

Monmouthshire County Council Safeguarding Strategy April 2016

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The Strategy

1. What the Safeguarding Strategy sets out to achieve

The Safeguarding strategy has been put in place to ensure that responsibility for safeguarding is adopted by everyone both within the authority and where we deliver services with others. In this sense the strategy aims to clarify the levels of accountability that everyone must take to assure how we safeguard others.

The second purpose of the strategy is to inform what we must do if we have a safeguarding concern.

2. The values and principles:

In a policy context, this strategy gives foundation to Monmouthshire's overarching strategy; the Single Integrated Plan 2013 – 17 (which will be replaced from 2018 by Monmouthshire's Wellbeing Plan). It also underpins two of the Council's four priorities of *Supporting Vulnerable People* and *Supporting Education and Schools*. These are a continuous focus in the Improvement Objectives set out in the Council's Improvement Plan. The current plan is for 2016-17. In continuing this alignment, safeguarding is a foremost priority of all chief officer plans and mainstreams through each team service plan.

In terms of legislative compliance, local authorities have a statutory duty to put safeguarding arrangements in place including for strategic planning, in giving support and guidance for all providers of relevant services in its area and in a direct provision of some services. In this sense local authorities have a duty to work in partnership with others to secure the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and adults in their area, including working with the Local Safeguarding Boards. For Monmouthshire, this means the separate regional boards in place for children and young people and for adults.

In line with this, employees and volunteers who work with children and with adults have specific safeguarding duties and responsibilities and authorities must ensure that adequate checks are in place to know that employees and volunteers are of good character. In this same context, authorities must also ensure there are processes in place to monitor and manage working practices and to investigate and record safeguarding allegations made against staff, teachers, support staff and volunteers.

Additionally, members, Chief Executives and senior managers need to ensure that they have proper oversight of the safeguarding arrangements in place across the authority. They should actively seek and gain assurance that arrangements are operating effectively, as without this they are unable to demonstrate that they have discharged their statutory obligation on safeguarding.

This strategy and the programme of activities that supports it sets out how these requirements will be achieved.

3. The authority's current performance on safeguarding

In addition to the work done to align safeguarding to the Council's policies and the Improvement framework, work done over the past three years has given the authority and therefore Monmouthshire as a county, a strong foundation for safeguarding that we can build on. To date, additional work undertaken has been on developing a safeguarding policy, firming up practices of key concern and trying to embed a culture of safeguarding so it is everyone's responsibility. This means in our work with partners and through other agencies too. This has directed activities such as safer recruitment, safeguarding training, auditing safety in the settings used for children and young people and ensuring robust safeguarding processes and practices across a range of council and agency run support. A further focus has been on working with volunteers to embed safeguarding behaviour and practice.

Impact from this work is clearly seen and in the children and young people context particularly has contributed demonstrably to removing the authority from Estyn Special Measures early in 2016.

4. The intention: where we want to be on safeguarding and the current gaps in performance

The Council wants to ensure safeguarding captures the needs of children, young people and adults and wants to embed safeguarding as everyone's responsibility; officers, agency workers, volunteers, elected members and partners. Also, the council wants to more closely make a tie between safeguarding and the issues of domestic abuse and of people radicalisation.

The authority recognises there are gaps between this vision and the situation that exists at this time, for instance, the need to bring adults more cohesively into the whole authority safeguarding agenda and within that, tie a safeguarding culture around adults and children more closely together. Also, the need to respond to the direction outlined in the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 which means in many ways supporting safeguarding in a much broader context than previously and safeguarding becoming more integrated for children, young people and adults.

However, gaps have been highlighted through other references; work such as a Monmouthshire Internal Audit Service review of safeguarding and a commissioned study of Monmouthshire's safeguarding carried out by Ellis Williams, a former chief officer for Social Services in a neighbouring authority. In broad brush these uncovered the need to improve leadership and accountability at all levels of the authority, the need to mainstream safeguarding through council policies, decision making, service planning and operational delivery, the need to assure a safe workforce, better manage professional concerns and improve how we assure safeguarding through procured and commissioned services.

