

DRAFT AGENDA

ID	2239
Committee	Cyd-bwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol (Diogelu)
Date	26/04/2021
Attendees	<p>Cynghorwyr Stephen Thomas (Cadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Haydn Trollope (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Derrick Bevan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Garth Collier (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Martin Cook (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Gareth A. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Gareth L. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Malcolm Day (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Phil Edwards (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Keith Hayden (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr John Hill (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Wayne Hodgins (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Julie Holt (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Clive Meredith (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Amanda Moore (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr John C. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorydd John P. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Lee Parsons (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Greg Paulsen (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Keri Rowson (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Tim Sharrem (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Tommy Smith (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Bob Summers (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr David Wilkshire (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Mr. Tim Baxter (Co-Optee)</p> <p>Mr. Alun Williams (Co-Optee)</p> <p>Damien McCann (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gemma Wasley (Swyddog)</p> <p>Tanya Evans (Swyddog)</p> <p>Alyson Hoskins (Swyddog)</p> <p>Lynn Phillips (Swyddog)</p> <p>Alison Rawshaw (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gavin Metheringham (Swyddog)</p> <p>Michelle Jones (Swyddog)</p> <p>Sarah Dixon (Swyddog)</p> <p>Sarah Jones (Swyddog)</p> <p>Liz Thomas (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gwasanaethau Democraidd (Notify)</p> <p>Leeann Turner (Secretary)</p>

	Pob Cynghorydd (Notify)
	Louise Bishop (Notify)
	Sean Scannell (Notify)
	Richard Crook (Notify)
	Rhian Hayden (Notify)
	Michelle Morris (Notify)
	Steve Berry (Swyddog)
	Andrea Jones (Swyddog)

Item ID	2905
Item Title	Cyfieithu ar y Pryd
Summary	Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o hysbysiad ymlaen llaw os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.

Item ID	2906
Item Title	Ymddiheuriadau
Summary	Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Item ID	2907
Item Title	Datganiadau Buddiant a Goddefebau
Summary	Ystyried unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau a wnaed.

Item ID	2908
Item Title	Cofnodion y Cyd-bwyllgor Craffu Addysg & Dysgu a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol (Diogelu)
Summary	Derbyn cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Cydbyllgor Addysg & Dysgu a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol (a gynhaliwyd ar 8 Hydref 2020). (Dylid nodi y cyflwynir y cofnodion er pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig).

Item ID	4743
Item Title	Dalen Weithredu – 8 Hydref 2020
Summary	Derbyn y Dalen Weithredu.

Item ID	4744
Item Title	Gwybodaeth Diogelu Perfformiad ar gyfer Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol ac Addysg – 1 Ebrill i 31 Rhagfyr 2020
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a'r Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg.

Item ID	4745
Item Title	Adroddiad Diogelu Oedolion o 1 Ebrill 2020 i 31 Mawrth 2021
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol.

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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) – 8TH OCTOBER, 2020**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT
OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: S. Thomas
D. Bevan
M. Cook
G.A. Davies
G.L. Davies
P. Edwards
L. Elias
K. Hayden
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
J.C. Morgan
L. Parsons
T. Smith
B. Summers

AND: Corporate Director of Social Services
Interim Corporate Director of Education
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Service Manager for Development & Commissioning
Service Manager, Children's Services
Safeguarding in Education Manager
Communications & Policy Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
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No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Day, G. Collier, C. Meredith, M. Moore, G. Paulsen and T. Sharrem.</p> <p><u>Co-opted Member</u> Alun Williams</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>JOINT EDUCATION & LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SAFEGUARDING)</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Joint Education & Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) Meeting held on 2nd December, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET - 2ND DECEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Joint Education & Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) held on 2nd December, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>COVID-19</u></p> <p>A Member expressed disappointment that there had been no discussion with the Chair and Lead Officers in the Authority regarding the COVID-19 situation and the knock on effect in relation to the Education Directorate and felt that Members should be kept fully informed of the situation.</p> <p><u>Water Testing & Quality</u></p>	

A Member commented that a joint meeting between the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee was to be arranged. As the host Committee, only Members of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee would have voting rights, and Members of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee would not. He felt strongly that water testing and quality was a safeguarding issue and should be considered at this Committee.

The Interim Corporate Director of Education said that it had been decided to hold a Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting between the two Scrutiny Committees as Community Services had Corporate Landlord responsibilities.

Another Member commented that as a Safeguarding Committee it was important that Members were aware of the position in relation to how decisions were made and who by and that the right decisions were being made and followed correctly.

The Interim Corporate Director of Education said that the water quality issue had delayed the reopening of some schools and an independent investigation to review processes had been carried out. A report would be presented to the Joint Scrutiny Committee highlighting a number of areas for development and improvement moving forward.

The Member reiterated his disappointment regarding voting rights for the Education & Learning Scrutiny Members. The Chair also felt strongly that Members of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee should have voting rights on this issue.

The Democratic & Scrutiny Officer said she would take these points back to the Head of Governance & Partnerships.

The Chair and Vice felt that a meeting with the Managing Director and Leadership of the Council should be arranged to discuss this issue.

Democratic
& Scrutiny
Officer

	<p>Another Member raised further concerns regarding the Local Government Education Services report written in June 2020 in relation to the responsibilities of safeguarding. He felt that issues within schools such as health & safety, water quality and COVID-19 were all safeguarding issues and were the responsibility of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee and as such Members of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee should be involved in any decisions being made.</p> <p>The Interim Corporate Director of Education said the primary responsibility of the Joint Safeguarding Committee was around child protection. In relation to water testing these procedures would largely fall under Health & Safety Regulations and was aligned to the work of Technical Services e.g. Legionella. Therefore, it had been necessary to arrange a Joint Scrutiny Committee to consider discussion from Members of both Committees.</p> <p>The Chair felt that a Joint Scrutiny Committee with full voting rights for all Members should have been arranged. The Interim Corporate Director of Education said that he would take these comments back to Democratic Services in advance of the Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>A Member pointed out that no child had been at risk as a stringent testing regime had been put in place and schools had remained isolated until that testing had been concluded. He felt that learners' educational settings had been protected and it would be appropriate to wait for the findings of the report for discussion at a future meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	Interim Corporate Director of Education
No. 6	<p><u>TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></p> <p>The Committee AGREED that future meetings be held at 10.00 a.m.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>360 DEGREE SAFE ONLINE SAFETY POLICY FOR SCHOOLS</u></p>	

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director of Education which presented the 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy for schools and sought Members' views on the policy template prior to the adoption of the model policy for schools.

The Safeguarding in Education Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein. The policy was provided by Southwest Grid for Learning who work in partnership with the Welsh Government and was intended to ensure that learners were able to use the internet and related communications appropriately and safely. The policy templates were extremely comprehensive and covered a whole range of considerations for online safety and schools were permitted free use of the policy to adapt to suit their particular setting. Other pre-existing policies within schools would be superseded upon the implementation of this policy.

The Chair enquired what safeguarding tools were available for parents to put on their children's devices. The Safeguarding in Education Manager said that the Welsh Government regularly updated their 'Keeping Safe Online' website and would include a link to the website within the Policy document. The Corporate Director of Social Services said that the Gwent Safeguarding Board website also gave advice in a simple format on parental controls in relation to mobile and computer devices. He would liaise with the Safeguarding in Education Manager to forward the online link to parents.

The Strategic Education Improvement Manager echoed the Director's comments and said that during the COVID-19 situation a protocol for streaming online teaching etc. had been developed to support parents and some form of communication from schools could be passported onto parents to support them with this issue.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely:

- that the Welsh Government 'Keeping Safe Online' link be forwarded to parents and included within the Policy document; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the policy be recommended for approval by the Executive Committee. 	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES SAFEGUARDING POLICY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director Education and the Safeguarding in Education Manager which was presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy following its annual review.</p> <p>The Safeguarding in Education Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the following updates to the policy:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, replacing previous reference to All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008; Inclusion of the Blaenau Gwent Youth Service safeguarding policy in appendix 3 of the policy; Inclusion of the safeguarding data collection protocol; and, Inclusion of a COVID-19 annex to reflect the current situation and reinforce the procedures for reporting concerns. This appendix can be updated regularly as the emergency situation develops and changes. <p>A Member raised concerns regarding the pressure on home life such as financial issues, job losses etc. and the changing dynamics at home with many parents homeworking. He enquired how feedback from these situations could be captured as this could lead to future increases in children looked after. The Service Manager, Children’s Services reassured Members that those referrals with safeguarding concerns, i.e. child protection, abuse or neglect, regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic were responded to appropriately, and for those children who were at home because of the lack of school provision nothing had alerted the local authority to any safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>The Member referred to the wider implications of safeguarding and how the stresses of the workplace going into the family home were affecting children’s lives in</p>	

general. The Service Manager, Children's Services said that additional funding via the Child Development Fund had been made available and was specifically targeted at those children that had suffered as a result of COVID-19, either educationally, emotionally or through holistic well-being. The Directorate would be looking at these cohorts of children in conjunction with Families First and Flying Start. There would be an opportunity to look at statutory settings as well. The additional funding would help explore what alternative support could be put in place for those children who may have suffered at a lower level, through non attendance at school and through the social isolation they may have experienced while schools were closed.

