that, dependent on the role, the correct safe recruitment checks are carried out and logged on the volunteers' profiles. Training undertaken is also logged on the system (for example Safeguarding Level 1).

During the COVID-19 period council volunteer activity was suspended. Efforts were instead turned to supporting the range of community groups that had sprung up in response to the pandemic with their safeguarding arrangements. To ensure sustainability, GAVO and Volunteering for Well-Being (Bridges) have now been inducted to carry out this function.

Council volunteer activity is now being gradually re-started.

### Training

Level 1 training is delivered via a Training for Trainers approach. This has allowed some directorates to be self-sufficient in delivering at this level, whilst others remain dependant on the SGU. There is a training forum in place to ensure that trainers are kept up to date and provided with support and information, as well as providing a level of Quality Assurance.

For Level 2 (children) there are 6 trainers in MCC who work together to deliver at least 4 x one day courses throughout the year based on demand using the Gwent Safeguarding board material.

The central collation and monitoring of training records remains problematic and the current arrangements remain in place (i.e. service areas and directorates hold and monitor their own records on separate data bases).

Training delivered by the **safeguarding unit** during the period is as follows:

#### April 2019 – March 2020

Level 1 **226**

Level 2 **131**

#### April 2020 – Sept 2020

Level 1 **187**

Level 2 **48**

In response to the crisis all direct training courses are currently suspended. The council was quick to respond and launched digital versions of Level 1 safeguarding (via SWAY) and the Level 2 renewal programme. Further digital approaches are being developed and will continue to be a mainstay of the training strategy, as a positive 'legacy' of the pandemic period. The added advantage of using digital platforms is that some of the training data is easier to collect.

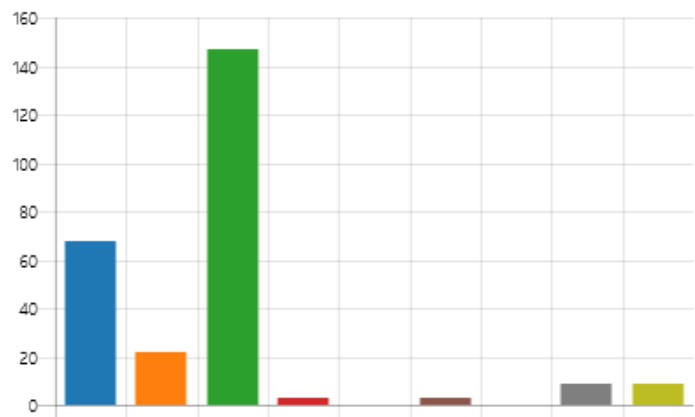
The data below illustrates simply the take-up of training via SWAY and does not equate this to the more fundamental question - *who needed training against who received it.*

Data from Level 1 programme via SWAY May 2020 until November 2020

5. Please select your directorate

[More Details](#)

● Social Care & Health	68
● Children & Young People	22
● Schools	147
● Operations	3
● Chief Executives	0
● Mon Life	3
● Member	0
● Outside Organisation	9
● Foster Carer	9



Managing Professional Allegations

During the period the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance has held meetings about 55 professionals relating to 64 children following professional allegations.

During the period 35 Professional Strategy Meetings were concluded, of which:

- 12 x Substantiated
- 13 x Unsubstantiated
- 10 x Unfounded

Professional allegation referrals come from a range of referral sources.

There is no data available for numbers of professional allegation processes undertaken in relation to adult safeguarding, or escalating concerns.

Analysis

The maintained score of 3 is retained in the acknowledgement that a watertight system for centrally recording and monitoring employee data regarding safeguarding training from the point of recruitment onwards is not currently achievable. There is due to be a significant upgrade to the current data base and this is where resources need to be turned. Issues pertaining to the recording of training data was highlighted in the IA report (unpublished) as a moderate risk, however, for the time being it will be retained as a disaggregated responsibility of individual service areas and directorates.

Safe recruitment under the Corporate Safeguarding Policy continues to be a priority and there are good processes and systems in place to ensure that safe recruitment practice is followed. However, recruitment practice has had to change and adapt because of COVID-19, and further reassurance is required to ensure that levels of compliance have been maintained.

Key Strengths:

- High priority is given within the council to safe recruitment practices
- The council worked hard to ensure that community groups were provided with the correct advice and support to ensure that volunteers were safe and appropriate. This included

using the council's infrastructure to provide a safe recruitment function for voluntary groups (which has now been passed to Bridges and GAVO).

