

**SUBJECT:** Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report 2024/25

**MEETING:** Performance & Overview Committee

**DATE:** 23<sup>rd</sup> September

**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 2024 / 2025, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2025 - 2026.
- 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 January 2024.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

For members to scrutinise the Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report and Activity prior to its presentation at Council in November 2024.

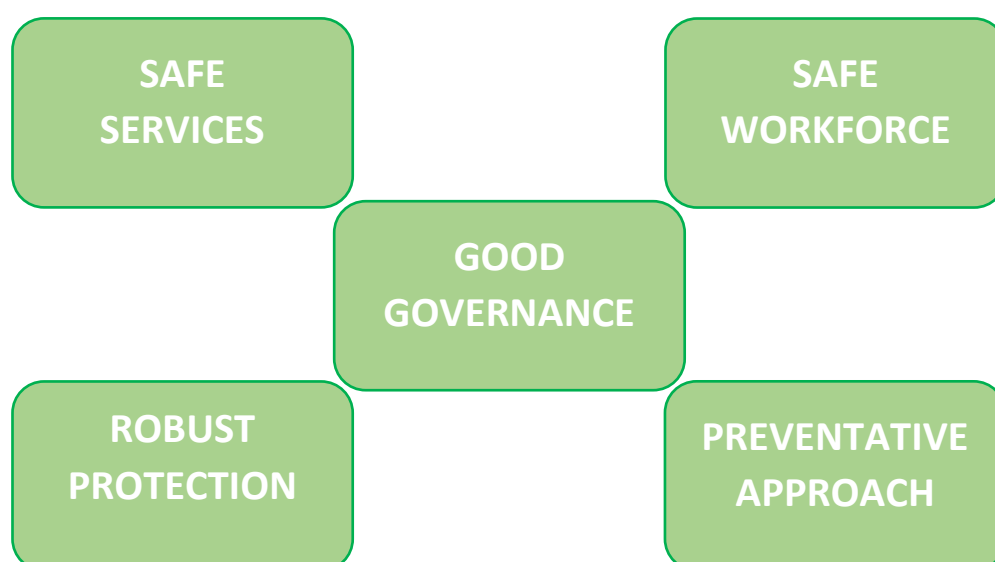
## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 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 WellBeing [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 forms an integral part of the continual development of Safeguarding practice across the Council.
- 3.2 2024-25 has been a period which has seen issues raised in previous reports in relation to increase demand for safeguarding services, the recommendations of the CIW Inspection Report into Children Services (Feb 24), and the vacancies in key roles in the Safeguarding Unit managed and addressed. This meant that whilst budget and resources remained a driver for change and accountability across the council, and with

statutory partners the increased resilience and restructuring within the Safeguarding Unit ensured Safeguarding remained a priority in Monmouthshire.

- 3.3 The Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2025 received Royal Assent on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The main aim of the Act, to restrict the making of profit in the provision of Residential Care homes or fostering services for children, remains a work in progress for the Government and full implementation of the Act has been extended to 2030. There is still significant disruption within the private care provider market which has seen price increases and further challenges securing safe and appropriate placements to meet children's more complex needs whilst Monmouthshire's "inhouse" provision is developed.

#### **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]. To balance the Self-Assessment process WASG seek triangulation utilising 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) Progress against the Action Plan set following Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection of Children Services Feb 24;
- (4) Review of performance data monthly by Children's Services Safeguarding Leads, Leadership Team to track trends and highlight performance issues to consider against local, regional and national targets;
- (5) Quarterly Safeguarding reports produced by Independent Reviewing Officers.

Any priority Action will form part of the Action Plan which is implemented by the Safeguarding Service and overseen by WASG

3.5 The current self-assessment is set out below:

**SELF ASSESSMENT SCORES:**

<b>CORNERSTONE</b>	<b>April – Sept 2017</b>	<b>Oct 2017 – March 2018</b>	<b>April 2018 – March 2019</b>	<b>April 2019 – March 2020</b>	<b>April 2020 – March 2021</b>	<b>April 2021 – March 2022</b>	<b>April 2022 – March 2023</b>	<b>April 2023 – March 2024</b>	<b>April 2024 – March 2025</b>
<b>GOOD GOVERNANCE</b>	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>SAFE WORKFORCE</b>	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
<b>PREVENTATIVE APPROACH</b>	3	4	4	4	5	4	4	4/5	5
<b>ROBUST PROTECTION</b>	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	5
<b>SAFE SERVICES</b>	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4

**3.6 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>

**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:**

- 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.

**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 Safe/guarding in Monmouthshire County Council.

**9. CONSULTEES:**

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

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

[Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#)

**11. AUTHOR:**

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