5. Working towards the intent and filling the gaps

A number of key work streams are underway to take the authority from the current position to where we want to be and are being managed by the Whole Authority Safeguarding Coordinating Group (WASCG). These include:

- A safeguarding strategy to set out the authority's intent
- A programme of key milestones and actions across three strands; corporate, children and young people and adults. This will instigate responsibility taken by schools, other partners and volunteers. The programme will be reviewed annually
- A scorecard of measures to monitor and evaluate performance against the programme
- A revised constitution and terms of reference of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Coordinating Group to better steer, manage and monitor the strategy and programme

6. Governance and accountability for safeguarding within the authority

A number of clear accountabilities are designated to specific Monmouthshire officers and elected members and also, to a number of other agencies that we work with. These are outlined in the appendices to the strategy.

In line with this, the terms of reference of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Coordinating Group sets out chief officers and other practitioners' accountabilities for ensuring and assuring safeguarding. This group particularly acts as the safeguarding champions and have responsibility for driving the strategy through operational service delivery, for assuring performance and for ensuring information, advice and guidance on safeguarding to all service areas.

They also have responsibility for ensuring the systematic collation and reporting of key performance information using the activity programme and the measures scorecard. This coordinated performance information will be systematically reported to Department Management Teams, the Senior Leadership Team, the relevant select committees, the Cabinet and the Council.

In addition, safeguarding performance measures extrapolated from the strategy scorecard must be cascaded into all teams' service plans to assist safeguarding performance being regularly monitored at an operational level.

7. Governance and accountability for safeguarding by others outside the authority

Others that work with us also have responsibility for assuring safeguarding. This involves other public sector and voluntary sector organisations that we work with and also, commissioned services that we contract including in the private sector.

This will in context reflect different responsibilities and accountabilities from those that need to be taken by the authority. For instance at a regional level, the regional safeguarding boards for children and for adults keep their own programmes under review. These account for contributions from Monmouthshire County Council too.

The regional boards are represented by the neighbouring authorities and key agencies acting within the region; for instance for children this includes the Joint Fostering Service, the Joint Adoption Service, the Youth Offending Service, Health and for adults includes the Police and Probation Service.

The key accountabilities that fall under this umbrella are shown in Table 2 of the appendices, however, it above does not cover all regional and joint services that the authority works. Monmouthshire's services that liaise with regional and other joint services are responsible for defining the safeguarding accountabilities of these bodies through the governance arrangements and for holding them to account.

8. The key safeguarding designations in the council

As referenced in paragraph 6 the strategic safeguarding accountabilities are highlighted in the diagram and Table 1 in the appendices.

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Officer, Enterprise & Deputy CEO

Chief Officer Children & Young People

Chief Officer, Social Care & Health

Chief Officer, Resources

Head of Governance, Engagement & Improvement

The designated members of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Coordinating Group (WASCG) are listed below. Some designations will duplicate those given above:

Officers designated to form the WASCG:

Chief Officer for Social Care and Health

Chief Officer for Children and Young Peoples directorate

Head of Operations

Head of Adults Services

Head of Children's Services

Head of Governance, Engagement & Improvement

Head of Community Led Delivery

Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture

Safeguarding Unit Manager

Monmouthshire Housing manager
Monmouthshire Youth Service manager
Interim HR Manager
Programme lead on Volunteering

9. What to do if you have a concern around safeguarding:

Any member of staff with concerns for the safety of individuals, or the behaviour of colleagues or members towards children or adults should immediately contact the Designated Officer for Safeguarding in the Social Care, Safeguarding & Health directorate or the designated officer (the Champion) within their service area; see paragraph 8 and Appendix 1 Table 1 and diagram for details.

Staff must also follow any other relevant policies and procedures laid down for their service.

Further advice and guidance can be given by the Safeguarding Unit on 01633 644392.

10. Other legislation, policies and guidance associated with the Safeguarding Strategy:

The authority's accountability for safeguarding must be undertaken in tandem with other direct legislation, policies and guidance both at a national and local level. For instance the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, the Children Acts and the Wales Interim Policy & Procedure for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse Nov 2010.

Even wider legislation includes the Human Rights Act 1998 and wider policies include safeguarding through the Domestic Abuse policy and the policy against radicalisation through PREVENT.

