

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE JOINT  
EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL  
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
(SAFEGUARDING)**

**SUBJECT: JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
(SAFEGUARDING) – 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY, 2018**

**REPORT OF: BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. Thomas (Chair)**

Councillors: P. Baldwin  
D. Bevan  
J. Collins  
M. Cook  
P. Edwards  
K. Hayden  
S. Healy  
R. Hill  
J. Holt  
H. McCarthy  
J. Millard  
J. C. Morgan  
J. P. Morgan  
K. Pritchard  
K. Rowson  
T. Sharrem  
T. Smith  
B. Summers  
H. Trollope

**WITH:** Inclusion Lead Officer  
Safeguarding in Education Manager  
Service Manager – Children’s Services  
Education Improvement Manager  
Service Manager – Commissioning and Service  
Development  
POVA Co-Ordinator  
Scrutiny Officer – Advisor

**AND:** Ceri Waters – Aneurin Leisure Trust  
Representative – Aneurin Leisure Trust

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from: -</p> <p>Councillors: G. A. Davies and L. Parsons</p> <p>Mr. A. Williams - Co-opted Member</p>	
No. 3	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interests or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><b><u>JOINT EDUCATION, ACTIVE LIVING AND LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SAFEGUARDING)</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Joint Education &amp; Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.</p> <p>(The Minutes were submitted for points of accuracy only).</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><b><u>ACTION SHEET</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Action Sheet of the Joint Education &amp; Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, whereupon:-</p>	

### **Bullying**

The Service Manager provided an update and advised that development of the WCCIS had not yet been completed due to information being spread out across Wales and Authorities joining at different times.

A Member wished to congratulate the Executive Member for Social Services and Blaen-y-Cwm Primary School becoming the first Dementia Friendly School in Blaenau Gwent.

### **Fig. 1.1**

The Service Manager explained that the new forthcoming report would indicate the figures of those children moving from 'Children in Need' to 'Child Protection'.

### **Fig. 1.4**

It was noted that the Trust's Safeguarding Policy mirrors that of the Local Authority and that 78.6% of staff had received Level 1 safeguarding training which is refreshed every 3 years. The Officer informed Members that a procedure was in place whereby should there be a cause for concern in relation to children at Sports Centres the Police would be contacted and would then complete a referral on behalf of the Trust.

### **Fig. 3.2**

It was noted that the Performance Team were working on the numbers requested.

### **Elected Home Education**

The Education Improvement Manager referred to the 39 children currently being home educated and noted that in 2016/2017 there were 45 children identified as being home educated. She explained that an Education Welfare Officer visited the families of these children and to date none had been identified as being at risk.

A Member enquired if there was an update on the proposal

	<p>to develop a Register for Elective Home Education and the development of a National protocol.</p> <p>The Inclusion Lead Officer responded that Welsh Government was looking into the matter, but no update at this time.</p> <p><b><u>Training</u></b></p> <p>The Service Manager explained that 241 members of staff, 311 non employees as well as 26 external organisations had completed training. A Member said that this was exceptional.</p> <p>RESOLVED subject to the foregoing, that the information contained in the Action Sheet be noted.</p>	
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No. 7	<p><b><u>SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION - SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION – APRIL TO DECEMBER, 2017</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children’s Services which was presented to provide Members with the Safeguarding Performance and Self Evaluation information from across the Local Authority.</p> <p>The Service Manager spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p><b><u>Performance Evidence &amp; Information</u></b></p> <p>A Member referred to the total of open and new case referrals on 2.3 and felt it quite staggering that this equated to 20 children a day. He asked if there was sufficient capacity to deal with these numbers and the Service Manager responded that capacity was clearly an issue and had been raised with the Corporate Leadership Team who had provided additional resources. Also the Families First team had been reconfigured and a qualified Social Worker</p>	

now works within the team. There were also longer term plans, e.g. the LAC Reduction Strategy.

Reference was made to the reduction in the number of child referrals in 2.1 of the report but it was noted that referrals of families had risen. The Officer explained that it was not unusual for these figures to fluctuate; what was evident in Blaenau Gwent was the number of large sibling groups and it was this that reflected on numbers.

A Member made reference to Fig. 2.4 regarding the age breakdown of children on the Child Protection Register and asked what support was in place for young mothers and fathers as well as expectant mothers. The Officer stated that the Health Board and Midwives played a major part in identifying issues and supporting families and also link with the Flying Start and Families First Teams who provide early support through parenting courses and parenting groups. There was also support through the new Supporting Change Team.

Following a question it was noted that there were referrals in relation to different ethnicity and culture groups although this was not of a significant number, however there was currently one asylum seeker receiving support.

