

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”. There is strong leadership and 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.

PROGRESS AND KEY STRENGTHS

The Strategic Director ensures that ‘live’ safeguarding issues are raised with leaders in the Council via the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet. There are weekly meetings between the Strategic Director and the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services. The Strategic Director and the Head of Children’s Services meet with the Leader of the Council bi-monthly to ensure safeguarding issues, and risks and trends are discussed or escalated as required.

The role of the Scrutiny Committee within Monmouthshire County Council provides an additional layer of governance in relation to safeguarding across the Council. The Performance & Overview Committee scrutinises the Council’s performance in delivering corporate objectives outlined in its corporate plan. The committee scrutinises the annual safeguarding evaluation report prior to its presentation at Full Council.

SAFEGUARDING AUDIT FRAMEWORK EVALUATION [SAFE]:

- The SAFE programme has commenced for the 2025-2027 cycle. This ensures that, within this period, all directorates will conduct a structured assessment of safeguarding practice within individual service areas.
- A new digital platform is in place to support access to and safe storage of the SAFEs to provide wider oversight and ensure compliance by Senior Managers and the Safeguarding Unit. This platform went live on 01 April 2026 and Designated Safeguarding Leads [DSLs] for each area have been ratified. The expectation is that SAFE action plans will be reviewed quarterly.

SAFEGUARDING CORPORATE POLICY:

- The Safeguarding Corporate Policy was updated in November 2025 to reflect the further updated guidance around Safeguarding training and the updated Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Strategy and delivery plan 2025 – 2028. The Safeguarding Corporate Policy will continue to be reviewed on a biennial basis, or as required.

GWENT SAFEGUARDING BOARD [GSB]:

- There remain strong links between the Gwent Safeguarding Board (GSB) and the Safeguarding Unit, with key members representing Monmouthshire on all Subgroups. The Strategic Director, Jane Rodgers, co-chairs the Board and Heads of Service, Diane Corrister and Jenny Jenkins, represent Monmouthshire on the Board and on the Case Review Group.
- The GSB continues to provide oversight and accountability for all partner agencies in ensuring effective safeguarding across the region. The board leads on regional projects such as the Child Sexual Abuse action plan, implementation of the National Training Standards and the development of regional safeguarding procedures.
- Following the publication of the North Wales Extended Child Practice Review (Our Bravery Brought Justice), the GSB is facilitating discussions around the recommendations from the review to ensure Local Authorities, Education and partner agencies are compliant.

WHOLE AUTHORITY SAFEGUARDING GROUP [WASG]:

WASG has continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis to ensure Directorate Leads are appraised of Safeguarding developments and to share information. The Core Data Set for whole authority safeguarding has been reviewed and updated to include Commissioning, Adult Safeguarding, and Harmful Sexual Behaviour [HSB]. This allows WASG members to interrogate safeguarding activity and outcomes through a data lens.

SINGLE UNIFIED SAFEGUARDING REVIEWS [SUSRs]:

The Local Authority continues to participate in the Single Unified Safeguarding Review process through the Gwent Safeguarding Board. This ensures that timely and relevant learning from reviews across the region (and in some instances from across Wales / UK) informs safeguarding practice in Monmouthshire.

ESTYN INSPECTION:

In November 2025 Estyn undertook a Local Government Education Services (LGES) inspection which reported in Jan 2026. The feedback highlights that *“the Local Authority promotes a strong culture of safeguarding. Each directorate has a designated safeguarding person and a deputy, and each central team complete an annual safeguarding audit. These processes ensure that safeguarding is a high priority across all teams. There is a detailed and evaluative annual safeguarding report which is presented to the performance and overview scrutiny committee and full Council. Elected members ask appropriate questions to seek clarification, request further information and to challenge the report presented to them.”*

ANALYSIS:

Monmouthshire County Council continues to have strong safeguarding governance arrangements in place. Safeguarding issues are regularly escalated where required through senior leadership and Council Members for appropriate oversight and accountability.

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy is regularly updated by the Safeguarding Unit and Lead Officers who are Monmouthshire's representatives on the GSB. This allows the Policy to remain dynamic, reflecting ongoing national, regional and local changes in legislation and guidance. The Whole Authority SAFE audits are supported by robust quality assurance mechanisms to ensure they reflect the Safeguarding activity across the Council allowing a measurement against other Gwent Authorities, and compliance statute and guidance.

The Estyn inspection feedback provides strong assurance that safeguarding governance arrangements are embedded across the Council. It demonstrates that safeguarding is visible at both operational and strategic levels, supported by directorate safeguarding leads, annual audit activity, scrutiny through elected Members, and clear reporting to both the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Full Council. This reinforces the self-assessment score of 5 - that safeguarding is well-led, subject to effective oversight, and maintained as a corporate priority.

2. SAFE WORKFORCE

SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 4

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 KEY STRENGTHS

OUR BRAVERY BROUGHT JUSTICE REPORT (Gwynedd Review):

2025/26 saw the publication of a significant Extended Child Practice Review report commissioned by the North Wales Safeguarding Board relating to long term historic abuse of children by a Head Teacher. This has led to significant changes in National Safeguarding processes within Wales, particularly in relation to the management of those in a position of trust. As a result the Safeguarding Unit is reviewing current practice and processes to ensure we are compliant with changes in guidance and the recommendations arising from the review.

Officers from across the Local Authority continue to engage with the GSB networks and sub-groups to review data, trends and themes to support the analysis of practice within Gwent. The data shows that Monmouthshire has a consistent application of threshold in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. Similarly, Monmouthshire is already working in line with recommendations made within the North Wales Extended Review in respect of capturing data-sets that help to identify areas of concern and map out safeguarding actions within the Section 5 process. Data-sets will continue to be reviewed on a regional basis

particularly given that the new social care case management system, Mosaic, is scheduled to go live next year.

SAFE RECRUITMENT:

- Safe recruitment practice remains embedded across Monmouthshire County Council and applies to both established services and areas of new service development. Recruitment activity continues to be underpinned by clear safer recruitment processes, including appropriate checks, training requirements and assurance mechanisms, to ensure that individuals working with children and adults at risk are suitable for their roles and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Following review, in line with the 24/25 Action Plan, it is confirmed that safe recruitment practice is embedded within the Micro Care service, where in order for individuals to register they need to provide DBS checks, undertake training and provide personal liability insurance.
- Monmouthshire Children's Service continues to develop a children's residential workforce, both for residential children's homes and supported accommodation. The ongoing recruitment process and training program that has been developed to support the children's residential workforce is fully compliant with the Safer Recruitment Process.
- The Corporate Disclosure and Barring Policy was reviewed, updated and disseminated in October 2025 to remain compliant with legislation.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING:

The Corporate Training Team, working in partnership with the Safeguarding Unit and the Workforce Development Team for Social Care, have finalised the level of safeguarding training for all roles across the Council and have assigned the roles to the training standards groups A-F. Compliance to mandatory training is monitored by both Corporate Training and Workforce Development team and is part of the Authority's Induction programme.