Appendix 1: Governance Arrangements:

Table 1: Governance Arrangements within the Authority

Function	Who does this	The key safeguarding accountabilities
Designated Officer for Safeguarding	Chief officer for Social Care and Health services	Act as the lead on safeguarding for the authority and as the authority's guarantor for safeguarding Perform the role of the <i>Designated</i> senior leadership team safeguarding champion
Lead officer for safeguarding in education	Chief officer for Children and Young People Services	Perform the role of the <i>Designated</i> safeguarding champion in relation to schools and other education settings and for early years education child care settings for
Cabinet member portfolio for safeguarding	Cabinet member with portfolio for safeguarding	Act as the elected member lead on safeguarding for the authority and as the designated elected member guarantor and champion for safeguarding
Cabinet member portfolio for education	Cabinet member with portfolio for education	Act as the elected member lead on safeguarding in education
The Corporate Parenting Panel	Cabinet member with portfolio for safeguarding acts as Chair of the panel Additional representative elected members and officers Designated young people, the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and foster care representatives	Carry out the legislative Corporate Parenting Responsibilities Provide annual reports to the Council
The Whole Authority Safeguarding Co-ordinating Group (WASG)	Lead Officer and Chair – Chief Officer for Social Care and Health Also, representative officers in the group	Set the safeguarding framework for Monmouthshire Steer the safeguarding strategy, policy and associated programmes of activity for children and young people and for adults. Assess the need for support across authority services, schools, partners and commissioned providers, including the voluntary sector, to ensure a safeguarding culture and environment

Function	Who does this	The key safeguarding accountabilities
		<p>Monitor and reviews performance against the safeguarding strategy and policy and on safeguarding practices across the authority and by relevant external providers</p> <p>Receive reports from the Regional Boards, Estyn and the Children’s Social Services Inspectorate for Wales, assesses appropriate action in response to findings and reports / liaises with senior managers and elected members</p> <p>Liaise with senior leadership team and elected members on implementation of the Safeguarding strategy, policy and programmes</p>
The Senior Leadership Team	Chief officers and heads of service	<p>Strategically monitor and evaluate the authority’s application and performance on safeguarding through regular reports and also through external inspection and regulation and intervenes as necessary.</p> <p>Perform the role of directorate champions to ensure and assure a safeguarding culture and safeguarding practices across directorates</p>
Department Management Teams	Chief officers and directorate managers	<p>Ensure a standard agenda item for safeguarding at DMT meetings to test out application of the strategy.</p> <p>Ensure officers’ compliance with the expectation that any unsafe practices and concerns are reported to the <i>Designated Officer for Safeguarding</i> and / or the directorate champion.</p> <p>DMT representatives on the WASG act as the conduit between this group and their DMTs</p>
The Safeguarding Team	Safeguarding Unit manager	<p>Provide advice and facilitation to services and schools on safeguarding</p> <p>Act as the key support to the Corporate Safeguarding Co-ordinating Group in driving the whole authority safeguarding strategy, policy and associated programmes of activity</p>

Function	Who does this	The key safeguarding accountabilities
		Report on the progress and impact of the safeguarding programmes to SLT, select committees, Cabinet and Council
Select Committees	Elected members of the Children and Young People's and the Adults Select Committees	Scrutinise and challenge performance achieved and application to safeguarding practices both in relation to the authority and that of authority partners as relevant Scrutinise safeguarding implications in relation to new and revised policies Scrutinise any strategic risks on safeguarding as part of the whole authority strategic risk assessment arrangements
Cabinet	Elected members of the Cabinet	Approve the safeguarding strategy and policy and any subsequent revisions Consider safeguarding matters in all decisions taken as the Executive for the authority Direct the authority to act on safeguarding in relation to policies and decisions adopted
Council	All elected members	Collectively consider and sign off the safeguarding strategy and policy and any subsequent revisions Collectively direct the authority to act on safeguarding in relation to policies and decisions adopted
Service leads	All service managers across the authority	Ensure application to safeguarding is considered in planning and delivering services, including services commissioned through partners Ensure all staff are checked through the Disclosure Disbarring Service (DBS) and that safe recruitment and safeguarding training is carried out as appropriate to posts Ensure a safeguarding culture is adopted by the teams and safeguarding practices and procedures are followed in delivering services, including through any commissioned and procured contracts