### **Elected Home Educated**

A Member raised concern regarding the 3 Elected Home Educated children that were Statemented and enquired whether support was in place. He asked if assurance could be given that these children were being provided with adequate support. The Inclusion Lead Officer explained that Statemented children were reviewed annually in the same way as pupils attending mainstream schools and there was significant engagement with the families through the Senior Education Welfare Officer. None of these children had any physical needs.

### **Youth Service Information**

A Member referred to a recent statement from the Welsh Government in relation to tackling mental health issues in children and young people and enquired if there was anything in place in Blaenau Gwent. The Officer responded

that he had not seen the statement from WG, however the Education Psychology Service were trained to work within this area and provided support to schools; also the Authority had managed to ensure that two ELSA's work within each school. He explained that a CAMHS In Reach pilot was in the process of being established, a part of which would be to look at how support can be provided for pupils in school as well as for staff.

The Inclusion Lead Officer informed Members that changes in a number of areas including the curriculum, the inspection framework, the expectation of schools working closely together, all impacted on pupil wellbeing. He further stated that Education Officers are working closely with schools in the development and sharing of good practice.

A Member referred to the restricted physical interventions figure and enquired of the number of interventions that were related to children and young people who have moved into the Authority via a manage move. The Officer responded that the figures had recently changed, as had now they were monitored. RPI reports are now sent to the Safeguarding Manager for analysis and consideration. The Officer informed members that the majority of restraints took place in our special schools and the actual number emanating from mainstream schools was very low.

An explanation was required on how the WCCIS computer system worked and the Service Manager explained that this was a Window based package that was a replacement to the previous DRAIG system, whereby all children will have individual files with their personal information is stored. The system was also used by Health Boards and local authorities across Wales, which would enable the sharing of information. The Member noted that procedures were being standardised across Wales and questioned whether it could be looked to standardise the format of the multi-agency referral form (MARF) and the Officer responded that the Authority is working with Pan Gwent colleagues to do this, however, to standardise across Wales would be huge task.

### **Impact Assessment Against Proposals/Options**

A Member made reference to concerns regarding

Safeguarding Capacity issues and wished these concerns to be added to the recommendation. Another Member agreed to move Option 2 with this addition as well as work load.

**Fig. 2.3 Categories of Abuse**

A Member referred to the graph on Page 58 of the categories of abuse and stated that neglect had historically been an issue; he asked if there had been a rise in emotional abuse and was enough being done to tackle the problem. The Officer explained that emotional abuse was not easy to identify but could possibly be high in terms of neglect. Due to the fact that emotional abuse was difficult to detect a Member asked if appropriate training was available and the Officer confirmed that training was available to all staff and there were courses available.

Reference was made to there being no sexual abuse referrals recorded and the Officer confirmed that sexual abuse was continually monitored but numbers were low in Blaenau Gwent.

It was noted that the Committee requested reassurance that the Executive Committee would look at capacity issues in Social Services and Education with regards to safeguarding.

RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the Executive Committee considers an alternative option namely that:

- The Executive requests a paper be drafted by the Education and Social Services Directorates to identify any capacity issues within the Directorates (to include schools) in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people.

**No. 6 ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO THE 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2017**

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager which was presented to provide Members with

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Safeguarding Performance and Self Evaluation information from across the Local Authority.

The Service Manager, Commissioning & Development spoke to the report and highlighted the Purpose of the Report as well as the Background and Context.

### **Update from the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Review in February, 2017**

A Member made reference to the inconsistencies that may arise with regards decision making and advice from Designated Lead Managers and questioned why inconsistencies would occur. The Service Manager, Commissioning & Development explained that inconsistencies were usually around training issues however, learning tools have been identified to alleviate this.

### **Present Position – Point 4 on the Chart**

A Member requested an explanation on the status of allegation – Inappropriate for the safeguarding process – 241. The Officer responded that on occasion referrals may not be appropriate however, they are taken very seriously even though they may not meet the threshold they would still be offered appropriate support from other agencies.

A Member raised concern regarding vulnerable adults under Universal Credit and digital by default, that could possibly be without money for up to 8 weeks; he asked if conversations would be held with the Benefit's Department. The Officer confirmed that this was a cause for concern, however training regarding this was available and it was currently being managed. He stated that ongoing monitoring arrangements and contingency plans were in place to deal with this.

### **Background and Context**

Reference was made to 1.4 and 1.10 of the report and a question asked regarding whether capacity was also a problem within Adult Services as there was concern that the levels of referrals would increase. The Officer stated that an action plan was in place and awareness raising

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would inevitably increase levels of referrals, however, appropriate training was in place and the service was managing at this time and there were no capacity issues.

**Welfare Reform Group**

A proposal was made and it was agreed to recommend to the Executive Committee that the Welfare Reform Group be reintroduced.

RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that Option 1 be endorsed namely:

- Members consider and accept the contents of the report and give consideration to the current and forthcoming demands placed on the Adults Safeguarding Team, and;
  - To reintroduce a Welfare Reform Group.
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