

**Committee: Joint Social Services & Education and Learning (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

Report Subject: **Safeguarding Performance Information for Social Services and Education - January to March 2018**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services and Cllr Clive Meredith, Executive Member Education**

Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services  
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Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
28.6.18	3.7.18	11.10.18			25.10.18	Info Item 28.1118		

**1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Members with safeguarding performance information and self-evaluation from across the Local Authority. The information provided will enable members to identify safeguarding trends and areas within the Authority which require further development to improve safeguarding practice and meet the safeguarding needs of children and young people within Blaenau Gwent.

**2. Scope and Background**

2.1 The report contains safeguarding information from Social Services and Education information from January 2018 – March 2018.

2.2 This report is written in order to provide a greater focus on the safeguarding agenda. The Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members agreed for safeguarding information to be reported to a Joint Social Services /Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee after each school term. This is the thirteenth such report to be presented.

**3. Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Having scrutinised the information members can

Option1

Accept the approach and information detailed in the report provided

## Option 2

Consider the information provided and provide comments on where improvement can be made to the current monitoring processes.

### 4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The Safeguarding agenda is considered as part of the Council's Corporate Strategies that includes:

- Corporate Improvement Plan
- Single Integrated Plan
- Corporate Risk Register
- Safe Reduction of LAC Strategy

Social Services work to a number of regional and national safeguarding procedures which can be located on the South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board website: <http://sewsc.org.uk>

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

#### 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

No direct financial implications known at this time however the increase in current Looked After Children numbers and Court applications has a significant negative impact on the budget. The safeguarding team is currently without a permanent Team Manager as the post holder left the department and due to the senior management review the post cannot be filled until this has been completed. This situation has been resolved by offering an honorarium to one of our independent reviewing officers (IRO) to take on this role. However unforeseen sickness has occurred with the IRO which has resulted in the team being without team management support, which will need to be resolved, although it is not anticipated that this will impact negatively on the budget.

#### 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Directorate Risk register identifies the highest risks for the Social Services Department. These are monitored as part of the quarterly report of the Director of Social Services.

### 6. **Supporting Evidence**

#### 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data (see Appendix 1)***

##### 6.1.1 **Social Services**

**Figure 1:** shows the number of referrals made to Social Services from April 2017 – March 2018. From January 2018 - March 2018 the total numbers of

referrals was 1,194.

This information demonstrates the increase in referrals during Q4.

Q1 = 1,078

Q2 = 840

Q3 = 842

These figures also demonstrate an increase in last year's figures by 650 additional referrals

**Figure 1.2:** shows the source of the referrals with Police, Health and education being the highest individual referrers.

**Figure 1.3:** shows the number of referrals received on open cases. For the period of this report the total was 793. Whilst there was a reduction in referrals on open cases during the months of June, July and December the average of around 250 per month was consistent apart from August where 305 referrals were received.

Previous reports have shown increases in referrals and Q4's data indicates that this trend is continuing. The development of the 'Supporting Change Team' and the new model of service delivery in preventative Families First services may see this trend change over the next 4 quarters.

**Figure 1.4:** shows the Youth Service referrals during Q4 totalling 9, which is a similar figure to Q1.

**Figure 2.1:** gives the number of children (and families) on the child protection register. (CPR) The summary of registrations and deregistration is given in figure 2.2. The total of 88 children to 51 families shows that the numbers are not increasing and once names of children are placed on the CPR they are not left to drift.

**Figure 2.3:** shows the categories of abuse, it is usual to see neglect and emotional abuse being the largest form of categorisation within Blaenau Gwent and Q4 shows no exception to this trend.

There are currently no children on the CPR under the category of sexual abuse and historically the figures have been low for this category. The age profile and gender of the children on the CPR is shown in Figure 2.4

The average time a child is on the CPR is shown in figure 2.5. The Social Services management team review all those children on the CPR for 12 months or longer on a regular basis to ensure plans are appropriate and there is no drift. Q4 information clearly shows the effectiveness of this scrutiny, as the length of time children are on the CPR for between 12 – 24 months has reduced to 1.

**Figure 2.8:** gives the breakdown on both initial and review conferences. It shows the number of conferences held, the number of families involved and

the outcomes in terms of registered or not. The numbers of initial conferences increased during Q4 with 46 children being the subject of conference (28 families) and 46 children were registered (7 at birth). This is an indication of the threshold for significant harm being applied appropriately.

82 review conferences were held with 47 deregistration's and 35 continued registrations.

**Figure 2.7:** shows the number of initial conferences held within timescales. There is a clear improvement in performance in Q4 with 95.7 % held within timescales compared to 81.1 % in Q3.

Of the 2 that were outside of timescales, adverse weather conditions meant that the conferences had to be cancelled.

**Figure 2.8:** relates to review conferences and again we see an improvement on performance with 92.7% held within timescales compared to 86.9% in Q3. Of the 6 that were outside of timescales, one conference had to be rescheduled as the conference was not quorate, one child was transferred to Powys CBC, three had to be rescheduled due to adverse weather conditions, and one was cancelled due to the unforeseen sickness of the social worker.