Function	Who does this	The key safeguarding accountabilities
Operational staff and ward councillors	All officers and members across the authority	Ensure safe practices in contacting vulnerable children and vulnerable adults within the course of their roles and functions Comply with the expectation that any unsafe practices and concerns are reported to the <i>Designated Officer for Safeguarding</i> and / or the directorate champion

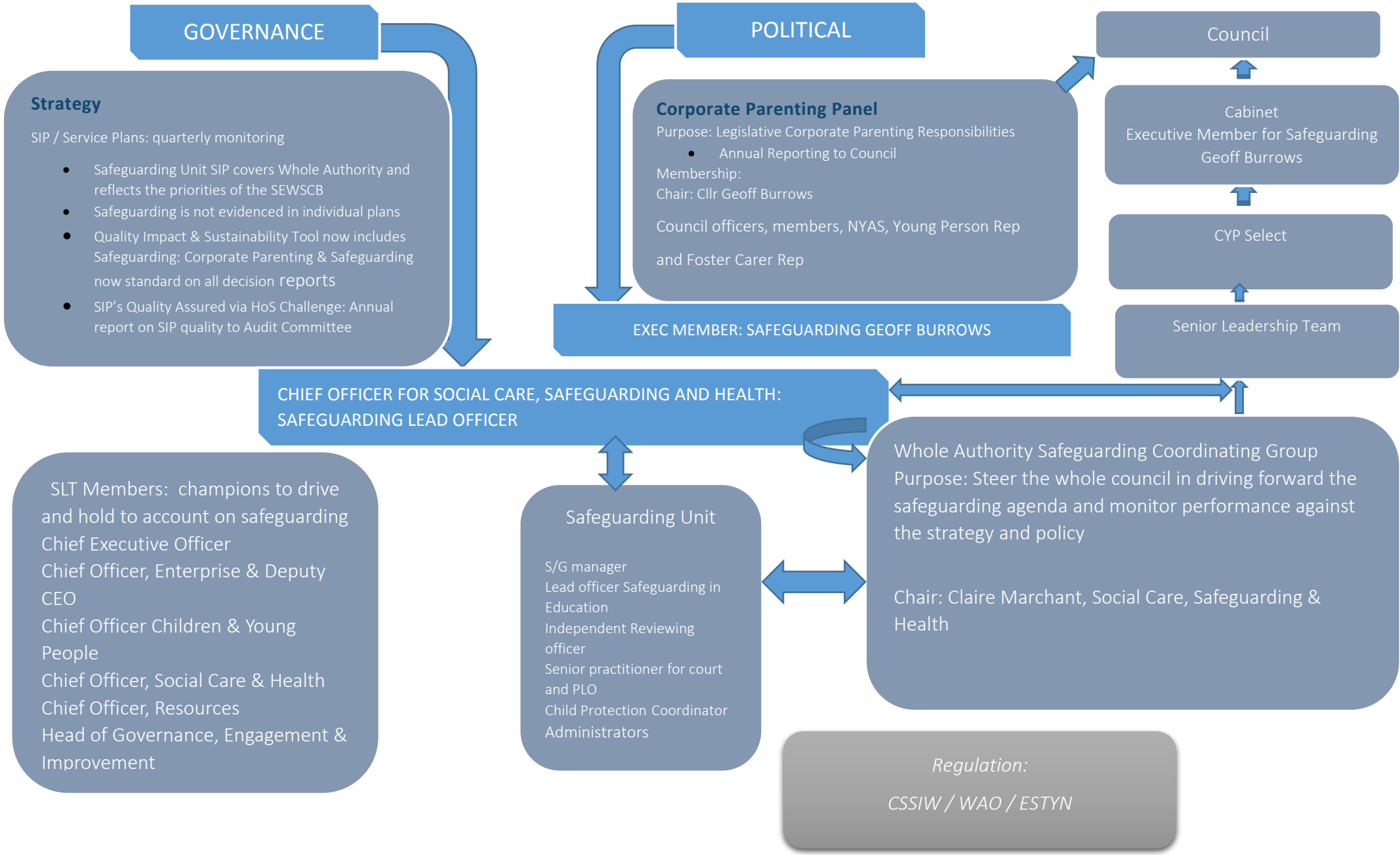
Table 2: Governance Arrangements outside the Authority

