

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

Date of meeting: **21st January 2022**

Report Subject: **Adult Safeguarding Report 1st April to 30th September 2021**

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

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
23.11.2021	25.11.2021	12.01.22			10.12.2021	02.03.22		

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 to the 30th September 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.
- 2.2 A governance framework has been established by the Boards with each group structure having clear terms of reference and work plans which link directly to the three year strategic plan 2020/2023. This enables the Board to provide assurances for partner agencies and members of the public, to maintain oversight of the operational demand across agencies and to consider priorities moving forward.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The report has been considered and agreed by the Social Services Leadership team and the Corporate Leadership Team.

3.2 Option 1

Scrutiny are asked to accept the report as provided.

Option 2

To seek further clarification on any areas within the report and/or to highlight any areas of interest or concern that need to be considered further.

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

- Corporate Plan;
- Single Integrated Plan;
- Corporate Risk Register.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There is no anticipated impact on the budget both in the short and long term.

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.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications within this report.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no implications within this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Performance and data is provided within the report

The number of reports received of an 'adult suspected of being at risk' during the given period was 295 which is a slight increase on the previous year where the total number of referrals for the same period in 2020/2021 was 261.

Number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during 1st April to 30 th June 2021	147
Number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during 1 st July to 30 th September 2021	148

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 four years.

Although as a percentage the number of referrals for sexual abuse has risen in the last half year.

Category of Abuse	Gender	Age 18-64	Age – 65 and over	Age 18-64	Age – 65 and over
		01/04/21 – 30/06/21	01/04/21 – 30/06/21	01/07/21 – 30/09/21	01/07/21 – 30/09/21
Physical	Male	5	4	4	6
	Female	9	10	11	17
Sexual	Male	2	0	2	0
	Female	5	1	7	3
Emotional /Psychological	Male	6	1	6	4
	Female	16	8	10	4
Financial	Male	8	3	6	4
	Female	6	10	4	11
Neglect	Male	8	13	4	12
	Female	7	25	6	27
Total	Male	29	21	22	26
	Female	43	54	38	62
	Total	72	75	60	88

Referrals of domestic abuse are captured as part of the data return for the Welsh Government. There has been an increase in reports received for domestic abuse with 33 in the last half year and 61 in the current half year.

		Age 18-64	Age – 65 and over	Age 18-64	Age – 65 and over
		01/04/21 – 30/06/21	01/04/21 – 30/06/21	01/07/21 – 30/09/21	01/07/21 – 30/09/21
Domestic	Male	5	4	3	5
	Female	11	13	8	12

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 Integrated Care Funding, from Cyfannol and the support worker is based within safeguarding and Information Advice and Assistance until March 2022.

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 The alleged perpetrators in these cases 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 01/04/21 – 30/06/21	Total 01/07/21 – 30/09/21
Own Home	79	57
Community	17	15
Care Home Setting	46	67
Health Setting	5	9
Total	147	148

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. Whether referrals progress to strategy discussions/meetings and further enquiries are needed with providers the commissioning team are involved as part of the enquiry.

The persons alleged responsible for the abuse are broken down in the table below. Paid employees being alleged perpetrators for 60 of the reports received and 61 being a relative. The previous year showed similar figures. 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. In the domestic abuse cases a high proportion of alleged victims do not consent to the referral progressing through safeguarding. These referrals are submitted to the Police for further action.

Person alleged responsible	Total 01/04/21 – 30/06/21	Total 01/07/21 – 30/09/21
A spouse	10	8
A child	12	12
A family member who is not a child or spouse	13	6
A professional	33	27
A volunteer or unpaid worker	0	0
A friend	7	7
A neighbour	0	0
Another service user	6	18
Other person	8	8
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	58	62
Total	147	148

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.

Source of Referral	Total 01/04/21 – 30/06/21	Total 01/07/21 – 30/09/21
Self-reported	5	8
Relative	9	7
Friend or neighbour	1	3
Early Intervention / Prevention Service	0	0
Health	32	15
Education	1	2
Housing	1	0
Police	7	3
Probation	0	2
Third sector	10	7
Local authority	4	3
Independent hospital	0	0
Ambulance service	7	3
Care regulator	5	3
Provider agency	37	69
Advocate	0	0
Other	8	8
Internal (Social Worker, other team)	20	15
Total	147	148

Updated response to the Pandemic over the last 6 months

- ✓ The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused significant disruption to all services and communities across the region. Despite this, Gwent Safeguarding Board and Blaenau Gwent Safeguarding team have worked diligently to ensure that essential services have remained operational to provide support to the most vulnerable adults.
- ✓ Since the onset of the pandemic, we have made considerable efforts working with our regional partners to develop a comprehensive agency training programme so that we can offer online learning experience and move towards a more blended approach to practitioner development. This enables us to continue to raise awareness of safeguarding and add value to agencies/providers on training provision and our training resources are up to date and meet the required standards. During the summer period information sessions were held with the social work teams to increase knowledge of the Wales safeguarding Procedures and promote collaboration and early intervention. We have delivered this via Teams to minimise the impact of Covid19. Our long term plan is to continue to deliver the training to social work teams and then expand this to external providers in the authority. We have also been collaborating with the Caerphilly Safeguarding Team to deliver Advanced Safeguarding Training via Teams organised through Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly's Joint Workforce training unit.
- ✓ In terms of collaboration and early prevention we have been strengthening our relationship with our IAA team. This has involved a member of the safeguarding team basing themselves within the service once a week. This has allowed for early discussions and a collaborate response to ensure preventative services can be utilised where appropriate
- ✓ Multi-agency Transition panel still meet regularly as this improves collaboration with other agencies in both adult and children's services and across social care, health and education. This forum promotes early intervention and prevention for young people transitioning to adulthood. It also helps us identify trends in terms of the issues young adults are experiencing.
- ✓ We are continuing to work well with voluntary organisations, however it is evident that they too are experiencing higher pressures as a result of staffing resources, therefore we have taken the opportunity to provide additional grant funding to alleviate any pressures in preventing a backlog in referrals.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

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

6.3 *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

6.4 *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.

6.5 ***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.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Blaenau Gwent fully participates in the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards.

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

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.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Not applicable.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment (complete an impact assessment to consider how the decision might help to reduce the inequalities of outcome associated with socio-economic disadvantage).***

All service provision and functions that sit under social services are subject to socio economic disadvantages for example, low income, material and area deprivation. All programmes work towards addressing these disadvantages.

6.9b ***Equality Impact Assessment***

The overarching vision is to support the needs of the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities through a range of early intervention, prevention and support mechanisms. With the aim of building resilient individuals, resilient families and resilient communities.

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.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

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