

SUBJECT:	Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report 2025/26 (Self-Assessment)
MEETING:	Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	29th September 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- To inform members of the effectiveness of safeguarding in Monmouthshire via a self-assessment process, including the work that the Council undertakes to protect children and adults at risk from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- 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, January 2024 and November 2025.
- To update on progress related to Monmouthshire County Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2025 / 2026 highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2026 – 2027.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

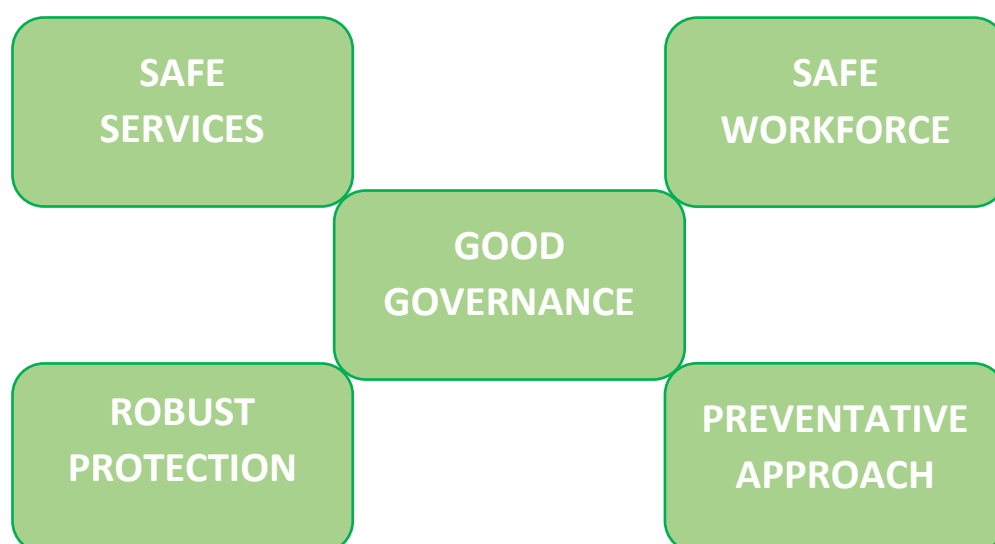
- For members to scrutinise the Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report and activity prior to its presentation at Council in November 2026.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Monmouthshire County Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy underpins this evaluation report. The Policy covers duties for both children and adults at risk and is in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing [Wales] Act [2014] and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. The evaluation reflects progress against priority areas set out within the policy and the previous year's action plan. The report forms an integral part of the continual development of Safeguarding practice across the Council.
- 3.2 This period (April 2025- March 2026) has seen ongoing demand pressures across services and within partner agencies. Nevertheless, safeguarding has

remained a foremost priority. The Council's commitment to safeguarding is evident through its reviews of policies, updated training, the preventative and proactive approach to emerging issues and effective collaboration across the Council and with regional partners.

- 3.3 Safeguarding practice across the Council continues to evolve in response to changing services, emerging risks and national developments. The 2025–2027 SAFE programme is underway, supported by a new digital platform, with a review of designated safeguarding leads for each area and quarterly review of directorate action plans to strengthen oversight and assurance. This report provides updated evidence of strong governance, robust protection arrangements for children and adults, safe workforce practice, and the wide range of preventative activity delivered across Council services and partnerships to promote wellbeing and reduce safeguarding risk.
- 3.4 The year ahead will prioritise embedding developments already underway, whilst continuing to respond to increasing complexity and demand across safeguarding services. We will be looking to make progress with implementing the National Training Standards across the Council and ensuring compliance; digital and system developments including Mosaic and the SAFE platform; and implementing the All-Wales referral form.
- 3.5 The North Wales Extended Child Practice Review - *‘Our Bravery Brought Justice’*, has prompted national changes to safeguarding practice, particularly around those in positions of trust. Monmouthshire is reviewing local arrangements to ensure compliance with revised guidance, while continuing to work through Gwent Safeguarding Board networks to monitor data, thresholds and Section 5 practice regionally. Priority actions are continued within the Action Plan which is implemented by the Safeguarding Unit and overseen by the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG).
- 3.6 As in previous years, the report is constructed around 5 pillars of safeguarding. Each section offers a statement of “what good looks like” which is agreed within the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG] based on experience, professional judgement, and recognised good practice.



- 3.7 The corporate scoring framework is used to provide an overall judgement of effectiveness between 1 [major weaknesses] and 6 [excellent / outstanding]. The self-assessment score is agreed by the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG] through critical challenge and on the basis of evidence reviewed to date. This year, the self-assessed scores remained the same as the previous year.
- 3.8 To help moderate the self-assessment process, WASG triangulates data and evidence through drawing on a number of sources of information including:
- (1) National checkpoint data and local dashboard data.
 - (2) Specific Inspections including Monmouthshire County Council Improvement Check visit to Monmouthshire County Council Adult Safeguarding (April 2025) and Estyn Inspection – *A Report of Education Services in Monmouthshire* [November 2025.]
 - (3) Progress against the Action Plan set following Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection of Adult Safeguarding April 25.
 - (4) Service led performance data within Children and Adults Safeguarding Teams
 - (5) Regional safeguarding data via the Gwent Safeguarding Board (which helps to track trends and highlight issues / benchmark against regional data)
 - (6) Quarterly Safeguarding reports produced by Independent Reviewing Officers.
 - (7) Information arising from Internal Audit

3.9 The current self-assessment is set out below:

SELF ASSESSMENT SCORES:

CORNERSTONE	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	April 2024 – March 2025	April 2025 – March 2026
GOOD GOVERNANCE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
SAFE WORKFORCE	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
PREVENTATIVE APPROACH	4	4	4	5	4	4	4/5	5	5
ROBUST PROTECTION	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	5	5
SAFE SERVICES	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4

3.10 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

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

This report provides assurance that children and adults at risk are safeguarded and protected from the harm related to abuse, exploitation and neglect. The approach recognises that some people with protected characteristics such as children with disabilities and those at risk because of their gender are more vulnerable to abuse. Through its emphasis on preventative approaches and partnership working the Council's approach to safeguarding aligns with the ways of working set out in the

Future Generations Act. The approach supports a healthier Wales and the maintenance of cohesive communities.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

Not applicable to this report

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Safeguarding progress is evaluated against the 5 pillars of safeguarding.

7. 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.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no new resource implications to this report.

9. CONSULTEES:

- Members of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG]
- Strategic Director, Social Care, Safeguarding and Health

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- Estyn Inspection – *A Report of Education Services in Monmouthshire [November 2025]*

11. AUTHOR:

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