The organisation or body	The key safeguarding accountabilities	Monmouthshire service area that liaises with the organisation
The South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (the regional board)	<p>Act as a joint board to provide strategic leadership and steer a three year action plan</p> <p>Hold agencies to account for discharging their safeguarding responsibilities</p> <p>Share best practice and seek ways to improve practice Undertaking Child Practice Reviews and sharing learning</p> <p>Developing practice guidance, procedures and protocols for multi-agency safeguarding children practice</p> <p>Engage with and consult children and young people, parents and carers, the public and professionals to identify ways in which services can be shaped and improved</p> <p>Develop and deliver safeguarding children training for volunteers and professionals</p> <p>Provide an annual performance report to the WASCG and to the Council</p>	Children's Services in the Social Care, Safeguarding & Health directorate

The organisation or body	The key safeguarding accountabilities	Monmouthshire service area that liaises with the organisation
The Gwent Wide Adults Safeguarding Board (the regional board)	<p>Act as a multi-agency board to give a regional strategic steer on safeguarding adults</p> <p>Act as a conduit for senior leaders across local authorities and other key agencies to share and promote good practice</p> <p>Act in a monitoring role to assure safeguarding of adults</p> <p>Provide an annual performance report to the WASCG and to the Council</p>	Adult Services in the Social Care, Safeguarding & Health directorate
<p>The Local Service Board incorporating the Joint Assessment Framework around the Family (JAFF) and the Team Around the Family (TAFF)</p> <p>(the Local Service Board will become the Public Service Board in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act coming into force 2016)</p>	<p>Act as a multi-agency board to support effective partnership working including matters on safeguarding</p> <p>Support the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board in ensuring that robust multi agency governance arrangements are in place</p> <p>Steer, monitor and review the over-arching Single Integrated Plan for Monmouthshire and the programmes of activity that underpin it, including matters on safeguarding (This plan will become the Wellbeing Plan in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act coming into force 2016)</p>	Partnership Team and the Policy & Performance Team (for the Wellbeing Plan) in the Chief Executives Department
Monmouthshire schools and governing bodies	<p>Ensure safe recruitment of school staff and safe election of governors</p> <p>Ensure staff and governors are trained in safeguarding practices</p> <p>Assure that staff, governors and any volunteers are cleared</p>	The Children and Young People's directorate and the Safeguarding Unit

The organisation or body	The key safeguarding accountabilities	Monmouthshire service area that liaises with the organisation
	<p>through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS checks)</p> <p>Ensure a designated responsibility is taken for safeguarding across staff and governors</p> <p>Ensure a proper process in dealing with safeguarding matters</p>	
<p>Contracted providers for children and young people including for example bus companies, Additional Learning Needs residential care, Education Other than at School (EOTAS), specialist Pupil Referral support, Youth Service support, foster care and any other specialised children and young people provisions</p>	<p>Comply with contractual specifications and / or legislative regulations in safeguarding children and young people in providing services with or on behalf of the authority</p>	<p>All directorates</p>
<p>Contracted providers for adults including for example home care / domestic care, day and residential care for the elderly, infirm, disabled, mental health care and any other specialised adult provisions</p>	<p>Comply with contractual specifications and / or legislative regulations in safeguarding adults in providing services with or on behalf of the authority</p>	<p>Adult Services in the Social Care, Safeguarding & Health directorate</p>

An overview of Monmouthshire’s key governance arrangements around safeguarding are depicted in the diagram below.



Appendix 2: Related Legislation, policy and guidance

- Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014
- More than just words 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Wales Interim Policy & Procedure for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse Nov 2010
- Valuing people 2001 and Valuing people now 2009
- All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Carers Act 2004
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services 2004
- Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Welsh Government guidance on Direct Payments
- Welsh Government guidance In Safe Hands
- Monmouthshire County Council Whistle Blowing policy
- Monmouthshire County Council Complaints policy