A Member raised concerns regarding increased COVID-19 rates and protecting school staff, some were waiting up to one week for results, whilst remaining in school looking after pupils. He enquired if there was a way to ensure school staff had regular testing similar to staff in care homes. The Director of Social Services said that over the last week the rate was down to 83 per 100,000 so there was progress in reducing the rate in communities. In relation to the UK portal people may not be able to access tests locally and discussions were being held with the Welsh Government to find a solution. A further lab in the Newport area to enable an additional 20,000 tests per day to be carried out was being developed to come on line in November. Many people, not just in Education but across Council services would need to stay at home whilst awaiting test results. This issue existed across the UK and until test results could be turned around within the 72 hour target then there would be issues throughout the winter period.

Councillor Tommy Smith left the meeting at this juncture.

A Member commented that whilst he supported the policy he had concerns regarding the COVID-19 Annex in relation to the mixed messages parents received regarding isolation of children with siblings who attended a different school. He enquired if clear information could be relayed to parents to enable them to make appropriate decisions to protect their children without the fear of repercussions. The Director of Social Services said there had been confusion regarding mixed messages across the UK, he clarified that if a child tested positive then that child needed to self-isolate and

stay off school along with any siblings. If a child had been in contact with someone who in the school was positive then that child would have to self-isolate but their siblings would not, so a contact of a contact did not need to self-isolate and could continue to attend school. This was national advice and guidance, however, he accepted parental decisions if parents had concerns with their children attending school during the pandemic.

The Member reiterated that the Council should relay to parents that if they had any concerns or doubts they should take appropriate action without the fear of repercussions. He felt that this would give parents an element of self-choice. The Interim Director of Education said that the Directorate liaised with Environmental Health colleagues when a positive case had been identified and clear advice was given to the family and was also followed up by the Test, Trace and Protect element. In relation to non-attendance at school due to the emergency COVID-19 situation there was no intention of penalty notices being issued at this point in time. He referred to the national advice and guidance and said the Council had adhered to the national arrangements.

A Member raised concerns regarding children who should be self-isolating, being allowed out in the community by their parents whilst awaiting test results. He felt that some parents were putting youngsters health at risk by allowing them out in the community. This could be considered as neglect and enquired if Social Services and the Police, who had responsibility for fines, were looking at this issue.

The Service Manager, Children's Services said that she would air on the side of caution if Members were minded to send a generic message to parents with regards to those children that may be asymptomatic, symptomatic or even tested positive that are being allowed out into the community. She pointed out that the responsibility was not with the school after children had been told to self-isolate, it was a parental decision if parents were concerned for the safety of their children. The Service Manager advised Members that it would be better to try a supportive approach to encourage parents to keep their children in school and point out the ramifications for not following national guidelines. If the behaviour continued the Directorate could

	<p>liaise with the local Community Engagement Officers on the ground to further advise whether it would meet the criteria for a safeguarding concern and ultimately a joint visit with the police, but this would depend on other factors.</p> <p>The Service Manager advised that she would look back at the referrals from Quarters 1 and 2 to check if any had identified children that were out in the community when they should have been self-isolating. She would also liaise with Families First, the lower tier preventative services, to check if they had received any referrals of a similar nature.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>A Member commented that no matter what action was taken there would always be exceptions, this was a difficult situation with parents unsure of what approach to take.</p> <p>The Strategic Education Manager said that she would work with Social Services colleagues to identify pinch points where such incidents may happen when children were not in school.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that the draft policy as presented in Appendix 1 be accepted.</p>	<p>Service Manager, Children's Services</p>
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES – 1ST APRIL 2019 TO 31ST MARCH 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services and Service Manager, Children's Services which was presented to provide scrutiny Members with safeguarding performance information and analysis from Children's Social Services from 1st April 2019 to the 31st March 2020.</p> <p>The Strategic Education Improvement Manager provided an overview to Members on the reasons why the Education Directorate had been unable to provide performance information to be included in the report at this time.</p>	

<p>The Chair said that he understood the need for Headteachers and staff to focus on operational challenges within schools during the pandemic and accepted the reasons why the routine collection of performance data was not available at this time. He requested that the briefing note be circulated to Members.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>The Service Manager, Children’s Services spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein. She explained that due to the pandemic the information contained in the performance report was historic information. It was reported that throughout the four quarters there was consistency with regard to referrals and the Service Manager reassured Members that safeguarding remained a priority for Children’s Services and safeguarding responsibilities continued for those children that had been deemed at risk.</p> <p>A Member commented that safeguarding had been one of a number of recommendations from Estyn when Blaenau Gwent Education Services had been in special measures and enquired when safeguarding was last reviewed by Estyn. The Interim Director of Education said that since the Council had been removed from special measures, termly meetings with the Local Authority and Estyn Link Inspectors were held and periodically safeguarding featured on the agenda whereby Link Inspectors were advised of any developments such as policy updates etc. At the last Estyn monitoring visit they had recognised that good progress had been made against the recommendation that had been put in place against safeguarding procedures. Estyn now regulated local authorities on a wider education perspective as part of the Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework.</p> <p>The Strategic Education Improvement Manager said that in relation to the Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework the Directorate had completed their Self Evaluation of which safeguarding was a key component under the leadership and management aspect of that framework. She enquired if Members wanted a future report in terms of the safeguarding extract from the Self Evaluation to be prepared for a future meeting.</p>	<p>Democratic & Scrutiny Officer</p>
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	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the briefing note on reasons why the Education Directorate had been unable to provide performance information to be included in this report at this time be accepted; and • a report on the safeguarding extract from the Self Evaluation be prepared for a future meeting. 	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>ADULT SAFEGUARDING REPORT 1ST APRIL 2019 TO 31ST MARCH 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Social Services which was presented to provide Scrutiny Members with Safeguarding Performance information relating to Adult Services from 1st January 2020 to the 31st March 2020 for the 4th quarter of the financial year and also the information of the financial year 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.</p> <p>The Service Manager for Development & Commissioning spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein. There was a similar position to Children’s Services, historically the trends remained static and the Department were still working closely with key partners. He reassured Members that with the different ways of working communication with care homes and partner agencies was maintained on a regular basis, working with providers, offering financial support in terms of referrals and discussions around testing. In domiciliary care, agencies were working together to develop contingency plans, working through the risk management process with regard to a spike in the second wave. The Department continued to support care homes and work closely with health colleagues and partners. Currently there was a stable workforce which continued to support providers in extremely challenging circumstances.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that Members accept the report as provided.</p>	

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Joint Education and Learning and Social Services (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee – Thursday 8th October 2020

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
8	<p><u>Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy</u></p> <p>Officer to check Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 referrals to ascertain if any referrals had been made to the department with regards to children who are waiting for COVID-19 test results not adhering to self-isolation guidance.</p>	Alison Ramshaw	<p>Researched all new referrals received into the IAA team for Q's 1 & 2 none were recorded for children waiting for COVID 19 testing as a result of not adhering to guidance.</p> <p>Checks also undertaken with child care teams for children already receiving support from the department again for Q's 1 & 2 none were recorded as waiting for COVID 19 test due to not adhering to guidance.</p>
9	<p><u>Safeguarding Performance Information for Social Services – 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020</u></p> <p>Briefing note in relation to the Education Directorate performance reporting to be circulated to Members of the Committee.</p>	Scrutiny / Democratic Officer	<p>Briefing Note circulated to Members on 13th October 2020.</p>

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Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

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

Date of meeting: **26th April 2020**

Report Subject: **Safeguarding Performance Information for Social Services and Education – 1st April to 31st December 2020**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services; and
Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**

Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director Social Services
Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	15.04.21	20.04.21			26.04.21			

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Members with safeguarding performance information and analysis from Children's Social Services and Education from 1st April 2020 to the 31st December 2020. Monitoring and reporting systems are well developed to ensure the department is able to track information and evidences that the safeguarding agenda remains a priority for the local authority.

The information provided will enable Members to identify safeguarding trends and areas within the Authority that require further development to improve safeguarding practice in order to 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 from 1st April 2020 – 31st December 2020, and Education information from 1st April – 31st December 2020

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.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Having scrutinised the information Members can:

Option 1

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 CLA Strategy
- Early Intervention and Prevention 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)***

There is no impact on the budget. Children's Services are making good progress in relation to those Children Looked After in residential care placements returning into care environments that fully supports their care plans and is less costly. Progress is also being made on revoking care orders for children placed at home under the auspices of Placement with Parent Regulations.