- Group A – Current compliance for Social Care staff stands at 88% with Corporate Group A training at 87%. The remaining workforce either on long term ill health or maternity leave will be supported to achieve training on their return to work.
- Group B - Social Care, Housing and PPU staff that require the completion of Group B is undertaken by Social Care Workforce Development team and current compliance rate stands at 64%, which is a reduction from last year. This is due to the expansion of the Directorate to incorporate PPU and Housing and is being addressed through additional training.
- WASG has agreed (ratified by the GSB) that non-social care employees can undertake a blended delivery of Group B safeguarding training. The training package has been devised by the Social Care Workforce Development Team and is awaiting approval. Once authorised this will be rolled out to all employees outside of the social care directorate.

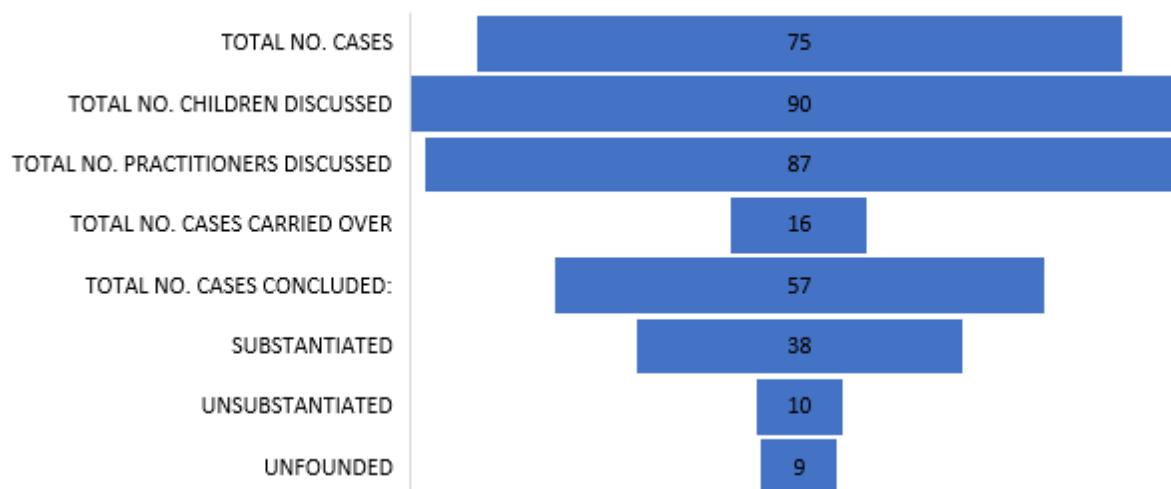
- Group C training is currently being offered via GSB. 88% of Children's workforce and 78.5% of Adults workforce have completed this training. Regular discussions are held with the Safeguarding Service Manager to ensure outstanding staff, some of whom are absent from work, complete the training as soon as possible.
- All Head Teachers have received appropriate level of safeguarding training and all Designated Safeguarding Persons within Education have received Group C training.
- It has been confirmed that Welsh Government will not be providing a standardised training package for Groups D, E and F (senior leaders). There are ongoing discussions with the Gwent Safeguarding Board to identify how this need is going to be met.
- As per the paid workforce, all volunteers are expected to undertake group A training with additional levels of training dependant on role.
- Elected Members are expected to undertake group A training and there is the intention to implement Group F training for elected members over the next year. once the content is agreed.

SECTION 5 WALES SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES: PRACITITONER CONCERNS / ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THOSE IN A POSITION OF TRUST (PCM):

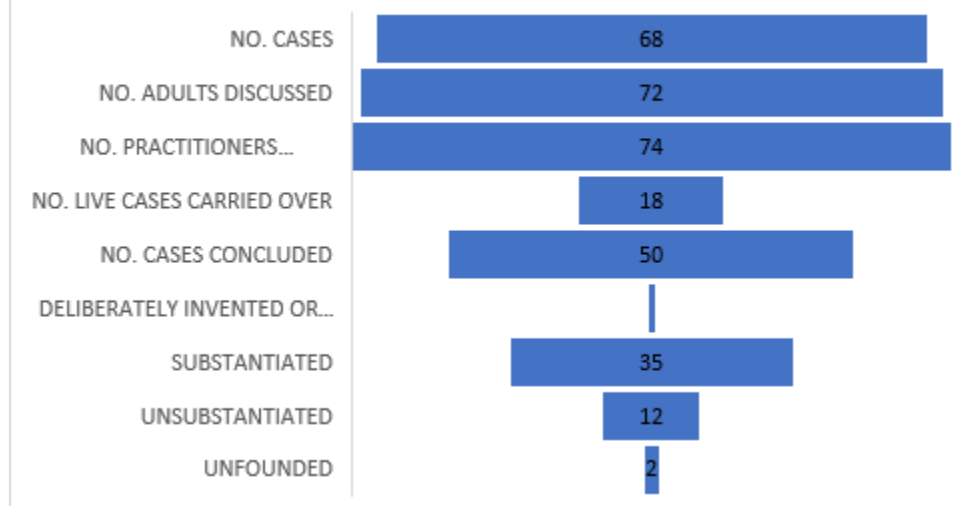
- The Safeguarding Unit retains overall responsibility for the management of the Section 5 process in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- Cases coming into the Section 5 arena continue to increase but referrals with a particular spike observed during December 2025 and January 202 (something that was mirrored across Gwent). Positively, the overall rate of cases being concluded is increasing; this is due to concluding some long running criminal investigations which then enabled the Section 5 process to end.
- Where safeguarding concerns are substantiated the employing organisation is then expected to use internal HR processes to manage / mitigate the transferrable risk, including referral to relevant governing bodies.
- Cases that involve criminal investigations rarely conclude within six months due to delays in Police processes. This has a wider impact on the subject, practitioner, the victim and the employer from an emotional wellbeing, operational and a financial perspective. These are addressed on a case-by-case basis by members of the Safeguarding Unit and Human Resources. Patterns of and reasons for delays are also escalated via the GSB.
- There is no change within the primary professional setting for referrals to Section 5 with the majority of concerns relating to children linked to educational staff and within Adult Safeguarding, health and care staff.
- The Safeguarding Unit works closely with the other Gwent Local Authorities to ensure consistent thresholds and case management. The GSB Quality Assurance sub-group continue to quality assure the Section 5 process across Gwent which also ensures that regional trends are raised earlier and so that inconsistencies can be reduced. In line with the North Wales extended Child Practice Review, a separate task and finish group has been set up with Safeguarding Leads across Gwent to consider thresholds and what information should be recorded, particularly in regard to 'low level concerns'.

- Revised guidance of the Section 5 procedures was launched on 01 July 2026. The changes have included a greater focus on “transferable risk”, which has been a standard approach in Monmouthshire for the last 5 years. Welsh Government will be providing training and resource packages, and implementation will be supported via the GSB.
- Care Inspectorate Wales [CIW] will be undertaking audits with each Local Authority six months after implementation.