- The identification of role-related safeguarding training needs has informed the Safeguarding Training Plan
- Monmouthshire is fully compliant with the management of Professional Concerns Guidance within Children and Adult Services.

### **Next Steps**

- Implement the upgrade of the HR data base to support all aspects of safeguarding as appropriate
- Revise the safeguarding training strategy so that it reflects developments in digital training options
- Further develop directorate sufficiency for the delivery of Level 1 training
- Update safeguarding training to reflect the implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Undertake an audit of the adapted arrangements for digital recruitment
- Continue to develop the council's relationship with community groups to support safe volunteer workforce practices
- Develop data to enable reporting on professional concerns relating to adult safeguarding

### **Preventative Approach**

#### **SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 4**

#### **What does good look like?**

We work with partners to identify emerging issues, risks and challenges to our communities. We demonstrate clear multiagency approaches to developing protocols, processes and practice in how we respond to these issues therefore reducing risks through early intervention and preventative approaches.

#### **Progress and Evidence**

##### **Responding to Emerging Issues**

Training plans are in place across the council to ensure the right levels of training are place in respect of:

- VAWDASV
- PREVENT
- Child sexual and criminal exploitation
- Modern Day Slavery

The focus is on early recognition of concerns and referral on.

As at the end of Oct 2020 the completion rates for Group 1 VAWDASV were:

CYP: 60.84%

Enterprise: 57.28%

Chief Exec: 43.41%

Resources: 77.56%

SCH: 52.02%

During this period 32 children were subject to Child Sexual / Criminal Exploitation Strategy Meetings.

In addition to this, 6 MCC children were discussed as part of a Complex Strategy Meeting considering 13 children, however, these 6 did not proceed to their own individual CSE / CCE Strategy Meeting.

Fortnightly MASE Meetings (Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation meetings) continue between Police, Social Care and partner agencies to identify any patterns, locations and perpetrator identification.

There is good liaison in place between safeguarding, the Safer Monmouthshire Group and the council's Public Protection Unit including licensing.

Last year saw the Development of the Monmouthshire Exploitation Group (MEG) with representation from Safeguarding Unit, Public Protection, Partnerships, Police, Gwent Missing Children's Team, Education, Community Based teams. This group has overseen the development of a Monmouthshire Protocol for responding to Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation. This group has been on hold through the pandemic, and there are plans in place now for a re-launch.

### Providing Effective Early Help

The Information/ Advice and Assistance (IAA) facility at the front door of Children's and Adults (FISH) services are well embedded.

The Early Help Panel (EHP) within Children's Services has been operating since Jan 18 and has been recognised nationally as an example of effective early help practice. The early help panels provide streamlined referrals for families who need preventative and early help from a range of partner agencies and services. In 2019 – 2020 the EHP discussed 1267 referrals; the majority of these families were diverted away from statutory involvement (at the point of panel).

Multi-agency meetings (MAMs) are in place in each of the secondary schools and there is a good link between these and the EHP.

Numbers of referrals received into children and adults services continue to show an upward trend and overall did not reduce notably during the lockdown period.

### Preventative approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Early help and support services continued to provide services via digital solutions.

A parenting advice and support line was put up within 2 days of lockdown and between March and September 154 calls were received.

The council suspended its work with direct volunteers and instead turned its resources to supporting the range of community and volunteering activity that sprang up in response to the crisis.

Schools worked in partnership with social care to ensure that vulnerable families received support.

### Housing

Providing accommodation and support to homeless individuals and families has been a particular area of focused activity and challenge for the council during the pandemic. Plans are now being progressed for the Council to develop more lasting strategies to tackle and reduce homelessness.

This year has seen the introduction of the Housing Intervention Panel. The Housing Intervention Panel aims to provide a multi-agency forum to identify, consider and co-ordinate multi-agency support to vulnerable individuals and households with multiple and complex needs. The Purpose is to prevent homelessness or the threat of homelessness.

### Analysis

Preventative approaches remain a strong area of safeguarding practice within Monmouthshire, built on solid partnership working developed over time. A quote from CIW Annual Letter 19/20 illustrates this well.

"A particular strength of Monmouthshire County Council is its commitment to develop a range of innovative and creative preventative services, and ways of working with people in finding their own solutions in preventing or delaying their need for statutory care and support. We saw evidence in our annual activity of an extensive range of preventative community-based services that support early intervention and good outcomes for people. "

The score remaining at 4 is reflective of the impact of the pandemic, lockdown and the requirement to massively alter the way that the council connects with vulnerable families and individuals. That said the LA responded quickly and flexibly in finding alternative ways to maintain services, keep eyes and ears open and provide support where it was needed.