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)**

6.2 **Social Services**

6.2.1 **Referrals to Social Services**

Figure 1:1 Shows the number of referrals made to social services. The chart demonstrates a slight increase in referrals during Q1 (1,113) with an increase in Q2 (1,292) and Q3 (1,363). Indications are that the increase during Q3 is as a result of the easing of the COVID 19 restrictions and the reopening of schools.

Figure 1.2: Shows the source of the referrals. As previous quarters, police remain the highest referring agency (40% in Q1, 39% in Q2 & 35% in Q3) followed by Health (16%) and then closely followed by Other Agencies (12%)

Figure 1.3: shows the numbers of referrals received into the department on open cases. During Q2 the number increased to 824 from 817 in Q1 this number increased again in Q3 to 981.

During the COVID 19 pandemic children's social services Red, Amber, Green(RAG) rated their open cases to ensure those children most at risk continued to get a service that safeguarded and promoted their welfare. Following the easing of restrictions those cases identified as less concerning were revisited and services were offered in line with the assessed need. Families and partner agencies were encouraged to re-refer into the department, this may explain the rise in numbers during the quarters covered in this report.

6.2.2 **Youth Services**

Figure 1.4: Shows the numbers of Youth Services referrals during Q's 1, 2 and 3. The figure shows that a reduction in referrals 15 in Q1 to 7 in Q3

The Youth Service is an active partner on the Space Wellbeing Panel, they sit on the Steering Group as part of the Families First model and they actively participate in the South East Wales Safeguarding Local Network meetings. Multi-agency working and close partnership arrangements with the youth service ensure that safeguarding is prioritised.

6.2.3 **Child Protection**

Figure 2.2: Gives a summary of the number of children on the child protection register(CPR) the numbers of registrations and deregistration is also included. There were a total of 62 children on the child protection register in Q1 to 33 families. This accounted for an additional 1 child being registered in this quarter. The numbers of children on the child protection register increased by 14 to 76 in Q2 involving 39 families.

Q3 saw 68 children on the child protection register to 33 families, which was an increase of 8 from the previous quarter. 23 children were placed on the register during Q3. (see below)

61 in Q4 (2020)
62 in Q1 (2020)
76 in Q2 (2020)
68 in Q3 (2020)

Whilst there is no right or wrong number when analysing the numbers of children placed on the child protection register. The numbers throughout the four quarters are fairly consistent and give no cause for concern. Monthly monitoring of the child protection register takes place at a senior management level. The Safeguarding Manager provides updated reports to the senior management group and these reports provide detailed information that ensures the meetings give appropriate oversight and analysis of the registrations and the child protection care planning arrangements as necessary.

Figure 2.5: shows the average time a child is on the CPR. As mentioned above, the social services senior management team review all those children on the CPR for 12 months or longer to ensure there is no unnecessary drift. There are no cases that give cause for concern.

Figure 2.6: gives the breakdown on both initial and review conferences. They show the numbers of conferences held the number of families involved and the outcomes in terms of registered or not.

The numbers of initial conferences increased in Q1 to 33 children to 19 families. Of the 33 children subject to child protection case conference 32 were registered.

51 review conferences were held in Q1, 23 children continued registration with 28 children who ceased to be registered.

The numbers of initial conferences held in Q2 decreased to 30 children to 16 families. Of the 30 children subject to child protection case conference 29 were registered.

45 review conferences were held in Q3 and 27 children continued registration with 18 who ceased to be registered.

The numbers of initial conferences held in Q3 decreased to 28 children to 12 families. Of the 28 children subject to child protection case conference 27 were registered.

53 review conferences were held in Q3. 26 children continued registration with 27 who ceased to be registered.

Figure 2.7: shows the number of initial conferences held within timescales. There has been consistency practice in this area throughout the 3 reporting period, with 100% of conferences held within timescales.

Figure 2.8: shows the number of review conferences held within timescales. There was a slight dip in performance during Q2 and a slightly smaller dip again during Q3.

Of the review conferences that were held outside of timescales there have been reasonable explanations given. These include: -

- Initial dates being rearranged due to the social worker needing to take time off work due to a bereavement
- A rearranged conference did not go ahead as the mother could not access the social worker's report
- Neither the chair nor business support were not informed by a social worker that the child had been born. The child had been born prematurely and was placed with maternal grandparents upon discharge from hospital due to the risks in relation to both parents. No safeguarding concerns were noted though as an Interim Care Order was granted by the Court shortly following the birth.

6.3 **Education**

6.3.1 Members will be aware that a briefing report was submitted to the last Scrutiny meeting regarding the difficulties in gathering the data from schools as a result of the pandemic, which commenced in March 2020 and disrupted education provision through this time

6.3.2 Members will be aware that schools closed on 24th March 2020 and were repurposed to provide hub provision during the initial phase of the pandemic, with children being provided with an opportunity to check in and catch up for the last three weeks of what would have been the summer term prior to the whole school return commencing on a graduated basis from 1st September 2020.

6.3.3 Members will also be aware that throughout the autumn term education within the County Borough was disrupted with the many schools being affected at some point with classes, year groups and some schools being required to self-isolate during the autumn term as the virus continued to spread. Consequently, schools in Blaenau Gwent switched to remote learning on 10th December 2020 in the interest of the wellbeing of pupils and their families and in recognition that the coronavirus cases in the County Borough remained amongst the highest in Wales. Schools partially reopened on 22nd February 2021 with face to face learning commencing for some pupils with all pupils returning to school on 12th April 2021. During this time schools were again repurposed to provide hub provision.

6.3.4 Throughout this time both the local authority, school staff and partners have flexed and continued to respond to the new and emerging daily challenges that this virus has brought. Consequently, given the state of flux *it has been far from a 'business as usual' approach and as such Members will be aware from a previous briefing note to this committee that one of the business activities that has continued to be affected is the routine data collection of*

information from our schools and partners, which is used to inform performance reports such as this.

6.4 Clearly, as the situation now appears to be improving with the country cautiously being removed from lock down measures, the Safeguarding in Education Manager has written to schools at the start of the summer term reminding them of the need to start regularly reporting this information so that future reports can be considered by this committee so that usual data collection from April 2021 can commence. Appendix 2 details the communication that has been sent to schools. Furthermore, the Education Directorate team continue to work in collaboration with our schools to roll-out the Capita One MyConcern package and this will be an important tool used for data gathering and monitoring safeguarding considerations across the school estate. Members will be provided with an update on the implementation of MyConcern in future reports.

6.5 **Expected Outcome for the public**

That all children are safeguarded, and, where required are supported in reaching their full potentials

6.6 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Safeguarding children is a statutory responsibility and is reliant upon a multi-agency response. Statutory partners attend safeguarding meetings as appropriate

6.7 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

Throughout the COVID pandemic safeguarding children has continued to take priority in service delivery. Whilst many meetings have needed to take place virtually, service delivery will continue to be monitored and reviewed, changes to current practice will follow WG guidance

6.8 **Preventative focus**

As part of the CLA Reduction Strategy, early intervention and prevention is an approach to practice that aims to identify issues early and provide packages of support designed to prevent needs escalating and requiring statutory intervention

6.9 **Collaboration / partnership working**

See 6.5

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

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Safeguarding Performance Report

Social Services
1st April 2020 to
31st December 2020

Corporate Services
Q1 and Q2



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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Purpose of the report

The council is committed to creating an environment which enables people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities whilst feeling safe and protected.

We believe that all children, adults and young people have the right to be safe from harm and it is a corporate objective to put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm.

We recognise our responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and this includes the contribution we make to working together with other agencies so that all children and young people reach their full potential and we continue to look after the most vulnerable people in our communities.

The purpose of this report is to provide safeguarding information that is recorded and monitored to ensure that we are indeed delivering this objective.

Monitoring and reporting systems are well-developed to ensure the department is able to track information and evidences that the safeguarding agenda remains a priority for the local authority.

Performance information is collated from Social Services, Organisational Development and Education information systems which identifies activity, demands and trends of data. This includes a number of items that are statutory requirements as part of the Welsh Government Performance Framework.

The report includes information on the following:

- Referrals received and their outcomes
- Children who are being safeguarded and analysis
- Quality assurance arrangements with education settings
- Broader issues within education that impact upon safeguarding
- Corporate progress on recommended proposals for improvement
- DBS Compliance
- Safeguarding Corporate Risk Register

This report will be shared with Senior Management Teams and presented to the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee for Social Services, Education and Active Living.