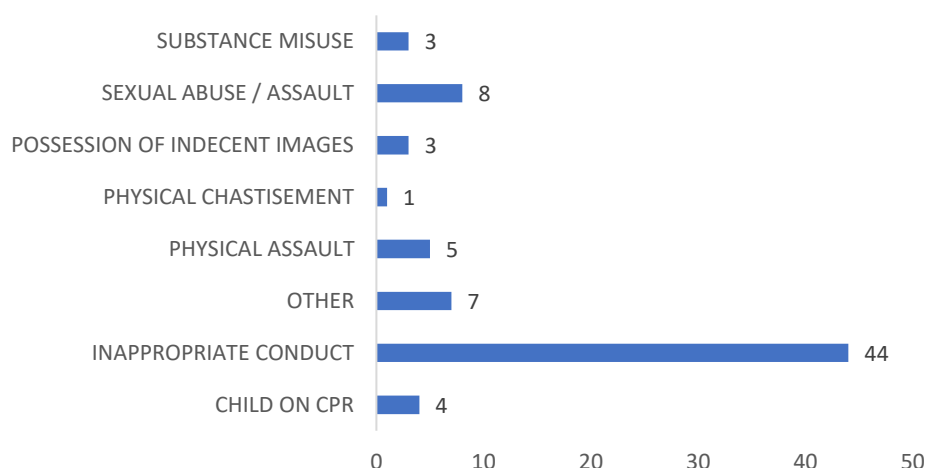
PCM - CHILDREN'S SUMMARY



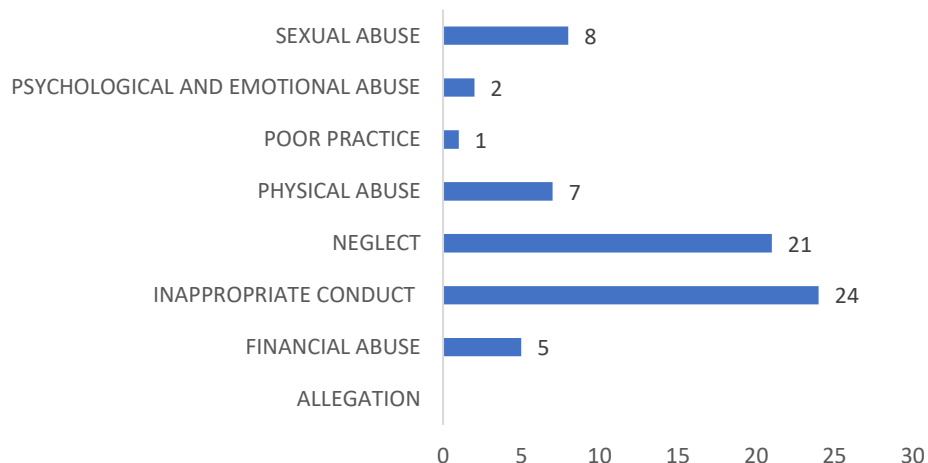
PCM - ADULTS SUMMARY



PCM - CHILDREN'S ALLEGATIONS



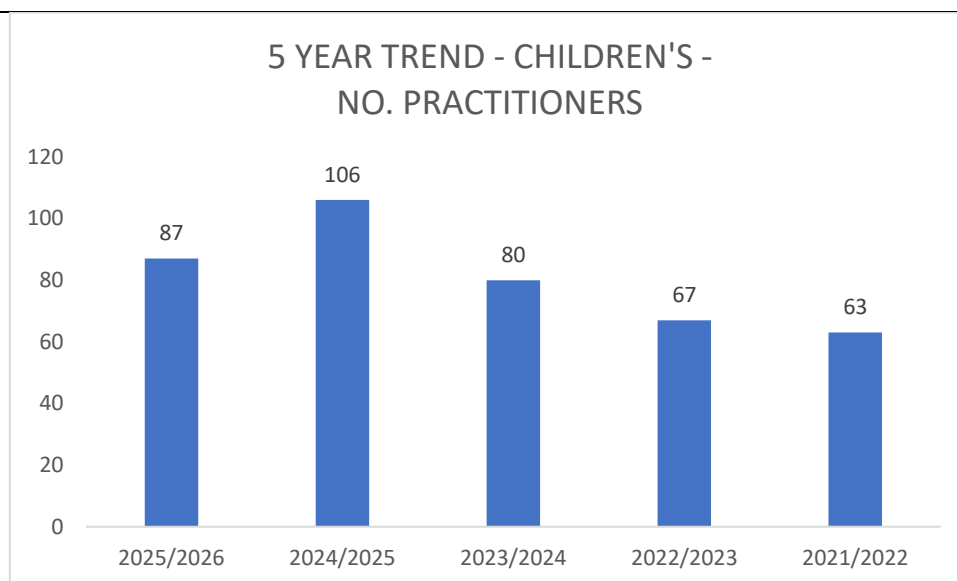
PCM - ADULTS ALLEGATIONS



[Categories of 'Inappropriate Conduct' and 'Other' are where concerns have been raised around the individuals' personal life/circumstances which calls into question their suitability to work with children and/or vulnerable people; these are based on individual circumstances and therefore do not fit into other reporting categories. Examples of such are domestic abuse cases, criminal offences such as theft, being under the influence of substances, and mental health difficulties.]

5 year trend – Children's:

2021/2022 – 57 cases comprising 63 practitioners
 2022/2023 – 61 cases comprising 67 practitioners
 2023/2024 – 70 cases comprising 80 practitioners
 2024/2025 – 91 cases comprising 106 practitioners
 2025/2026 – 68 cases comprising 74 practitioners



5 year trend – Adult's:

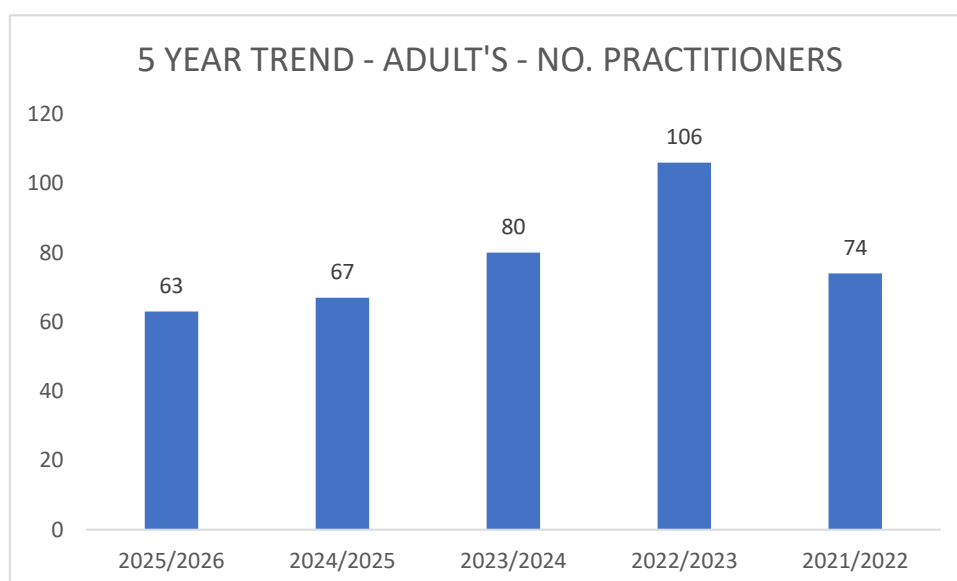
2021/2022 – 67 cases comprising 71 practitioners

2022/2023 – 80 cases comprising 84 practitioners

2023/2024 – 71 cases comprising 76 practitioners

2024/2025 – 85 cases comprising 94 practitioners

2025/2026 – 75 cases comprising 87 practitioners



Inappropriate Conduct has consistently been the main concern throughout the five years.