#### 6.1.2 **Education Information**

##### ***Numbers of restrictive physical interventions:***

Systems are in place within the Local Authority to gather incidents when Restrictive Physical Interventions (Fig 3.1) are used in school to manage pupils' behaviour. Following each incident the school is required to record the incident in a bound numbered book and complete an incident form. The incident form is sent to the Local Authority Education Directorate where it is recorded on a central recording system. These forms have been sent to the Pupil Referral Unit for collation but this system has now been reviewed within the Education Directorate.

**Figure 3.1** shows the period January to March 2018. The incidents of Restrictive Physical Interventions increased in quarter four to 52. This information is monitored by the Safeguarding Education manger and reviewed with the Inclusion manager.

Please be advised that the schools may not have completed all their forms by the end of the term so this figure may change when we get them all in the next term. This will be reported on in the next report.

Regular monitoring of incident forms is undertaken to ensure the use of physical intervention is appropriate. Schools visits have taken place to provide support and guidance in relation to the use of and reporting of RPIs

##### ***Numbers of bullying incidents reported which have led to exclusions:***

Bullying has been identified by children and young people as a significant

issue they face. An anti-bullying strategy has been developed by the Education Department.

**Figure 3.2** shows that for quarter 4 there were no reported exclusions from school where bullying was reported as the reason for the exclusion. This is a decrease from quarter 2 and quarter 1. Schools collate information in relation to bullying.

Again please be advised that the schools may not have sent in all their exclusions as of the end of term so this figure could change when we get them all in in the next term. This will be included in the next report.

Systems are in place for the Local Authority to collate detailed information in order to identify trends and anomalies and consider appropriate follow-up action. Incidents of bullying are shared with the Safeguarding Education Manager to ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

### ***Elected Home Educated (EHE):***

The total number of pupils home educated in 2017/18 is 72. There have been 14 pupils who became home educated during the Spring term, 9 males and 5 females. The reasons given for these pupils becoming EHE are attendance 4, school management issues 4, bullying 1, pupil medical/emotional need 4, and cultural 1.

This information is recorded by the Education Department who ensure that the Senior Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and another Local Authority officer, where appropriate, complete an annual visit to these families.

Blaenau Gwent's policy regarding home educated children has been reviewed. The law in relation to EHE restricts what the Local Authority is able to do although Welsh Government has introduced new guidance in the interim period whilst further measures are being developed.

### **6.1.3 Youth Service information**

This is included within the information figure 1.4 shows all the detail. The numbers of referrals has decreased from the previous quarter and are more closely aligned to earlier quarters.

In the previous report the Youth Service reported that all Youth Centre staff has received level 1 training as have all 21 youth workers. 11 youth workers have received level 2 training and 3 level training, with 1 having done level 4. The youth service has staff that has completed the train the trainer course to be able to deliver training going forward.

### **6.1.4 Leisure Trust**

As the Council is commissioning this service it is satisfied that there are appropriate measures in place to safeguard children and young people. The

Leisure Trust has robust child protection procedures in place and staff are trained to the appropriate level in safeguarding. As a quality assurance mechanism, child protection referrals made to social services will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Trust and the Council.

The safeguarding Lead for the Leisure Trust is a member of the Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group which meets quarterly.

#### 6.1.5 **Information from other directorates**

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy requires a Designated Strategic Safeguarding Lead in each directorate. The Lead is responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and that necessary staff have received safeguarding training. Quarterly meetings are convened with the Leads and the Service Manager responsible for the Safeguarding Unit in Social Services to ensure they are undertaking these responsibilities.

#### 6.1.6 **Allegations of abuse made against professionals**

In this period there have been 10 professional strategy meetings. Of these, 4 were initial meetings concerning 2 teachers, 1 support worker and 1 child care settings worker. 6 outcome strategy meetings were held, all concerning teachers. Of the outcomes, 3 have been unsubstantiated and 3 are continuing.

#### 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Those children who are assessed to be at risk of harm are protected and safeguarded, and that the Local Authority adheres to legislation regarding statutory intervention.

#### 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The development of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the Departmental Safeguarding Leads meetings help ensure all departments within the Authority are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and are kept updated with any emerging issues or trends within safeguarding.

Termly meetings also take place with the Safeguarding Leads from all the schools and monthly meetings take place between the safeguarding team and lead education staff.

The SEWSCB local Safeguarding Network group also reviews the safeguarding information to ensure all partner agencies are as fully aware as possible.

#### 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) enables Social Services to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the department is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The work undertaken by the Social Services Directorate looks to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention. Having a proactive rather than reactive approach to service planning can also help with planning resources.

Providing this report and the level of detailed safeguarding information to Scrutiny Committee enables members to ensure risks are identified and acted on

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board and its sub groups ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach to safeguarding. Blaenau Gwent fully participates in the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards.

Additionally the Corporate Safeguarding Policy ensures each department has safeguarding leads and these meet together on a quarterly basis looking at safeguarding across the whole Authority. The Leisure Trust lead also participates in this meeting.

6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***

All local authorities and partner agencies work together on safeguarding through the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board and Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board.

6.8 ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Local Safeguarding Network Group is a sub group of the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board and Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board. This group is made up of multi-agency representation from within Blaenau Gwent who monitors and reviews the safeguarding information and performance. This group has direct links with the Youth Forum to ensure the voice of the child is fully considered and heard on safeguarding issues.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- *Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Report*