00 | Community Profile - Demographics

Community Profile



- The total rate of Blaenau Gwent's recorded offence levels was higher than comparative areas. For the year ending December 2014 Police recorded crimes - 76.89 crimes per thousand population in Blaenau Gwent compared to its most similar group of areas average (as defined by the Home Office) of 69.03 per thousand population.
- Total Population: 69,713 Number of 0 – 17 year olds: **13,607** (2018 Population Estimates)
- Number of Open cases to Children's Social Services as at 31st December 20: **930**
- Number of pupils attending primary schools: **5,961**
- Number of pupils attending secondary schools: **3,115**
- 45% of Blaenau Gwent's local areas are amongst the top 20% deprived areas in Wales. (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019)
- The proportion of benefit claimants amongst people of working age was higher in Blaenau Gwent than the proportion across the comparable authorities (working-age client group – key benefit claimants August 2014 - 23.2% in Blaenau Gwent compared to all Wales level of 16.4%)

Fig: 1.1 Number of referrals received by Social Services

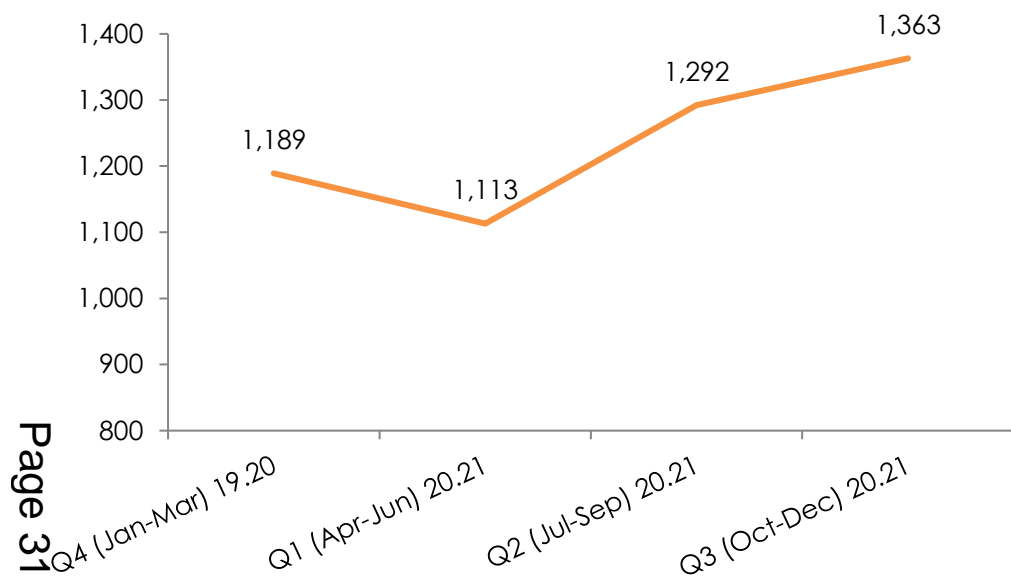
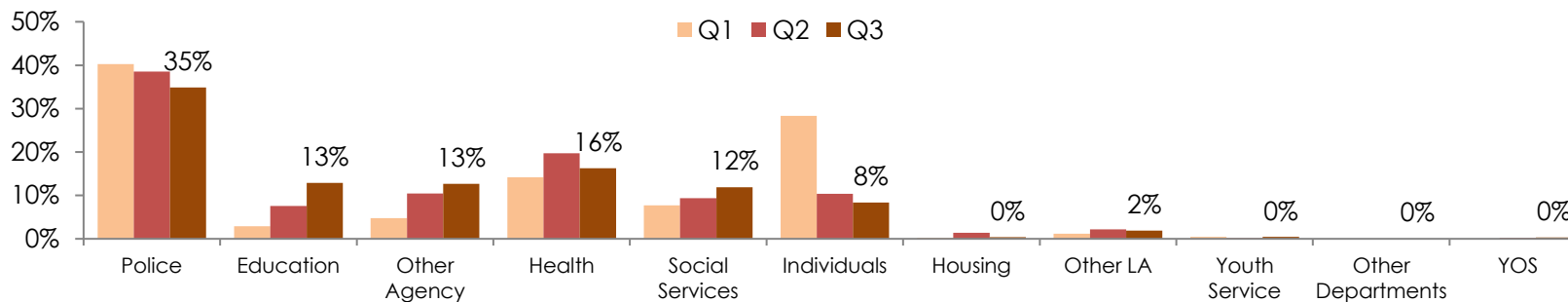


Fig: 1.2 Number and Percentage of Referrals by Source (Q1, Q2 & Q3)

	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Police	448	40%	498	39%	475	35%
Education	32	3%	93	7%	158	12%
Other Agency	53	5%	135	10%	173	13%
Health	158	14%	255	20%	222	16%
Social Services	86	8%	121	9%	162	12%
Individuals	315	28%	134	10%	114	8%
Education - Post 16		0%	0	0%	3	0%
Education - OOC		0%	5	0%	15	1%
Housing	3	0%	18	1%	5	0%
Other LA	13	1%	28	2%	26	2%
Youth Service	5	0%	2	0%	6	0%
Other Departments	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
YOS	0	0%	3	0%	4	0%
Total	1,113	100%	1,292	100%	1,363	100%

01 | Referrals to Social Services

Graph showing the source of referrals and the percentage



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Fig: 1.3 Multi-agency referral forms (MARF's) received on open cases