VOLUNTEERS:

Place and Community Wellbeing ensure that safe recruitment practice underpins the recruitment of volunteers within the council, and there is designated part-time volunteer coordinator in place. As per the paid workforce there is a clear recruitment process, including application form and interview, transparent role descriptions, references and

effective induction, so that volunteers, staff and service users are protected. Kinetic is the management system used to hold information on each volunteer. This is monitored to ensuring that individuals remain in date with safeguarding training. There is on-going development of processes to ensure consistency in the management of volunteers across the council.

ANALYSIS:

Monmouthshire Safe Recruitment processes for both paid and unpaid staff continue to be applied robustly, with new services being compliant with the process. There is significant progress in the embedding of the National Safeguarding Training Standards with a clear progression pathway supported by the Thinqi Platform and the SAFE process.

Monmouthshire is well represented in the Working Groups managing the changes to the Practitioner Concerns process (Section 5 process) and we are well placed to implement changes and recommendations arising from the North Wales Extended Review. The Safeguarding Unit continues to oversee the Section 5 process in Monmouthshire and are actively monitoring issues of welfare and impact involved in the process, escalating concerns and delays appropriately.

The further work being undertaken to develop training material across all groups, and ensuring that developments regarding the section 5 process in line with the Gwynedd review are embedded, have retained our self-assessed score at 4 for this year.

3. PREVENTATIVE APPROACH

SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 5

WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?

We work with partners to identify emerging issues, risks and challenges to our communities. We demonstrate clear multi-agency approaches to developing protocols, processes and practice in how we respond to these issues therefore reducing risks through early intervention and preventative approaches. We develop services at all levels aimed at preventing people from experiencing harm and supporting the development of parental understanding and skills so that people can safely exit statutory systems and access universal services for support.

PROGRESS AND KEY STRENGTHS

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE [VAWDASV]:

The Gwent VAWDASV Partnership Board is a multi-agency collaboration across Gwent to prevent VAWDASV and to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families.

The Partnership is made up of statutory agencies including Police, Health, Probation and the five Gwent Local Authorities. Monmouthshire has strong representation of MCC Officers across a number of Directorates.

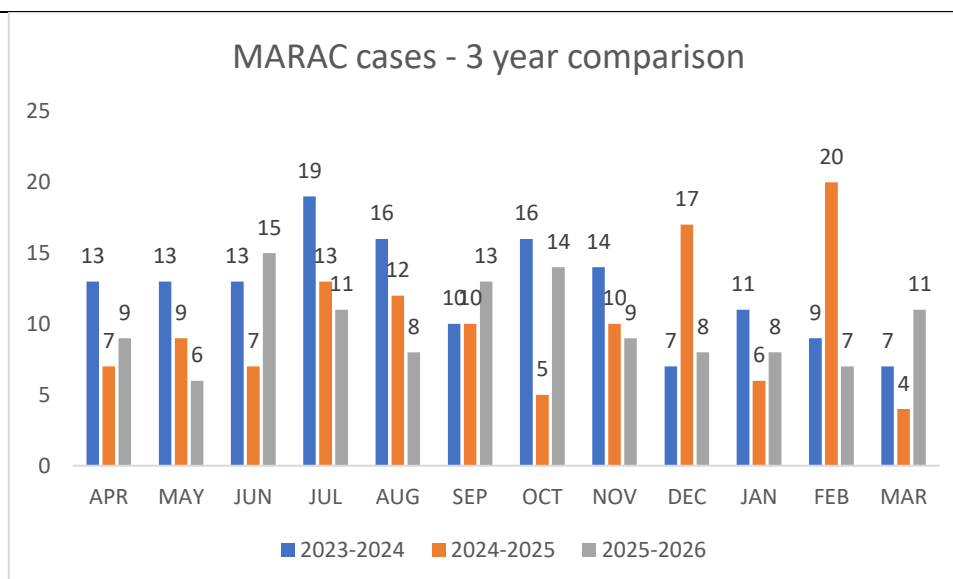
As part of statutory requirements placed on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards under Section 5 of the VAWDASV [Wales] Act 2015, the Gwent Partnership Board has remained committed to the 5 year Strategy.

- This year, there has been positive progress within the VAWDASV board in respect of undertaking a domestic abuse needs assessment, which is currently being finalised and which will support service commissioning and development.
- There has been a further increase in completion of VAWDASV training this year with 76.2% compliance with VAWDASV Group 1 [previously 61%] and there is ongoing work around VAWDASV Group 2 training (Ask and Act) going onto the Thingi platform and training dates to be identified.

DOMESTIC ABUSE & HIGH RISK MANAGEMENT [MARAC - MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE]:

MARAC continues to be chaired by members of the Safeguarding Unit and Heddlu Gwent Police, with increased training to support consistency, application of thresholds and focus on outcomes. There is some national development work taking place in 2026 aiming at increasing consistency of practice within MARAC structures across Wales.

- In 25-26 Monmouthshire's referrals discussed within the MARAC arena have remained at between 8 and 11 cases per fortnight which is consistent with data from previous years. Scrutiny of referrals has continued with the involvement of the Safeguarding Unit despite the Police MARAC Co-ordinator post remaining vacant. [Subsequently recruited in June 2026.]
- For cases which do not meet the high-risk threshold for MARAC, Monmouthshire applies a Section 115 process under the Crime and Disorder Act to support victims of domestic abuse. This is recognised as good practice by the GSB and has been identified as a piece of work for replication across the other Gwent Local Authorities.



MONMOUTHSHIRE EXPLOITATION GROUP [MEG]:

The Monmouthshire Exploitation Group [MEG] is a strategic multi-agency partnership that supports the Council and Public Service Board's responsibilities for safeguarding, modern slavery and exploitation. MEG identifies emerging risks and themes across criminal, sexual, financial, online and other forms of exploitation, including transitional safeguarding to support co-ordinated partnership action with strategic oversight. The group meets quarterly, is chaired by the Safeguarding Service Manager, and reports to the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG]

- Monmouthshire Exploitation Group [MEG] continues to meet quarterly with ongoing positive attendance from operational staff and managers as well as appropriate partner agencies. This supports consistency of thresholds, agency responses and allows for greater capacity to analyse trends, locations and perpetrators
- Over the year, MEG has included case discussions around ensuring the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable young people subject to sexual and criminal exploitation as they transition from childhood to adulthood (transitional safeguarding).
- This year, we want to establish a specific multi-agency 'Transitional Safeguarding Panel'. The purpose of this is to consider the circumstances of those individuals who do not "fit" into standard services threshold for support - to identify their strengths but equally where they require safeguards and which agency is best placed to meet those needs.

SEXUAL & CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN:

- Over the last year, 20 children have been discussed in the Exploitation arena, including 11 new cases, with only three cases remaining open at year end. This represents a significant decrease and reflects a wider trend across the Gwent region of reducing numbers. The majority of children within the cohort were aged

between 14 and 17, were living at home, and were supported under Care and Support Plans.

