

Committee: **Joint Social Services and Education and Learning (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee**
 Date of meeting: **14th July 2021**
 Report Subject: **Safeguarding Self-evaluation Outcomes**
 Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins Executive Member for Education**
 Report Submitted by: **Michelle Jones, Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
24.06.21		04.07.21			14.07.21			

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise the findings of ongoing self-evaluation and business planning processes undertaken within the Education Directorate, across the Council and with key partners.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Blaenau Gwent Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness. The Education Directorate has adopted a standardised approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES).

2.2 This report looks at the emerging findings against the Safeguarding section (3.4) of the Estyn Framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES) requires inspectors to evaluate how well the authority fulfils its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding.

2.3 A comprehensive self-evaluation process helps identify those areas where progress has been made and where further improvement is required. Emerging findings, via ongoing self-evaluation is captured every Autumn and Spring time as well as via quarterly performance and finance reporting mechanisms. Moreover, it is the high-level points only, which are presented in the narrative in this report shown under Section 6.1 with the full report included as Appendix 1.

2.4 The self-evaluation period that this report covers is for the academic year 2019/20 and has informed the business planning priorities for 2021/22. It is important that the data within this report is understood in the context of a global pandemic and caution must be taken when drawing comparisons to previous academic years.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1

To accept the report as presented.

Option 2

3.2 Members are requested to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee

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

4.1 Corporate Plan

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan activity
Support a fairer sustainable economy and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes• To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing
To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater• To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 The safeguarding in education self-evaluation outcome statement and associated business process are cognisant of the ongoing austerity measures and its implementation is managed through existing resources.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Directorate Risk register identifies safeguarding risks for the Directorate and is informed by the findings from this and other processes. Such risks are monitored as part of the routine Directorate risk management business activity and the Directorate's quality assurance processes seek to test the robustness of safeguarding activities and inform the corporate risk register.

5.3 ***Legal***

Safeguarding arrangements comply with relevant legislation and guidance which includes the Welsh Government Keeping Learners Safe Guidance.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The self-evaluation and safeguarding business arrangements are managed through existing resources.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 **Areas where Good Progress has been made**

- The Safeguarding Matrix approach to capturing information is helpful and supports the ongoing improvement in practice in this area.
- The close working arrangements between Education and Social Services have developed well, further supporting a coherence of approach regarding safeguarding in schools and settings. The Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed and understood by key stakeholders.
- Recent work to respond to community safety issues, counter potential terrorism and extremist behaviours has progressed well, for example, the Safer School Partnership, and the Respect and Resilience Action Plan.
- The Operation Encompass work has progressed very well and supports schools in this regard.
- Quality assurance processes to test the robustness of safeguarding processes have been implemented and inform ongoing work in this area.
- The new Council Policy requiring all school Governors to be DBS cleared is being implemented.
- Most schools are now using MyConcern as a means of recording safeguarding incidents

6.1.2. **Areas requiring further improvement**

- Continue to develop policy and practice that is responsive to emerging school concerns in line with the Vision for Education of school led improvement in a contextual safeguarding approach.
- Full implementation of VAWDASV (Group 1) training needs to be achieved, as well as the implementation of Group 2 training across all LGES settings.
- The 360-degree safe Cymru Policy needs to be implemented in all schools.
- Digitalisation of the safeguarding matrix to be developed and streamlined to enable greater readability, including the roll-out of MyConcern to the few schools that are not currently using it, now that the Council has secured a revenue budget.
- Provide greater flexibility in the training offer to increase the uptake of safeguarding training by school governors

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

The Directorate's self-evaluation processes are aligned with LGES framework. Established quality assurance processes inform the work of the Safeguarding in Education Manager who shares the high level learning at termly meetings which take place with the Safeguarding Leads from LGES representatives. More detailed information is shared with the individual establishment, at monthly meetings between the safeguarding team and lead education staff and on a regular basis with Education DMT and on a quarterly basis with CLT and Members of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee through the Performance Report.

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

The Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) and self-evaluation process enables the Education Directorate to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the directorate is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Through effective self-evaluation processes, support and monitoring of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be identified with consequent early intervention to secure improvement. The effectiveness of the Council's monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns coupled with the sharing of key areas across LGES settings.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Council collaborates with a range of services to discharge its Local Government Education Service (LGES) functions. The Safeguarding in Education Manager participates in the local, regional and national safeguarding groups and shares learning with Safeguarding Leads from LGES settings.

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.

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

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

6.8 ***EqIA***

Not required for this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Monitoring of the emerging findings of self-evaluation is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to

make informed decisions regarding the safeguarding arrangements across LGES settings.

There are well-established processes in place to ensure that self-evaluation is used to inform business plans to secure further improvement and in doing so continue to keep learner safe through systems, processes and procedures responding to emerging concerns, risks and patterns of behaviours.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Arrangements