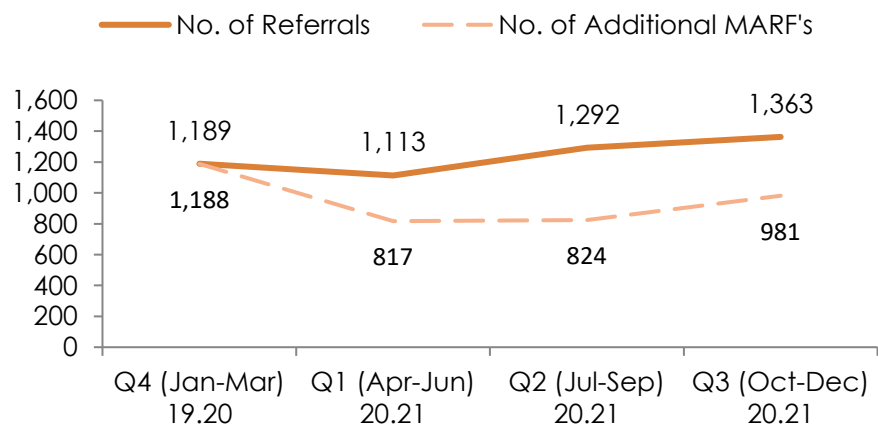


Fig: 1.4 Referrals received from Youth Services

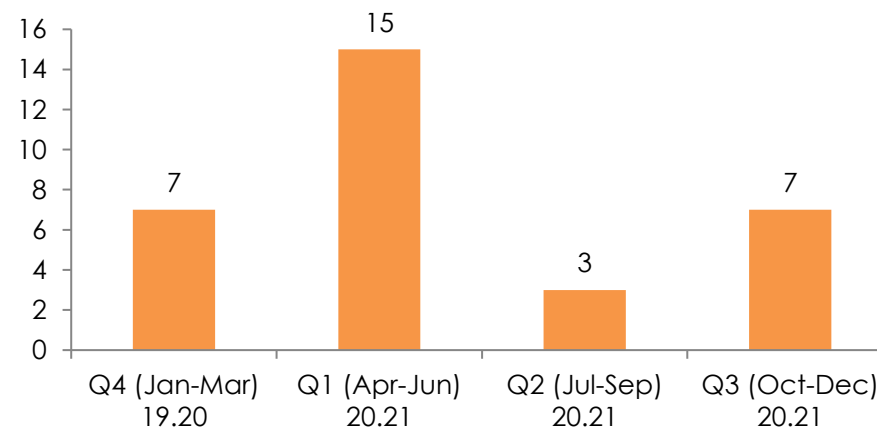


Fig 2.1 Children on the Child Protection Register

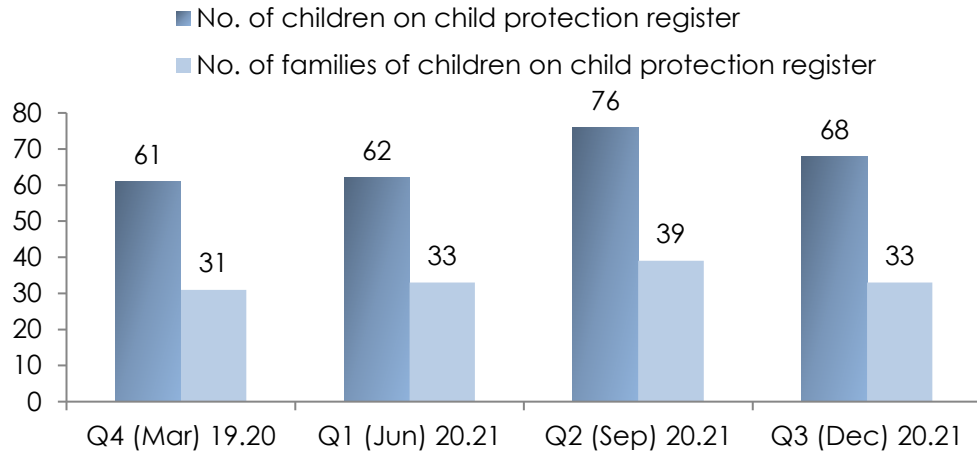


Fig 2.3 Categories of abuse

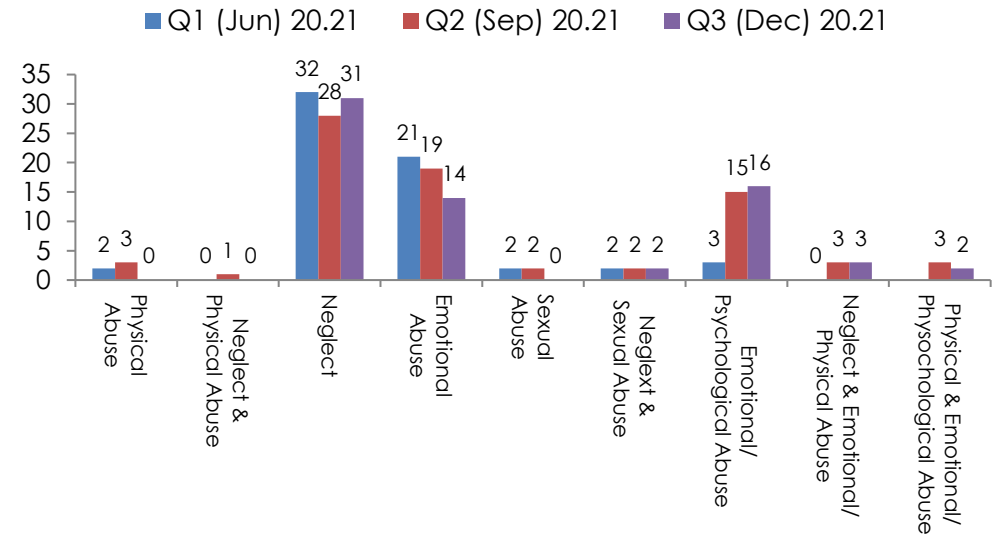


Fig 2.2 Child Protection Register Summary

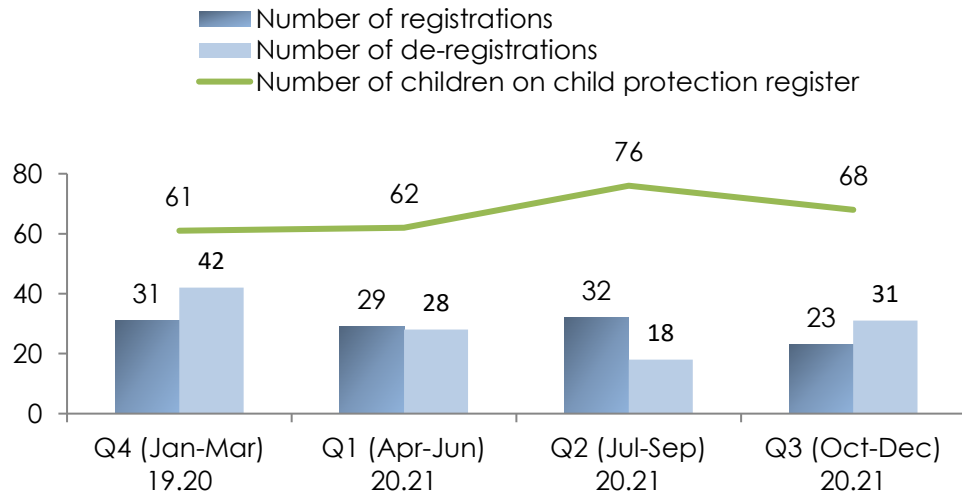


Fig 2.4 Age Breakdown of children on child protection register

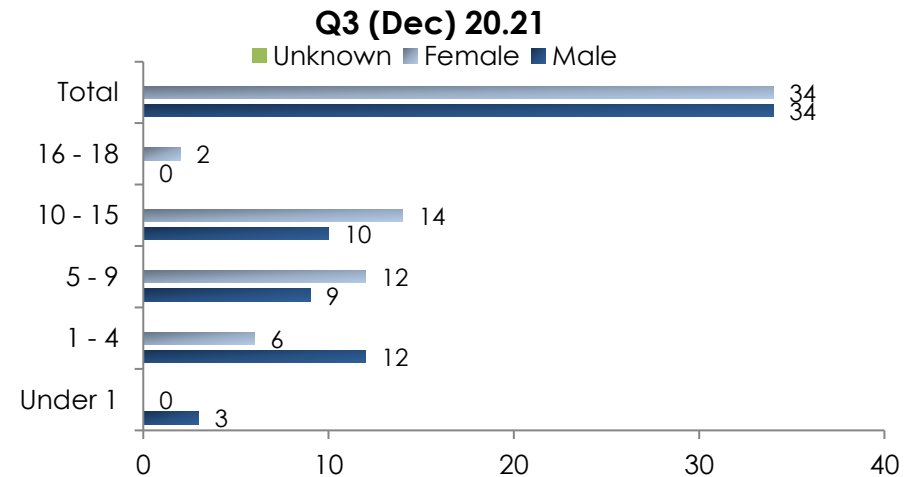
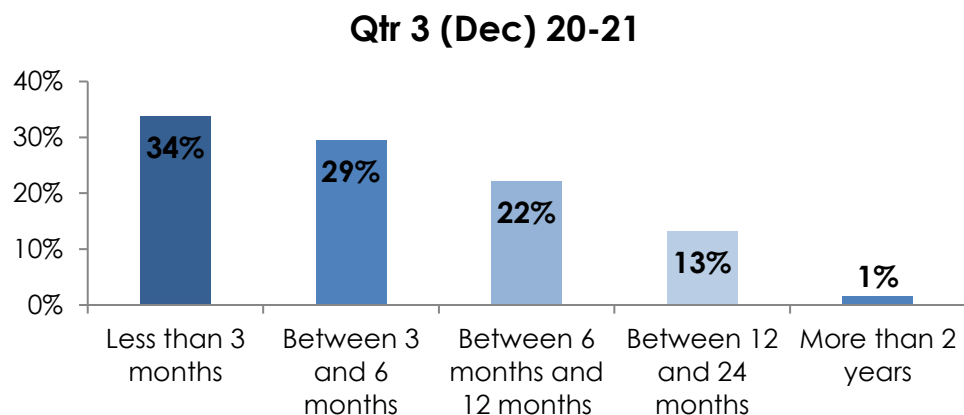


Fig 2.5 Average length of time on register



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Table showing the breakdown of children on the child protection register over the last 12 months

	Q4 (Mar) 19.20	Q1 (Jun) 20.21	Q2 (Sep) 20.21	Q3 (Dec) 20.21
Less than 3 months	27	25	31	23
Between 3 and 6 months	23	14	15	20
Between 6 months and 12 months	9	19	26	15
Between 12 and 24 months	2	4	4	9
More than 2 years	0	0	0	1
	61	62	76	68

02 | Child Protection Register

Fig 2.6: Child Protection Conferences

	Q4 (Mar) 18.19		Q1 (Jun) 19.20		Q2 (Sep) 19.20		Q3 (Dec) 19.20	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Conferences Held	91		84		75		81	
Initial Conferences	25	27%	33	39%	30	40%	28	35%
No. of Families	15		19		16		12	
Review Conferences	66	73%	51	61%	45	60%	53	65%
No. of Families	33		27		22		29	

Initial Child Protection Conferences	25		33		30		28	
<i>Outcome:</i>								
Registered	22	88%	24	73%	26	87%	22	79%
Registered at birth	2	8%	8	24%	3	10%	5	18%
Not registered	1	4%	1	3%	1	3%	1	4%

Review Child Protection Conferences	66		51		45		53	
<i>Outcome:</i>								
Continue with registration	26	39%	23	45%	27	60%	26	49%
Cease registration	40	61%	28	55%	18	40%	27	51%