- During this period, the other 4 Local Authorities have adopted Monmouthshire's approach to managing the Exploitation process, although this has had implications for Police resourcing and decision-making processes, which continue to be regularly challenged and reviewed by the Safeguarding Unit.
- As a result, work is ongoing to review and update the associated Toolkit documents, with this development being led by the Safeguarding Service Manager, reflecting a continued commitment to strengthening practice and guidance.

HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR [HSB]:

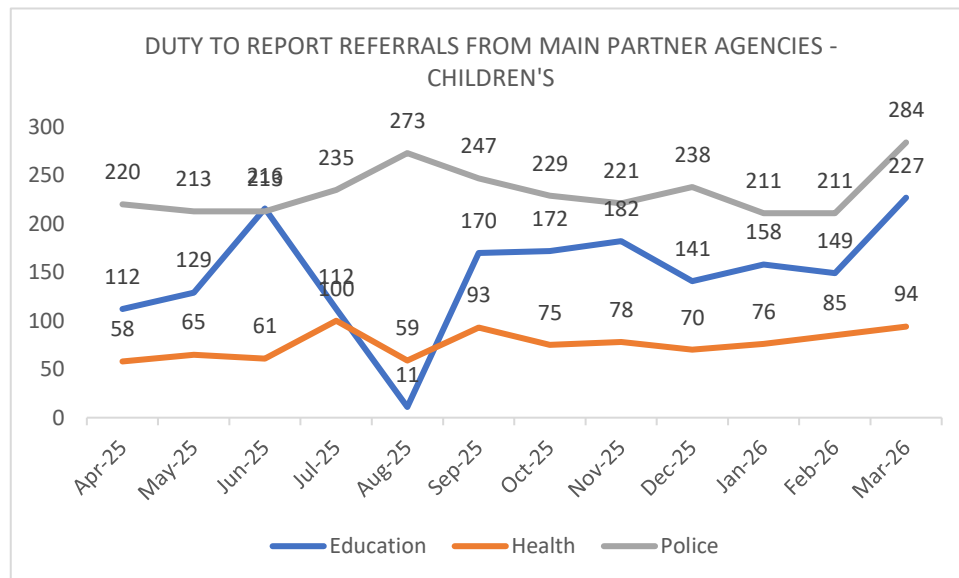
In 25/26 there has been an overall decline, particularly towards the end of the period, in referrals to the HSB process. This aligns with the referral pattern within the other Gwent Authorities. It is, however, notable that many cases involve young males (aged between 13 and 17 years) with increasing levels of severity of assault to victims. In other words whilst there has been a reduced volume of referrals, the cases that are referred have seen an increase in severity and complexity.

This reduction in the number of referrals is being closely monitored by the Safeguarding Unit to understand the ongoing reason. This may relate to early identification within education environment, ongoing training offered by the GSB and the Safeguarding Unit (regarding prevention), and potentially changes within communities.

Within the process there are clear areas of strength, including multi-agency engagement, cases of concern being referred in early, improved rates of case closure due to appropriate interventions and positive outcomes, and continued development of procedures and training.

SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOLS:

- Engagement in Child Protection processes remains strong, with consistent attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences and improved participation at Review Conferences.
- During the reporting period, Education services submitted 22% [1,779] of the total number of DTR's [8,099] received by Children's Services indicating a significant level of involvement in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- This represents a decrease from last year, when Education submitted 27% [517] of referrals, and reflects work undertaken to distinguish inappropriate referrals from cases involving information sharing only.
- Training uptake across Education services is strong, supported by positive feedback and accessible resources, contributing to increased confidence and competence among staff. Key strengths include well-established multi-agency relationships, high levels of engagement, positive inspection outcomes, and effective quality assurance processes.



YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE [YOS]:

Monmouthshire and Torfaen YOS's strategic approach remains firmly focused on prevention, early intervention and diversion, underpinned by Child First and trauma-informed practice and delivered through strong partnership working. During 2025-26, this continued focus contributed to maintaining low "First Time Entrant" levels and strengthening diversionary opportunities across the youth justice system.

The service identified increasing complexity in children's needs, particularly in relation to emotional wellbeing, exploitation, school disengagement and disproportionality. In response the prevention offer was strengthened through improved assessment, screening, quality assurance and data-informed practice, whilst working with partners to enhance access to early intervention and diversionary support. Going forward, to ensure the Service remain responsive to the needs of children, families and the community the service will continue to build on these strengths by developing outcome measurement, disproportionality monitoring and the evaluation of the impact of intervention.

SAFE AND WELL SERVICE [previously OUT of HOURS]:

The Out of Hours (OOH) Supervision and Support Service was introduced in 2023 as an extension of the Family Time Service. Its initial purpose was to provide a flexible and responsive safeguarding function outside of standard working hours, complementing the work of the Gwent Emergency Duty Team and enabling children to remain safely within their family networks while assessments and decision-making processes were undertaken.

Since its introduction, the OOH service has evolved substantially in both scope and importance. What began as a relatively small and reactive provision has developed into a core safeguarding service, supporting a wide range of interventions across Children's Services which work across a number of strategic priorities in Children Services.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION:

Preventing homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity continues to be a key priority, recognising the strong links between housing instability, vulnerability and safeguarding risk. The general situation is an improved homeless position compared to 2024-25. There has been a positive reduction in homeless applications and a duty to accommodate, a fall in temporary accommodation use and a fall in caseloads for Housing Options Team officers facilitating more proactive case work.

Dedicated Homelessness Prevention staff within the Housing Options Team work with households threatened with homelessness, providing practical interventions including affordability assessments, landlord negotiation, family mediation, housing options advice and support to access alternative accommodation. During 2025-26 the service achieved a homelessness prevention success rate of 69%, broadly maintaining performance of 71% from 2024-2025, helping many households avoid the significant risks associated with homelessness and temporary accommodation. Financial assistance through the Discretionary Homelessness Prevention Fund continues to help remove barriers for vulnerable households securing and sustaining accommodation.

Analysis of Housing Support referrals highlights the increasing complexity of need amongst those seeking support. Mental health support needs represented the largest referral category during 2025-2026, accounting for over 40% of referrals, whilst domestic abuse remained a significant area of demand. Frontline services report increasing levels of multiple and overlapping needs, often requiring coordinated responses across housing, health, social care and criminal justice partners. This mirrors the trend of increased complexity seen in Children Services.

A Housing Support Grant priority for 2026-27 is starting to recommission the programme of housing support. This includes Generic Services, Rough Sleeping, Temporary Accommodation and Domestic Abuse. Specifications will be reviewed and strengthened, including safeguarding arrangements.

Since the closure of The George Hotel in July 2025 for B&B use by MCC Housing Options, Severn View has accommodated 17 residents, many of whom present with high and complex needs. Outcomes to date reflect both the significant challenges of supporting this cohort and the positive progress that has been achieved in a short-term setting.