Key Strengths:

- Partnership working across the council
- Consistent drive towards developing preventative approaches across the council
- Place based approaches (adults)
- Early help panel (children)
- Proactive approaches to issues that impact on vulnerable individuals and communities.

### Next Steps

- Support the further development of MASE to include integrated approaches to all aspects of exploitation
- Ensure full roll-out of the Modern Day Slavery protocol across the council
- Re-launch of the MEG
- Further analyse the impact of COVID-19 on families and communities and ensure that services are in place to respond to increased risk and vulnerability
- Support the Council's approach to prevention of homelessness

## **4). Robust Protection**

### **SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 3**

#### **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.

#### **Progress and Evidence**

Children's Services

Children's services remain committed to promoting good practice around children protection and safeguarding through the current development programme *Building Best Practice* (2019 - 2021). Family support services across all tiers of need and vulnerability have been significantly increased and there is a good level of stability within the workforce and leadership.

In February 2020 CIW undertook a focussed inspection looking at safeguarding children at risk. Findings showed some key strengths including:

- The well-being and voice of the child is central to the safeguarding process.
- The local authority is committed to improvement and has a dedicated workforce who are committed to safeguarding children at risk.
- Partner agencies feel confident and able to challenge safeguarding decisions and are clear of the process to challenge safeguarding decisions.

Areas for improvement included adherence to statutory timescales; safeguarding recording and further embedding quality assurance mechanisms.

Within the service there is a continued upward trend in respect of both Child Protection Registrations and Children who are Looked After.

The number of children on the Child Protection Register at year end was 112 (from 116 at last year end).

The number of Children Looked After in Monmouthshire rose to 219 (from 173 at last year end).

During the pandemic Children's Services had to adapt quickly to delivering safeguarding and protection services differently. Further information was provided to C & YP scrutiny committee in October 2020.

The referral rate into the service did not reduce during the pandemic period.

#### Adult Safeguarding

The introduction of the statutory duty to report under the SSWB Act, as well as the low threshold for reporting concerns (which can be based on reasonable cause to suspect) continues to create an upward trend in the number of safeguarding concerns reported via safeguarding referrals.

CIW undertook a focussed inspection of adult safeguarding in February 2020. This recognised that the service had been reviewed and that a new structure was being implemented creating some additional capacity.

The inspection confirmed areas of strength as:

- People we spoke with confirmed that the well-being of the adult at risk was central to the safeguarding process.
- The local authority is committed to improvement and has a dedicated workforce who are committed to safeguarding adults at risk.
- Positive working relationships with partner agencies. Professionals we spoke with stated that communication from the local authority was good. They felt that the local authority adult safeguarding practice was responsive and thorough.

Areas for improvement included:

- The completion of adult protection enquiries within statutory timescales (7 days) currently @ 81% (from 76.79% previous year).
- Recording and Quality Assurance processes.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures come into force in April 2020. Implementation plans are in place in both children's and adults services to support the new procedures becoming fully embedded. MCC is working in partnership with the Regional Board to progress this.

Partnership within adult and child protection continues to develop with the next phase being the implementation of an Integrated Front-door for safeguarding, including co-location of a Police decision maker.

Practitioners in adult and children's services work with multi-agency partners in domestic abuse.

The numbers of MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) are as follows:

#### 2019/20

	2019/2020		
LA Area	Initial	Repeat	Total
Monmouthshire	94	18	112

#### 2018/19

	2018/2019		
LA Area	Initial	Repeat	Total
Monmouthshire	78	19	97

This indicates that the numbers of individuals subject to MARACs (and therefore at high risk from Domestic Abuse) had increased.

There were 0 adult practice reviews / child practice reviews or domestic homicide reviews undertaken within Monmouthshire in 2019 – 2020.

#### Analysis

Overall ensuring robust protection for people at risk of harm is a strength within the Council with key strengths in:

- Partnership working
- Commitment to delivering best practice
- Rigorous and transparent approaches to 'understanding the business' and responding to challenges

Never-the-less, the continued upward trend in numbers within both children's and adults services puts services under pressure.

In addition to this, the impact of COVID-19 on protecting vulnerable families and individuals cannot be underestimated, and reflects the cautious approach to stepping down the current self-assessed score to 3.

### Next Steps

- Ensure that plans are in place to implement the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and WCCIS without unnecessary disruption to operational issues / quality assurance processes
- Implementation of an integrated front-door for safeguarding
- Further analysis of risks related to the impact of COVID-19
- Continue to deliver risk assessment and strengths based practice across both Children's and Adults Services and at a partnership level
- Develop data so that adult safeguarding can be accurately monitored and reported on.

## **5). Safe Services – delivered through commissioning arrangements, grants, partnerships and volunteering**

### **SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 3**

#### **What does good look like?**

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.

#### **Progress and Evidence**

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been updated to include the agreed Framework for Minimum Standards for Safeguarding Across Commissioned Services

Social Care and Health have completed the Minimum Standards matrix - this showed that safe commissioning practice was complied with. The Internal Audit Report into commissioning of external placements (within children's services) published in June 2019 provided reasonable assurance that proper controls were in place.

Commissioning Leads within SCH ensure positive relationships with commissioned providers are established allowing any emerging concerns to be addressed through good partnership working. This means that within social care there is a robust, risk-based, contract management and quality assurance process across all providers.

The COVID pandemic has been a particularly challenging period for providers services. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Local Authority worked collaboratively to provide on-going support to provider services and commissioned services, including residential and nursing homes. This ensured that providers had support in place to:- keep up to date with national guidance; access PPE; implement good practice and share learning; respond to critical incidents / events.

There are well developed arrangements in public protection to ensure safeguarding is given due regard:

- safeguarding training is a requirement for licenced taxi /hackney and private hire drivers.
- voluntary safeguarding training is offered to alcohol/ entertainment and late night refreshment licensees.

During the reporting period our Licensing section ensured full compliance with all licences, including renewals, issued in the year.

Proactive checks are undertaken throughout the year, both licenced hackney carriage/private hire vehicles and licensed premises. Drivers, operators and vehicles are



subject to on-the –spot visits, typically annually. Added to this all complaints are actioned, so no drivers or licensed premises remain unchecked between licence periods.

Monmouthshire Letting and Hiring process requires evidence of the hirer’s Safeguarding processes as mandatory prior to letting council property.

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Volunteering Policy sets out clear guidelines and expectations for volunteers in commissioned services, which are reflected in individual service contracts.

The Council’s role as an ‘enabler’ and ‘influencer’ of safeguarding standards within volunteer groups and organisations has developed significantly over the months of the pandemic.

### **Analysis**

Social Care and Health have clear operating processes in place to ensure a robust approach for all social care commissioning for children and adults.

Schools, and other parts of the Council working with children / adults at risk, indicate there are robust arrangements in place for contracted services (including individual school contracts, transport, leisure services).

There is good evidence of safeguarding being embedded within licensing services and other areas of PPU.

However, the evaluative score remains at 3 because:

- The need to complete the commissioning matrix for each directorate and for this to be shared with WASG remains outstanding
- The changing nature of the task (i.e. supporting provider and commissioned services with their safeguarding arrangements has become considerably more complex since the outbreak of COVID-19)

### **Key Next Steps for 2019 - 2020**

Ensure that the next SAFE process supports directorates to review the Minimum Standards Self-Assessment Matrix, and evaluate outcomes

## Appendix 3

### Safeguarding CURRENT ACTIVITY PLAN (2020 – 2021)

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>		
Evaluate summative learning and outcomes from current (2019) process and ensure this informs future planning (Julie's powerpoint)	Chair of WASG	March 2021
Plan and implement next SAFE process (2021 – 2023)	Safeguarding Unit	March 2023
Ensure that any learning and actions from the IA report are taken forward	Safeguarding Unit WASG	TBC
Development / implementation of core data set for WASG including comparative data	Safeguarding Unit WASG	Sept 2021
Develop the process for 'learning in action' for the WASG based on case scenarios / areas of concern to replace the SBAR approach.	Chair of WASG	March 2021
<b>SAFE WORKFORCE</b>		
Implement the upgrade of the HR data base to support all aspects of safeguarding as appropriate	Head of People Services	Dec 2021
Revise the safeguarding training strategy so that it reflects developments in digital training options	Safeguarding Unit	Sept 2021
Further develop directorate sufficiency for the deliver of Level 1 training	Safeguarding Unit	Sept 2021
Update safeguarding training to reflect the implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures	Safeguarding Unit	Sept 2021
Undertake an audit of the adapted arrangements for digital recruitment	WASG	Sept 2021
Continue to develop the council's relationship with community groups to support safe volunteer workforce practices	Enterprise	Sept 2021
Develop data to enable reporting on professional concerns relating to adult safeguarding	Safeguarding Unit	Sept 2021
<b>Preventative Approaches</b>		
Support the further development of MASE to include integrated approaches to all aspects of exploitation	Safeguarding Unit	March 2021
Ensure full roll-out of the Modern Day Slavery protocol across the council	MEG	September 2021
Re-launch of the MEG	SCH directorate	March 2021
Further analyse the impact of COVID-19 on families and communities and ensure that services are in place to respond to increased risk and vulnerability	SCH directorate	September 2021
Support the Council's approach to prevention of homelessness	Enterprise	March 2022
<b>Robust Protection</b>		
Ensure that plans are in place to implement the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and WCCIS	SCH directorate	Dec 2021