03 | Referrals to Education

Fig 2.7 Initial Child Protection Conferences

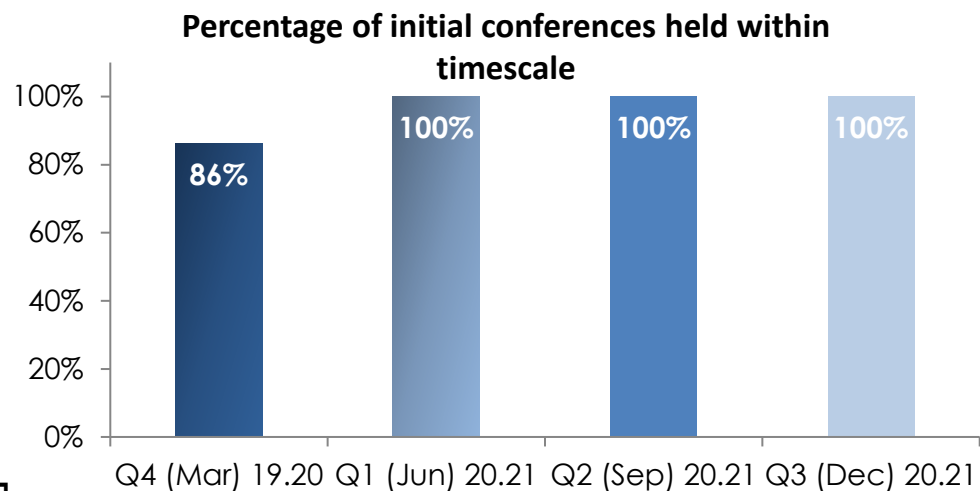
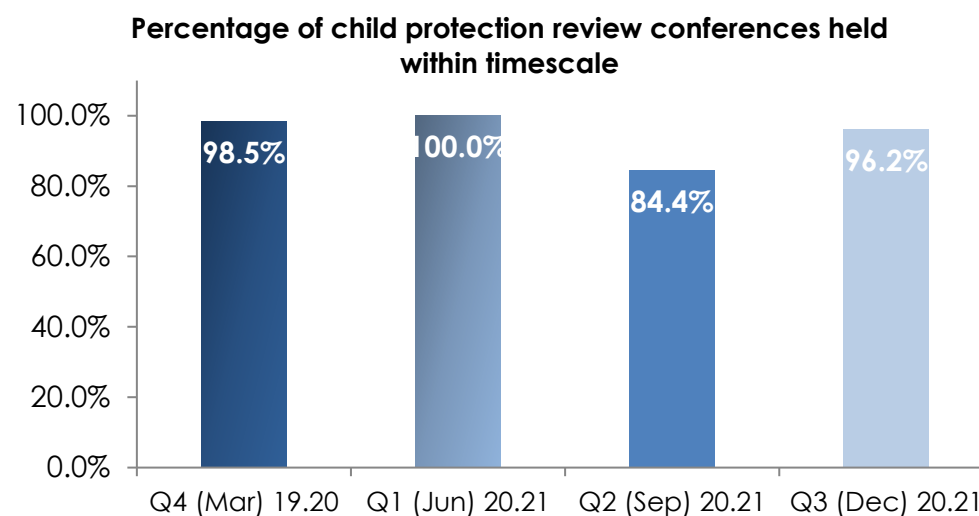


Fig: 2.8 Child Protection Review Conferences



	Q4 (Mar) 19.20	Q1 (Jun) 20.21	Q2 (Sep) 20.21	Q3 (Dec) 20.21
Number of initial conferences held	22	33	30	28
Number of initial conferences held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion	19	33	30	28
Percentage of initial conferences held within timescale	86%	100%	100%	100%

	Q4 (Mar) 19.20	Q1 (Jun) 20.21	Q2 (Sep) 20.21	Q3 (Dec) 20.21
Number of Review Child Protection Conferences held	66	51	45	53
Number of Review Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	65	51	38	51
Percentage of Review Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	98.5%	100.0%	84.4%	96.2%

03 | Referrals to Education

Fig 3.1 Contacts by Source – Primary School

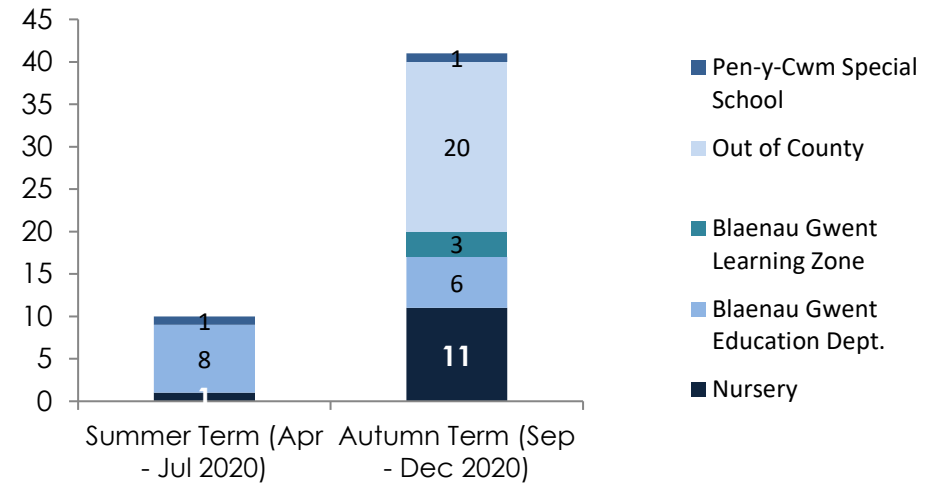
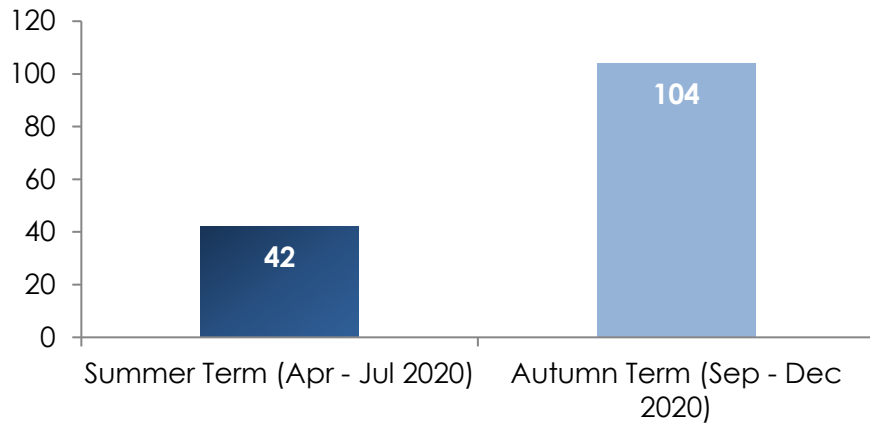


Fig 3.2 Contacts by Source – Secondary School

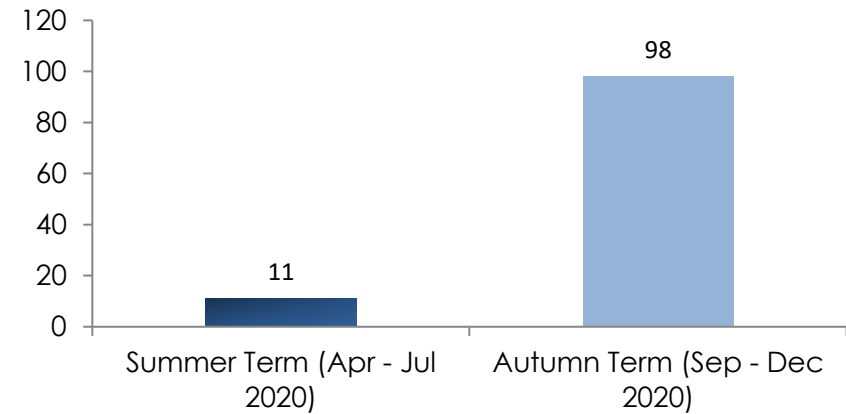


Fig 3.3 Contacts by Source - Other

DBS Compliance

Managers are required to identify the requirement of a DBS check utilising the eligibility criteria, all DBS checks are renewed on a 3 yearly basis. Organisational Development co-ordinates this DBS process for new starters and 3 yearly rolling programme along with monitoring the compliance of these checks and we have formal escalation processes in place. The updates on the compliance with DBS are provided bi-annually to Corporate Leadership Team.

This reporting has been relaxed during the pandemic, however the monitoring and escalation processes have continued.

The latest submission to CLT was October 2019 and is shown below

Position Statement: New Starter / Rolling Programme DBS Checks Schools

Effective Date:

28th October 2019

Criteria	Total
Staff requiring a DBS	1298
Staff with a valid DBS	1298

Out of Compliance	Less than 4 weeks	1 - 3 months	More than 3 months	Total
New Starters currently out of compliance	0	0	0	0
Rolling Programme currently out of compliance	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	0	0	0

Escalation Process

Employees and Managers receive automated e-mails from the DBS system reminding that the process has not been completed

Operational Teams receive fortnightly reports of all DBS applications currently in progress to enable Safeguarding escalation where required

Position Statement: New Starter / Rolling Programme DBS Checks Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (excluding Schools)

Effective Date:

28th October 2019

Criteria	Total
Staff requiring a DBS	1067
Staff with a valid DBS	1061

Out of Compliance	Less than 4 weeks	1 - 3 months	More than 3 months	Total
New Starters currently out of compliance	2	0	0	2
Rolling Programme currently out of compliance	1	1	2	4
Totals	3	1	2	6

1st DBS Check					
Department / School	Awaiting Appointment	Appt Comments	Awaiting Certificate	Cert Comments	Total
Corporate Services	2	Currently employees appointed to new positions	0		2
Regeneration & Community Services	0		0		0
Corporate Education	0		0		0
Social Services	0		0		0
Totals	2		0		2