CONTEST: (COUNTER TERRORISM AND RADICALISATION):

- Monmouthshire continues to prioritise safeguarding and counter radicalisation efforts via PREVENT, with schools playing a key role in identifying individuals at potential risk with education and Police being the main referrers to panel.
- Panel continues to diarise a monthly meeting to discuss referrals; this year there were two referrals. One referral related to an adult in a secure hospital setting who had transferred from a London Borough and remained in MCC for a short period of time before returning; the other referral was in relation to a young adult from Monmouthshire. In both situations the risks were safely managed.

- There has been a review of the training for attendees at Channel Panel so that all members have access to it. The training is now available on Thinqi.
- This year the Safeguarding Service Manager has become a standard attendee at Channel Panel along with YOS. Any training that is shared from the Home Office via that forum is now further disseminated across partner agencies.
- There is effective multi-agency work through the various corporate safeguarding groups, sharing of important information and attendance at key meetings. Schools and other education settings can access important information to track actions undertaken by other agencies when they have reported a concern about children and young people. This is a strength of the Local Authority's work.

COMMUNITY SAFETY:

The Anti-Social Behaviour [ASB] Strike process continues to operate effectively when applied to young people. Its success is largely due to lower case volumes and the absence of competing formal intervention frameworks across partner agencies when dealing with children. This allows for a coordinated, structured, and consistent approach. In contrast, the application of a similar Strike process for adult cases presents a number of challenges. Adult antisocial behaviour is managed by a range of partner agencies, each operating within their own established policies, procedures, and legislative frameworks. As a result, cases are often addressed within existing organisational processes rather than through a unified Strike model.

Despite this, there remains strong partnership working in relation to adult ASB. Complex or high-risk cases are regularly discussed at the monthly Crime and ASB Partnership Meeting, where appropriate interventions such as Community Protection Warnings (CPWs), Community Protection Notices (CPNs), and Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) are considered.

- Additionally, adult ASB cases are referred into the Problem-Solving Group under Section 115, which is well established and utilised forum.
- Whilst there is a clear role for a more structured approach to adult ASB, the existing partnership framework is currently providing a proportionate response.

ANALYSIS

Monmouthshire continues to demonstrate a strong preventative safeguarding approach through effective multi-agency working, early intervention and partnership forums. Progress has been made in forums across the Council to ensure that officers are able to identify early trends and areas of rising safeguarding issues, and that the ongoing development of services to meet the need of vulnerable children, adults and families are on target.

There is evidence that the increasing presentation of complexity of needs, noted across services and forums, is being responded to at an early stage with clear engagement of partners to ensure that there is either appropriate escalation to statutory processes, or that strategic and operational approaches meet the Council's preventative agenda.

MEG remains a key forum for managing exploitation and emerging safeguarding concerns. Whilst there are many external drivers for the exploitation and risk-taking behaviours of both adults and children there is evidence that the services and structures are supporting risk reduction in key areas.

Safeguarding in schools remains strong, with high engagement in Child Protection processes, good training uptake and effective multi-agency relationships. It is noted that the retirement of the experienced LOSIE in July 2026 will require careful planning to ensure consistency of support.

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 and within a Statutory framework. Multi-agency plans and interventions reduce risks and needs for children and vulnerable adults including those at risk of significant harm.

PROGRESS AND KEY STRENGTHS:

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK:

- The Safeguarding Hub continues to have a strong multi-agency presence for Child and Adult Safeguarding meetings which is supported by digital platforms. Unfortunately, the absence of Police within the Hub has an impact on time-scales for meetings. Despite regular discussion at strategic forums, and reassurance from the Chief Superintendent of a return to the Hub, this has not yet happened. However, although it is more time consuming, communication and relationships remain positive between Police and the Local Authority ensuring that children and adults are safeguarded.
- The Monmouthshire Children's Risk Assessment Framework 'Keeping Children Safe' continues to be implemented and a mandatory whole service training programme was completed, with a rolling refresher programme for staff and an induction. The work has been supported by continuing workshops led by the Safeguarding Unit for both Children and Adult Services, where attendance is monitored.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES:

- The work undertaken with partner agencies last year to address inappropriate and repeat 'Duty to Reports' [DTRs] submitted to Children's Services has stabilised the numbers received. 100% of DTRs had a management decision made by the end of the next working day which is compliant with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures;

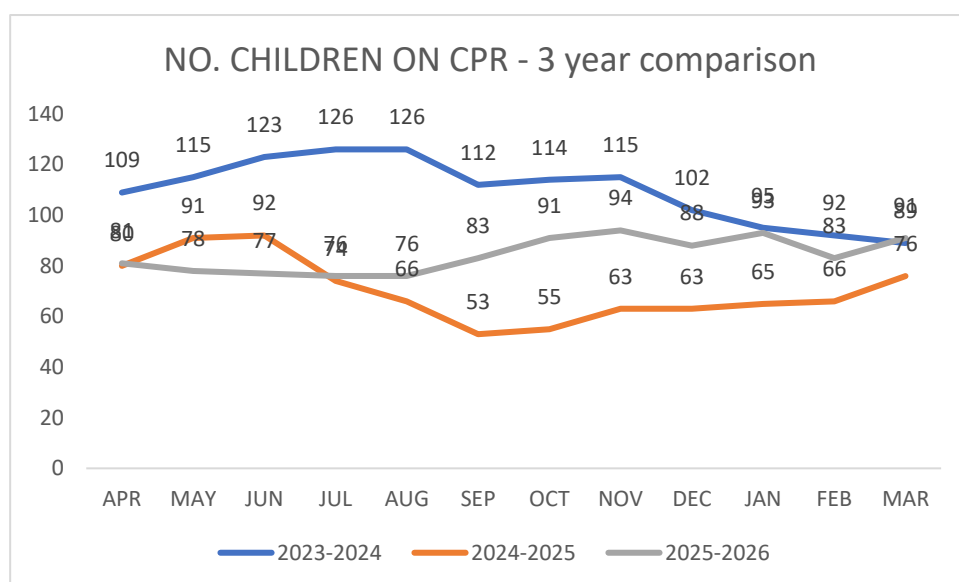
- A review of the threshold and appropriateness of Strategy Meetings and Section 47 enquiries was undertaken due to the post Covid increase in the numbers. These increased numbers now appear to be the new norm and have remained stable in the years following the pandemic. The review highlighted the proportion of cases requiring further Child Protection intervention has remained relatively stable, but that there is increased complexity with the presenting needs.
- Leads across Wales have established a National Working Group to develop an Integrated Referral Programme [AWIR], which is a national digital initiative to establish a single, standardised, multi-agency referral mechanism for safeguarding and wellbeing across Wales. There is a live pilot underway within Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Cardiff and Carmarthenshire who are using the AWIR, with positive feedback being received. Next steps include a wider public roll out, advanced integration to the Mosaic platform and then a national roll out. Monmouthshire is represented on the Working Group by the Safeguarding Service Manager.

CHILD PROTECTION REGISTRATION:

- The number of children whose names were added to the Child Protection Register peaked at 94 during the year. Throughout the year there was limited movement in the number of children on the Child Protection Register. Temporary registrations peaked at 13, while registrations relating to unborn children remained stable, fluctuating between three and six cases throughout the year.
- From 2022 the number of Initial and Review Conferences being held throughout the year has remained consistent [between the 230 – 250 mark], however, there was a reduction in 2024-2025 and this year we have then seen a 20% increase in the number of Conferences being held [193 to 232]. This correlates with the view of the Child Protection Co-ordinator who reports increased early identification of complex risk, increase in single or dual child families, robust assessment of progress against the Child Protection Plan and thoroughness of multiagency intervention prior to de-registration, which is also reflected in the low levels of re-registration of children in a 12-month period.
- In terms of the risk categories, emotional abuse remains the most prevalent category, with neglect also remaining consistently high, often linked to domestic abuse and parental risk factors inclusive of parental mental health and substance misuse. Ongoing discussion within the GSB of the rise in complex factors, and the under reporting of some types of abuse (specifically familial sexual abuse) will result in the use of dual categorisation of abuse being implemented across the region in July 2026. This will be regularly reviewed internally via Data Management Clinic [DMC] and the Quality Improvement Group [QIG] but also on a regional footing via the GSB's Quality Assurance sub-group.
- Initial Child Protection Conference have met full compliance with the National Safeguarding Procedures timescales in most months; however, Review Conference timescales remaining vulnerable to quoracy issues, and workforce capacity due to

Court demands. The increase in complexity and the number of Conference also are impacted by the capacity of the available Chairs.

- NYAS advocacy service remain unable to meet the needs of the number of children requiring advocacy in timescales for Conferences. However, a major strength noted by chairs is the increase in direct face to face work with children.

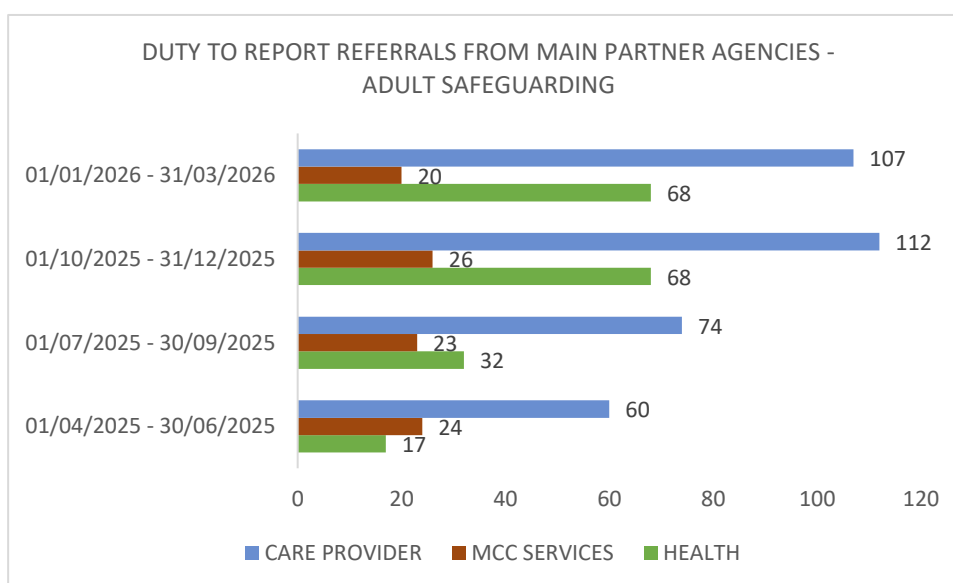
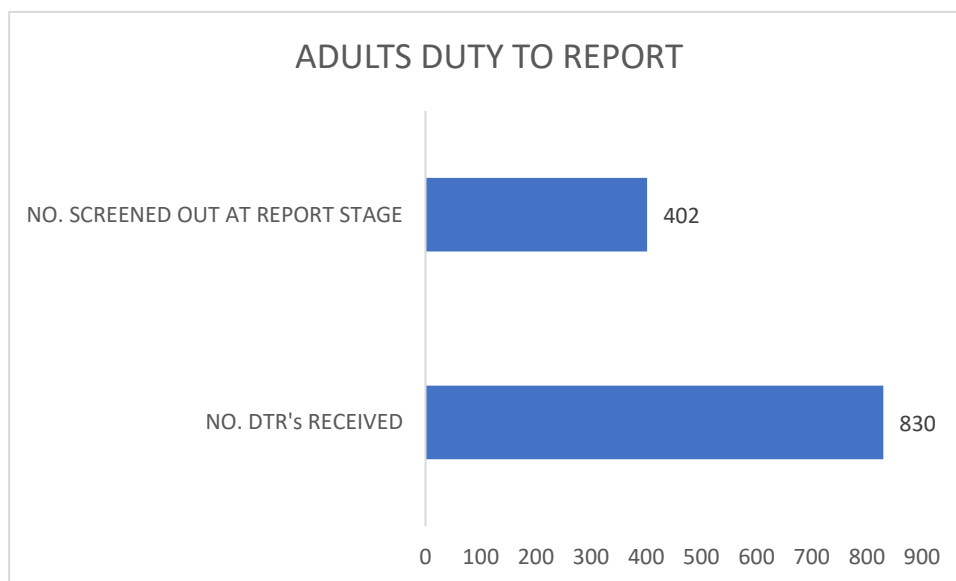


These numbers are end of month figures; there are obviously fluctuations of numbers throughout each month.

ADULT SAFEGUARDING:

- During this year the appointment of a permanent Team Manager has given a stable base on which to develop the Safeguarding service. Changes to how the operational work is recorded and increased digital support has given a greater accuracy in reporting operational activity. This is highlighting the increased demand and complexity of cases and is allowing more effective future planning.
- 52% of referrals have progressed to formal enquiry, with 92% of those cases having been completed within the 7 working day statutory timeframe, demonstrating increased compliance rates [5% increase from last year], which has been consistent throughout the year.
- The nature of safeguarding concerns is led predominantly by neglect, which accounts for 55% of cases, alongside a growing number of self-neglect presentations. The risk profile indicates that the majority of individuals are aged 65 and over, with most incidents of abuse occurring within the individual's own home.
- In terms of outcomes, 39.4% of cases required formal safeguarding intervention, while the majority of individuals required some level of support or intervention.

- Practitioner concerns were also a feature of activity, with 68 cases managed, the majority of which were Substantiated following assessment.



ANALYSIS:

Monmouthshire continues to demonstrate robust safeguarding protection for children and adults, supported by strong multi-agency working, with ongoing discussions around digital arrangements to further support practice and continued implementation of the Keeping Children Safe framework. Although the absence of Police in the Safeguarding Hub continues to affect timescales, positive operational relationships remain in place in order to address this.

Children's Services are experiencing increasing complexity and demand, reflecting wider Gwent trends. Work with partners has improved threshold understanding.

Child Protection activity remains high, with increased registrations and conference demand, but practice quality, compliance, reporting and case progression remain strong. Pressures include chairing capacity, review conference timeliness and low advocacy involvement. From

April 2026, Gwent will introduce dual registration categories where evidenced, to better reflect complex and co-occurring risks.

Adult Safeguarding has strengthened workforce stability and continues to manage increased and more complex referrals. Compliance has improved, with most formal enquiries completed within statutory timescales. Neglect remains the main concern, alongside rising cases of self-neglect.