without unnecessary disruption to operational issues / quality assurance processes		
Implementation of an integrated front-door for safeguarding	Safeguarding Unit	March 2021
Further analysis of risks related to the impact of COVID-19	SCH directorate	September 2021
Continue to deliver risk assessment and strengths based practice across both Children's and Adults Services and at a partnership level	SCH directorate	March 2022
Develop data so that adult safeguarding can be accurately monitored and reported on.	Safeguarding Unit	September 2022
<b>SAFE SERVICES</b>		
Ensure that the next SAFE process supports directorates to review the Minimum Standards Self-Assessment Matrix, and evaluate outcomes	Safeguarding Unit WAG	March 2023

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## APPENDIX 4

### Review of Previous Action Plan 2019 / 2020 action plan

GREEN – Completed

AMBER – In Progress, continuing

RED – Delayed, not started,

BLUE no longer required / changed

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Complete the SAFE process and evaluate learning and outcomes for future planning	All directorate leads Chair of WASG	March 2020	AMBER	Mainly completed – some disruption due to CV-19  New SAFE cycle bfwd
Develop the process for 'learning in action' for the WASG based on case scenarios / areas of concern to replace the SBAR approach.	Chief Officer Health and Social Care	March 2020	AMBER	Partially in place through SAFE process
Ensure that there is good awareness across the Council of the new Welsh Safeguarding Procedures	Safeguarding Service Manager	March 2020	GREEN	Completed On-going
Collate training data from the outcomes of the SAFEs and revise the training plan accordingly	Safeguarding Service Manager	March 2020	AMBER	Revision of training strategy bfwd as action for current work plan
Implement the upgrade of the HR data base and provide oversight from a safeguarding perspective	Head of Human Resources	March 2020	AMBER	Delayed Action bfwd
Ensure that interim arrangements for delivering and recording safeguarding training is collated consistently, so that WASG can assure the council that any risks are minimised during this interim period.( As	Head of Human Resources	March 2020	BLUE	This was not achieved and will be retained at individual service level

per P2a WAO partially addressed actions 2019 follow up review )				
Support the on-going development of integrated approaches to exploitation through the MASE work	Safeguarding Service Manager	March 2020		bfwd
Ensure full roll-out of the Modern Day Slavery protocol	Safeguarding Service Manager Head of Public Protection	March 2020		bfwd
Review the initial outcomes from the Early Help Panel	Head of Children's Services	Jan 2020		Evaluation report completed
WASG to retain oversight of the implementation of the Transport Programme board from a safeguarding perspective.	Chair of WASG Safeguarding Service Manager	March 2020		Service re-structure has been completed (PTU) and SGU continue to provide specific support
Ensure that plans are in place to implement new Welsh Safeguarding Procedures and WCCIS without unnecessary disruption to operational issues / quality assurance processes	Head of Children's and Adult's Services	Jan 2020		Implementation plans are in place  Next steps are bfwd
Consider capacity issues, specifically for adult protection	Chief Officer Health and Social Care	Jan 2020		Additional resources obtained and re-structure implemented
Deliver risk assessment and strengths based practice across Children's Services	Head of Children's Services	Jan 2020		Training delivered and plan for practice change approach in place
All directorates to complete the Minimum Standards Self-Assessment Matrix, and evaluate outcomes. ( As per P4 WAO partially addressed actions 2019 Follow up review)	All directorate leads Chair of WASG	March 2020		Partially completed Action is BFwd
Enhance qualitative comparative data at Directorate level which will form part of the Annual Report ( As per P3 WAO partially addressed actions 2019 follow up review)	WASG	Sept 2020		This can be looked at within the 'core' data set work
Strengthen arrangements by establishing a process to actively check on-going	Head Of Public Protection	Oct 2020		Completed on-going

compliance with licence conditions during 3-year licence period. ( As per WAO P1iic partially addresses actions 2019 follow up review)

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