Rolling Programme					
Department / School	Awaiting Appointment	Appt Comments	Awaiting Certificate	Cert Comments	Total
Corporate Services	0		0		0
Regeneration & Community Services	1	On hold - LTS	1	Awaiting Fingerprinting	2
Corporate Education	0		0		0
Social Services	2	1 On hold - LTS	0		2
Totals	3		1		4

Escalation Process

Employees and Managers receive automated e-mails from the DBS system reminding that the process has not been completed

Operational Teams receive fortnightly reports of all DBS applications currently in progress to enable Safeguarding escalation where required

Corporate Training

Domestic abuse Training

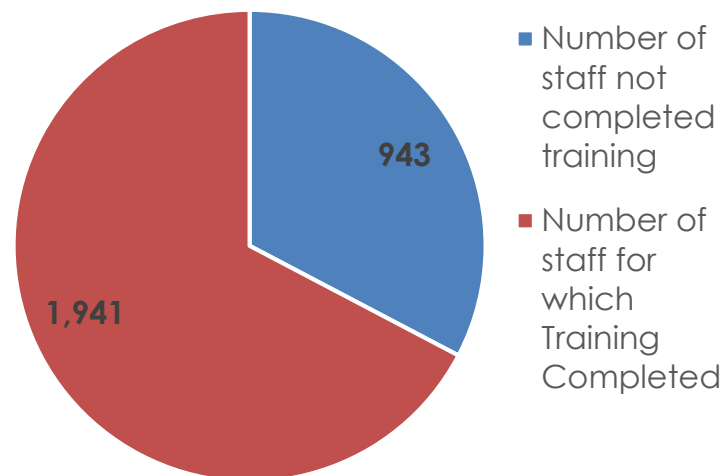
Corporate training has been provided to staff in respect of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence **67%** of staff having **completed** the **VAWDAS online training**.

All Wales Safeguarding Training on line for staff

Online Safeguarding training was included in the online corporate induction module in 2019.

Page 40 In terms of the wider workforce a suitable module is currently evaluated by the corporate Safeguarding group which has been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic.

VAWDAS Online Training Completion



with

being

Risk Register

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Triggers	Consequences	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Current Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Status	Proposed further controls to mitigate / reduce risk	Risk Owner
CRRA	Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is inadequate assessments and monitoring • If there is a lack of documentation • If there are increasing referrals for services • If there is a lack of appropriate guidance and training • If there is poor communication between all parties (internal / external) • If there is a high turnover of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential significant harm / loss of life • Long term reputational damage and confidence in the Council undermined • Increase in complaints / Potential litigation / prosecution • External intervention • Increased pressure on budgets • Low staff morale 	3	4	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board • SE Wales Safeguarding Children's Board • Standing item on CLT agenda • Safeguarding Network • Director of Social Services has a corporate responsibility for safeguarding • Lead Executive Member identified for safeguarding • Adult protection co-ordinator and process in place in line with All Wales process. • Manager's report consistently on safeguarding to elected Members and the Corporate Leadership Team • Joint Education and Social Services Safeguarding Team • Joint Social Services and Education Safeguarding scrutiny meeting held 3 times a year • Joint Business unit and subgroups for adults and children 	2	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plans will further embed risk assessment tools • Embedding of quality assurance processes in adult safeguarding • Training for all staff on Domestic Abuse Corporately 	<p>Director of Social Services</p> <p>Councillor John Mason</p>

Quarter 1 Update (April 20 – June 20)

Throughout this period COVID 19 has impacted significantly on the Social Services department however despite this, the department has been able to continue to provide a consistent approach and timely response when discharging our statutory safeguarding responsibilities across both Children and Adult Services. Both teams have continued to prioritise safeguarding both within our proactive and reactive responses to support vulnerable families and communities. Both areas experienced an initial reduction in safeguarding referrals during the first few weeks of April 20 but following this period there has been a continued increase in referrals with referral levels/ data indicating that we have quickly returned to 'normal' levels when compared to similar time periods in previous years. Both Adults and Children's services have monitored and reported safeguarding performance measures to Welsh Government during quarter 1. This information has also been reported to the Gwent Safeguarding Board during this period. Both the head of Adults and Children's have been core members of the Gwent Safeguarding Board during this period meeting with key partners including Police, Health, Education, Probation and specialist services on a fortnightly basis. These actions have continued for quarter 2.

Specific Adult Services during quarter 1:

- Safeguarding and Commissioning Teams have led on the safeguarding support relating to COVID including supporting internal and commissioned providers in relation to PHW guidance, PPE compliance, testing and infection control;
- Work has continued in relation to the implementation of the new All Wales Safeguarding procedures including the implementation of the training including alternative IT solutions and the implementation of the new duty to report tools on WCCIS;
- Care Management Teams have continued to support vulnerable people throughout proactive case contact via telephone or where required face to face contact;
- Our safeguarding support providers – including domestic abuse support within IAA have remodelled their provision to enable them to support both via telephone and / or face to face support.
-

Quarter 2 Update (July 20 – September 20)

Specific Adult Services during quarter 2:

- Actions are per Quarter 1 have continued for Quarter 2;
- All Wales Safeguarding training has been developed on line for all BG staff to include the implementation of the new Gwent wide duty to report form and guidance;
- Commenced development of Gwent multi agency safeguarding hub across both Adult and Children Services – due for implementation January 2021.

Specific Children Services during quarter 1:

- All safeguarding referrals have been dealt with and children and families have been seen face to face when required throughout the COVID lockdown. All visits have been undertaken following a risk assessment and using the appropriate PPE;
- All child protection conferences have continued to be held on a virtual basis using a combination of TEAMS can conference calls;
- All children on the child protection register have continued to be seen since lockdown began following risk assessments and use of PPE where required.

Specific Children Services during quarter 2:

- The same situation applies to Quarter 2 for Children's Services as outlined in Quarter 1;
- The CIW inspection in the further controls column relates to the inspection of 2018 and all the recommendations have been completed;
- An audit of Section 47 investigations was agreed for Quarter 2 but will be undertaken in Quarter 3.

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Information Contained within the Safeguarding Bulletin to Schools

Safeguarding data

As schools resume for all pupils, the routine data collation will once again be required. The safeguarding data protocol is contained within the safeguarding policy and contains details of the training information required.

Training information will be requested twice a year, during the Autumn term and start of Summer term. Schools are requested to provide safeguarding training information for any safeguarding training that has taken place since the previous request. Information will include DSP training, whole school safeguarding training, PREVENT training and any VAWDASV training beyond Group 1. Individual emails will be sent out with copies of the training data held centrally. Please review and update the information and return.

Policy information is collated through the EAS

Information is also being collated on DBS checks for Governors and volunteers. Communication will be sent directly to schools regarding this.

Any use of physical interventions is to be shared with the LA using the form R contained within the Restrictive Physical Intervention policy.'

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Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

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

Date of meeting: **26th April 2021**

Report Subject: **Adult Safeguarding Report from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	20.04.21			26.4.21			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Members with Safeguarding Performance information relating to Adult Services from 1st April 2020 to the 31st March 2021. The information provided will enable Members to identify Safeguarding areas within the Authority which require further development to improve Safeguarding practice and procedures for Adult Services.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In April 2016 The Gwent-wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GWASB) became a statutory Board as set out in Part 7 of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. The Board's purpose is twofold; to protect adults in Gwent becoming "adults at risk" and to protect adults who have been abused or neglected or are at risk of abuse or neglect. They are supported in their work by a number of sub groups that manage core business and other more specific pieces of work which deliver on the strategic priorities set by the Board each year.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The report has been considered and agreed by the Social Services Leadership Team and the Corporate Leadership Team. There were no recommendations identified from the previous report presented to Members.

3.2 Option 1

Members are asked to consider the detail contained in the Adult Safeguarding Report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations for amendment to the report before consideration at Executive Committee.

Option 2

Accept the report as provided.

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

4.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce an annual report on the discharge of its social services functions.

4.2 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for 2018-2022- This will help support the Corporate plan by implementing effective safeguarding arrangements to prevent adults becoming at risk by identifying and promoting preventative work.

5. **Implications Against Each Option
Risk including Mitigating Actions**

The Directorate Risk Register identifies safeguarding as high risk and is therefore monitored as part of the quarterly report of the Director of Social Services via the business planning process for each option. The Directorate Risk Register includes what actions have been taken to mitigate these risks and is reviewed on a regular basis.

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

Confirmation has been received from Welsh Government and the RPB that the Integrated Care Funding (ICF) has been approved for a further 12 months from the 1st April 2021 and it is hopeful this will continue to fund the support worker post put in place.

5.2 **Legal**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into force on 6 April 2016. The Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales.

5.3 **Human Resources**

There are no human resources implications attached to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Performance and data is provided within the report.

