

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 29th September 2026

Report Item: Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report

Key Issues raised by the Committee:

- The report suggests the Adult Strike Process for anti-social behaviour is being hindered by limited police resources. Is a lack of police resource affecting safeguarding work more generally?

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

The Adult Strike Process has been more difficult to implement because of the complexity of adult cases and resource constraints. The Children's Strike Process is already established. Monmouthshire has strong working relationships with the police, which support safeguarding activity. Officers are aware of police resource pressures and these can create challenges. Safeguarding work continues effectively through good partnership working and issues are escalated through the Gwent Safeguarding Board where necessary.

- Is it fair to conclude that more police resources would improve safeguarding responses.

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Additional police resources would benefit all agencies. Despite pressures, strong relationships with the police enable safeguarding responsibilities to be carried out effectively. Resource pressures have been particularly evident in progressing the Adult Strike Process.

- The Chair noted that police are often the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns and reminded members that the Chief Constable had been invited to Public Services Scrutiny Committee on 12 October to discuss policing resources and related matters.
- Group B safeguarding training compliance is only 64%. Child protection conferences have increased by 20%. Harmful sexual behaviour cases are becoming more severe and complex. At what point would these issues trigger escalation and what additional actions are being taken?
- **Response – Jane Rodgers**

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The lower Group B training figure reflects the transfer of Housing colleagues into the directorate. Additional training is being delivered and compliance is expected to improve significantly during the year.

- Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Harmful sexual behaviour increased significantly in the previous year but has reduced following closer joint working between Education, Social Care and Youth Services. Early intervention appears to be having a positive impact. However, there has been an increase in more serious harmful behaviours that meet a criminal threshold, which are managed through child protection and court processes where required.

- Harmful sexual behaviour is clearly an area of growing concern. How confident are officers that current interventions are addressing the issue effectively?

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Earlier intervention and stronger joint working between Education, Social Care and Youth Services are having a positive impact on reducing lower-level harmful sexual behaviour. However, the cases now being seen are often fewer in number but more serious and complex. The most serious cases are managed through established child protection processes and, where necessary, court proceedings. The increase in child protection conferences is being monitored. The service builds flexibility into staffing and capacity planning to respond to fluctuations in demand. Current levels remain manageable and officers are confident that statutory responsibilities can continue to be met.

- How do Monmouthshire's Position of Trust referral figures compare with Wales and the UK? Is there learning from elsewhere that could help improve safeguarding arrangements? At what point do issues such as misogynistic behaviour, hate-related incidents and the misuse of AI-generated imagery involving young people become safeguarding matters?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

Wales is moving towards more consistent reporting of Position of Trust referrals following national review work. Monmouthshire already has established reporting arrangements and reviews data through the regional safeguarding board. Monitoring referral trends helps identify emerging themes, risks and areas for learning.

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Incidents involving misogyny, harmful behaviour or AI-generated imagery would be assessed through safeguarding processes and multi-agency discussions where

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appropriate. The focus is on assessing risk, supporting those affected and determining which agency is best placed to provide ongoing support.

Additional Response by Head of Children's Services

Emerging issues around misogyny, online harms and AI-generated imagery are being identified through the Monmouthshire Exploitation Group. These themes have been escalated to the Gwent Safeguarding Board for wider consideration and potential multi-agency work across the region.

- The self-assessment rates the safeguarding workforce positively, yet four of the five priority actions remain amber. Why do actions with target dates of March 2026 remain amber rather than green? Does amber indicate incomplete work or ongoing development?

Additional Response by Head of Children's Services

Amber reflects work that is ongoing rather than work that has failed. Safeguarding is continually evolving, with new risks and complexities emerging as work progresses. Some actions involve regional or national dependencies, such as training standards, which are outside the council's direct control. The RAG status is therefore intended to show that work is progressing but not yet fully complete.

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

The workforce self-assessment score has remained at 4. Some actions have longer implementation periods than originally anticipated. Future action plans may need more realistic timescales or interim milestones to better reflect progress.

Chair's Conclusion:

The Chair suggested a short explanatory note in future reports to clarify why actions remain amber past their deadline and what progress has been made, and referred to the recent Estyn report, which recognised a strong safeguarding culture within Monmouthshire and acknowledged the committee's role in supporting and scrutinising safeguarding arrangements throughout the year. He thanked safeguarding officers and staff for their work and commitment and asked that the committee's appreciation be passed on to staff across the service.

Points requiring a further response by the Cabinet Member:

None.