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

SELF-ASSESSED SCORE = 4

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 KEY STRENGTHS

WHOLE AUTHORITY COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT:

At a whole authority level, there is an expectation that when tender specifications are being developed, consideration is given to safeguarding matters. Commissioned organisations are in general expected to have an awareness of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy including the duty to report any concerns and ensure that staff are suitably trained. Where relevant, safeguarding is included as an essential element of the specification, with tendering organisations being required to set out their safeguarding process and provide evidence of their safeguarding policies and procedures. Guidance for procurement process within the Council are currently being reviewed and strengthened which will allow for a further opportunity to ensure that safeguarding is built into procurement and commissioning processes.

REGISTRARS:

All registration staff undertake the mandatory corporate Safeguarding and VAWDASV training. Registration staff also have a duty to report criminal activity such as benefit fraud or immigration breaches when identified or if concerns are raised. Additionally, staff have received training to help consider and identify risk factors when considering marriage and civil partnership registration to include concerns such as Forced Marriage.

Public awareness raising posters relating to the signs of forced marriage are also displayed in the Register Office and the other offices that we use to register.

LICENSING:

Taxi Licensing follows a stringent process that includes multiple safeguarding related checks before a licence is granted; Conditions of an operator's licence also requires DBS checks on all staff employed as call handlers. Licensing also works closely with Passenger Transport Unit and takes part in school transport checks; this can include participating in multi-agency strategy meetings as and when required.

During 2025/26 1 Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver licence was revoked following a safeguarding concern raised in a Police disclosure.

Licensing work in partnership with Immigration Services and the Police anti-slavery teams conducting multi-agency operations within the hospitality sector. In 2025/6, four licensed premises received a face-to-face intervention by Licensing as part of a multiagency visit. This operation resulted in three arrests, and the issue by partner services of one civil penalty notice for relevant immigration offences. There continues to be premises licence reviews, however, none have required a revocation of their licence.

PASSENGER TRANSPORT [PTU]:

- An external provider regularly provides safeguarding training for the PTU to ensure 100% compliance for drivers receiving safeguarding training.
- Following discussions between the Safeguarding Unit, PTU and Education, it was identified that not all the one-page profiles completed for children accessing transport were shared with PTU following them being updated and/or reviewed. This was highlighted due to an increase in the number of drivers or passenger assistants being discussed within the PCM arena, as they were not responding to the child as agreed. A piece of work has been undertaken by PTU, Safeguarding Unit and Education to rectify this and ensure all one-page profiles are up to date and shared appropriately. This has resulted in the reduction of concerns being identified.

SOCIAL CARE COMMISSIONING:

During the period 01.04.2025 and 31.03.2026 quality assurance processes continued as normal; with in-county providers receiving an annual monitoring visit, and in the case of larger providers, 1-2 monitoring visits a year. For Children's Services much of the monitoring is done at desktop level due to services being commissioned on an individual basis or are out of county, however, in-person visits are made as necessary and where placements are in county. During this period Children's Services had one provider service under an improvement plan due to the lack of management oversight, team culture, staffing, communication, and relationships. These were successfully addressed.

Commissioned care and support services for our North Children's home and our South 16+ supported accommodation continue to be monitored quarterly by Children Services Commissioning Officer and the Residential Service Manager with input from the Team Managers who are responsible for the care of the children and young people residing in the home.

MONMOUTHSHIRE RESIDENTIAL SERVICE:

Progress across residential developments for 2025/26 has been strong and our Children's homes in the South and Central successfully achieved CIW registration and are now operating at full capacity, providing residential placements with all young people settled and actively engaging in education, community activities, and extra-curricular opportunities.

Further developments are also progressing positively, with an additional residential home and supported living accommodation scheduled to become operational in October 2026. Exploratory work is ongoing to assess future sufficiency needs, including the development of a further three-bed supported accommodation service.

ANALYSIS:

There continues to be clear processes in place to ensure a robust monitoring for all social care commissioned services for children and adults. These have expanded with the development of the Children Services Residential and Supported Living accommodation which has a mix of inhouse staff and commissioned providers.

There is evidence that safeguarding is embedded within all areas of the Council working directly with children and adults at risk, with evidence that that safe commissioning and good safeguarding practice with contractors is in place within schools and other services within the Council.

The current review of the guidance for the procurement and commissioning processes will further strengthen these safeguards and demonstrates the commitment of the Council to ensure that services and staff are appropriately supported in their safeguarding knowledge and practice.

SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY PLAN [2025 – 2026]:

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME	RAG RATING
GOOD GOVERNANCE			
Regional SAFE digital roll out to commence, with all Directorates to complete/update their respective SAFEs on a quarterly basis. Safeguarding to review / audit SAFEs during this two-year period.	Directorate Leads Safeguarding Unit	March 2027	
Core Data set to continually be reviewed and include Harmful Sexual Behaviour [HSB].	Safeguarding Unit WASG	Ongoing	
SAFE WORKFORCE			
National Safeguarding Training Standards [role specific training] to be implemented to ensure full compliance across the Council.	Gwent Safeguarding Board Corporate Training Team Workforce Development Team	Ongoing	
Continue to implement the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Learning and Development Framework, to increase the accessibility across the Council.	Workforce Development Team	March 2026	
Review and exploration of PCM data to explore themes and trends and form part of quality assuring the PCM process within Gwent. This	Quality Assurance sub-group GSB	March 2026	

will incorporate any amendments to the Section 5 PCM process identified as part of the Welsh Government Consultation period; and will consider a complaints process and future training programmes.	Safeguarding Unit		
Micro Care Team to review the effectiveness of the recruitment process of Micro Carers and the review of those individuals once employed.	Micro Care Team All Age Disability and Mental Health Service Manager	March 2026	
Safe recruitment of volunteers' process to be strengthened corporately to ensure consistency and good practice.	Safeguarding Unit WASG	March 2027	
PREVENTATIVE APPROACH			
Expand the knowledge and understanding of the PREVENT and CHANEL Panel across the Council; and the Safeguarding Unit to be a standing Panel member	Safeguarding Unit PREVENT and CHANEL Panel members	March 2026	
Continue to support the VAWDASV regional strategic plan	GSB Community Safety Leads Safeguarding Unit	March 2026	
Continue to record and produce HSB data to review thresholds, safeguards and any	Safeguarding Unit YOS	March 2026	

themes. This to include data from partner agencies including YOS			
Full review of the Out of Hours Service	Residential Service Manager	March 2026	
ROBUST PROTECTION			
Ongoing review of the Safeguarding Hub and attendees present; to include the implementation of the All-Wales Referral Form.	Safeguarding Unit EHAT Partner Agencies	Ongoing	
Continuation of implementation of 'Keeping Children Safe' and plans for review and refresher courses.	Safeguarding Unit Workforce Development Team	Ongoing	
Children Services Workshops to continue to be delivered with replicated workshops to be established within Adult Services.	Safeguarding Unit Workforce Development Team	Ongoing	
SAFE SERVICES			
Review of effectiveness of Strike process especially with adult cases.	Community Safety Team	March 2026	
PTU to commission a trainer to deliver Safeguarding Training to ensure ongoing compliance	Passenger Transport Unit	March 2026	