6.2 The number of reports received of an 'adult suspected of being at risk' during the financial year of 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 was 532. This is a slight decrease from the previous year where there were 540 reports received.

Number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during the financial year from 1 st April 2020 to 31 st March 2021	532
--	-----

6.3 The number of referrals received within the different categories of abuse or neglect are shown below. As in previous years the most referrals are received for females over the age of 65. This is a national trend. The category of abuse most reported is one of neglect and the least reported is sexual which has been the situation for last three years. In previous years, when reporting the category of abuse, the referrer was able put more than one category of abuse and there could sometimes be 2 or 3 categories chosen. The new format of reporting now only allows for the main category of abuse therefore comparative information for previous years is not available.

Category of Abuse	Gender	Age 18-64	Age 65 and over
		01/04/20 – 31/3/21	01/04/20 – 31/3/21
Physical	Male	27	26
	Female	25	69
Sexual	Male	-	3
	Female	12	3
Emotional /Psychological	Male	23	7
	Female	27	17
	Transgender	1	-
Financial	Male	15	12
	Female	11	26
Neglect	Male	14	58
	Female	20	136
Total	Male	79	106
	Female	95	251
	Total	175	357

6.4 The number of reports received with a concern of domestic abuse are captured as part of the data return for the Welsh Government. In the financial year 1/4/20 – 31/3/21 there were 34 reports received into adult safeguarding compared to 73 the previous year. This does not include the referrals that were received into Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) as they are captured in the data collated by IAA. The number referrals for domestic abuse received in IAA in the year 1/4/19 – 31/3/20 was 85 and there has been an increase of 100% to 169 referrals in the year 1/4/20 – 31/3/21. The referrals dealt with by IAA are ones where the person is not deemed an 'adult at risk' There is a thought that this could be linked to the current situation with Covid-19

		Age 18-64	Age – 65 and over
		01/04/20 – 31/3/21	01/04/20 – 31/3/21
Domestic	Male	10	3
	Female	13	8

6.4.1 Each of the five local authorities have different structures in place to respond to concerns about domestic violence, however GWASB partner agencies are represented on local and regional domestic abuse forums. There are strong links between practitioners in safeguarding and domestic abuse fields of practice and domestic abuse training is available and is well attended by all agencies across Gwent in a variety of formats. As discussed in previous years Blaenau Gwent have secured a seconded post, funded through ICF, from Cyfannol and the support worker is based within safeguarding and IAA.

6.4.2 The place where the alleged abuse occurred can be seen in the table below. The majority of referrals were split between the alleged abuse taking place in the persons own home where the alleged perpetrators could be paid carers going into the home or friends and family or within a care setting including a health environment - this could be residential, nursing or respite care and again the alleged perpetrators could be paid carers, family and/or other service users.

Place alleged abuse or neglect occurred	Total 1/4/20 – 31/3/21	Total 1/4/19 – 31/3/20
Own Home	264	242
Community	39	38
Care Home Setting	205	222
Health Setting	19	14
Other	5	24
Total	532	540

6.4.3 Safeguarding is an important part of the commissioning function and requires a substantial resource commitment from the Commissioning Team who provide crucial information in respect of commissioned services and providers which contributes to informed decision making in relation to safeguarding cases. A member of the Commissioning Team attends every strategy meeting held for commissioned services to offer advice, guidance and perspective. The Contracts and Commissioning Team Manager and the three Contract Monitoring Officers are all fully trained non-criminal investigators and undertake investigations independently or jointly with colleagues depending on the complexity and size of the investigation, or, with health colleagues if there are nursing issues involved. Whether referrals progress to strategy meetings and/or investigation, or are closed down as inappropriate safeguarding referrals, there is very often some preliminary investigation work and/or recommendations / performance issues with providers to be acted upon and followed up by the Commissioning Team.

6.4.4 The persons alleged responsible for the abuse are broken down in the table below. Paid employees being alleged perpetrators for a total of 156 in the year. 136 being a relative or friend/neighbour in the year. To progress the referral consent is needed from the alleged victim, but that consent can be overridden when a paid employee is the alleged perpetrator. These referrals are submitted to the Police for further action. The new safeguarding

procedures set out arrangements for responding to safeguarding concerns about those whose work, whether paid or voluntary, brings them into contact with children or adults at risk. Section 5 of the procedures is a stand-alone procedure for safeguarding allegation/concerns about practitioners and those in a position of trust. In the previous year, 19/20 172 out of the 540 referrals received, the person alleged responsible was a professional. 154 a friend or relative and 50 another service user.

Person alleged responsible	Total 01/04/20 – 31/3/21
A spouse	44
A child	32
A family member who is not a child or spouse	31
A professional	156
A volunteer or unpaid worker	-
A friend	26
A neighbour	3
Another service user	44
Other person	19
Not known – no specific individual identified on the duty to report due to the nature of the service settings i.e. unwitnessed fall by a service user	177
Total	532

6.5 The referrals received are from a variety of sources, as listed in the table below. The majority of the referrals were submitted from provider agencies. This is a trend every year. The previous year 260 of the 540 referrals received were from a provider agency. The category marked other includes referrals from DWP, fire and rescue, anonymous referrals and banks.

Source of Referral	Total 01/04/20 – 31/3/21
Self-reported	11
Relative	15
Friend or neighbour	2
Early Intervention / Prevention Service (Step-up)	1
Health	64
Education	1
Housing	8

Police	17
Probation	3
Third sector	33
Local authority	15
Independent hospital	-
Ambulance service	8
Care regulator	8
Provider agency	276
Advocate	-
Other	25
Internal (Social Worker, other team)	45
Total	532

6.6 **Updates on the achievements and progress on the strategic development plans during 2020/2021 and beyond:**

- The All Wales New Safeguarding procedures were launched in November 2019 and the processes were introduced in April 2020.
- Training sessions for the new procedures was commissioned by an Independent Provider but only limited numbers were able to attend with the intention of this being rolled out in-house. Unfortunately, due to current circumstances with Covid-19 this was delayed and will commence from April 2021.
- In response to the follow up review of the corporate arrangements for safeguarding by Wales Audit Office (WAO) which was presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 12th February 2020 a working group has been set up and an action plan developed to address the recommendations required.
- The introduction of the professional concerns protocol has increased activity within the safeguarding team, particularly during the pandemic where it has been alleged staff member have failed to adhere to infection control guidance relevant to Covid-19 and consequently vulnerable people have been placed at risk. A number of temporary short term solutions have been deployed to support the team during 2020 and the early part of 2021, with additional ad hoc capacity being provided from social work staff and managers from other areas in Adult Service, but a recent review if the situation has identified that a longer term solution is required with additional permanent social work capacity targeted specifically to ensure that we are safely safeguarding the most vulnerable adults in our communities by ensuring that the relevant safeguarding processes are followed by the department.
- There was a need to embed the departmental quality assurance process into the safeguarding work and ensure that full audits are completed in a timely manner. Work commenced in December 2020 and will continue developing 21/22
- Development of closer alignment to the Children Services Safeguarding arrangements including the embedding of the new multi-agency Safeguarding hub will continue throughout 21/22.

- Further development of performance measures to align to the requirements of the WCCIS IT systems and data collection requirements of both Welsh Government and Gwent Safeguarding Board.
- To contribute and support the increasing strategic demands and pressures towards Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking with partner agencies

Response to the Pandemic

- Gwent Safeguarding Board has produced a strategic response to ensure that safeguarding remains everybody's business whilst our partner agencies, citizens and services cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Gwent Safeguarding Board continue to support partner agencies and practitioners, at this time, as they perform their safeguarding duties to ensure that the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk remains at the forefront of our work.
- Safeguarding has been critical through the pandemic with all safeguarding staff in Adults working from home to maintain an essential service.
- Ongoing safeguarding training for all agencies has continued throughout the pandemic via eLearning as, due to the difficulties in these unprecedented times, face to face training was put on hold until further notice.
- There has been no drop in referrals to safeguarding due to the pandemic.

6.7 *Expected outcome for the public*

Quarterly reporting provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the Directorate and ensure accountability.

6.8 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 looks to build and strengthen on existing arrangements by involving service users, carers and other key partners where possible in helping shape and influence future design of services.

6.9 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

The Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board has developed a new partnership agreement between local authorities and agency partners including Gwent Police, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Wales Probation Trust, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations which sets out a clear and shared vision to ensure all adults in Gwent are safeguarded effectively through partnership working and community engagement.

6.10 *Preventative focus*

Providing this report and the level of detailed safeguarding information to the Joint Safeguarding Committee enables Members to ensure risks are identified and acted on.

6.11 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

It is a very important that GwASB does not work in isolation and having strong working relationships with the South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board (SEWSCB) and the Domestic Violence Board will be essential.

6.12 ***Integration (across service areas)***

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

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

Not applicable.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The performance of the department is monitored throughout the financial year from April to March and reported to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

The following hyperlink provides further details on the governance and structure arrangements: www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk