

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **26th October 2022**
Report Subject: **Corporate Safeguarding Performance Report, including Information for Social Services 1st April to 30th June 2022 and Education Summer Term–2022**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Haydn Trollope, Executive Member People & Social Services**
Cllr Sue Edmunds, Executive Member People & Education
Report Submitted by: **Tanya Evans, Interim Corporate Director of Social Services**
Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of 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)
20.09.2022	04.10.22	11.10.22			18.10.22	26.10.22		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with corporate safeguarding performance information and analysis from Children’s and Adults Social Services from 1st April 2022 to the 30th June 2022, and the Education summer term. Monitoring and reporting systems are well developed to ensure the Council can track information and evidence that the safeguarding agenda remains a priority for the Local Authority, and to identify Safeguarding areas within the Authority which require further development to improve Safeguarding practices and procedures.

1.2 The information provided will enable members to identify safeguarding trends and areas within the Authority that may require further development, to improve safeguarding practice in order to meet the safeguarding needs of the people within Blaenau Gwent.

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1 The report contains corporate safeguarding information as well as information from social services from 1st April 2022 – 30th June 2022 and education information from 1st April to 31st July 2022.

2.2 This report is written in order to provide a greater focus on the safeguarding agenda. It has been agreed that this report should be reported to the People Scrutiny Committee under the new political administration. These safeguarding reports have for many years been presented to a Joint Social Services and Education and Learning (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee, however there is strong recognition that safeguarding is everybody’s business across the Council and this report should include corporate safeguarding activity as well as specific information in relation to Social Services and Education.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report will be considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on 18th October 2022, and any feedback will be reported verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option 1

3.3 Accept the approach and information detailed in the report provided.

Option 2

Consider the information provided and make recommendations on where improvements can be made to the current monitoring processes.

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

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

- Corporate Plan
- Corporate Risk Register
- Safe Reduction of CLA Strategy
- Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

4.2 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. 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 both in the short and long term.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Corporate and Directorate Risk registers identify the highest risks for the Social Services Directorate, the Education Directorate as well as Corporate Services. These safeguarding risks are monitored as part of the quarterly report of the Director of Social Services.

5.3 ***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.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no human resources implications attached to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information**

Performance and data is provided within the report and the accompanying data pack.

6.2 **Corporate Safeguarding information**

6.2.1 **Overview**

The Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group is well established and has maintained a regular core group of senior representatives from across the Council. The Group meets four times per year.

6.2.2 The group consists of all leads/managers in all departments across the Local Authority and is in place to ensure the Council is meeting its corporate safeguarding responsibilities. The group ensures its activity is aligned to the Welsh Government's recently published Corporate Safeguarding Good Practice Guidance. The Group is chaired by the Children's Safeguarding Lead; whilst the chairing responsibilities should be managed by a rota basis it was agreed that following the COVID pandemic Children's Services would continue to chair for an additional twelve-month period.

6.2.3 The Corporate Safeguarding group has been responsible for driving forward the recommendations made following an inspection by Audit Wales. The recommendations are as follows:

1. To Improve corporate leadership and comply with Welsh Government policy on safeguarding
2. Ensure there is a corporate-wide policy on safeguarding covering all council services to provide a clear strategic direction and clear lines of accountability across the Council.
3. Strengthen safe recruitment of staff and volunteers
4. Improve accountability for corporate safeguarding by regularly reporting safeguarding issues and assurances to scrutiny committee(s) against a balanced and council-wide set of performance information
5. Establish a rolling programme of internal audit reviews to undertake systems testing and compliance reviews on the council's safeguarding practices
6. Include safeguarding within the internal audit programme to strengthen accountability and challenge.
7. Ensure the risks associated with safeguarding are considered at both a corporate and service level in developing and agreeing risk management plans across the council.

6.2.4 All these recommendations have been followed up with appropriate action being undertaken. Audit Wales returned to Blaenau Gwent Council in May 2022 to review this work; the Council awaits confirmation of their findings.

6.2.5 As part of the Corporate Safeguarding Leads forward work plan and in line with the recommendations from Audit Wales, each directorate has been requested to complete a Self-Assessment. These assessments have been completed and the Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Leads group, is currently in the process of collating the findings from the self-assessment

evaluations and will feed back these findings to the next Corporate Safeguarding Leads meeting which is scheduled for October 2022.

6.2.6 In order to achieve regional consistency, the regional Safeguarding Leads have been working on developing a unified Self-Assessment Tool. This is in the final stages of development.

6.2.7 A Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework has been developed and signed by CLT. The Corporate Safeguarding Leads are responsible for ensuring the framework is implemented and the uptake of the mandatory training, across the Council.

6.3 **Referrals to Social Services**

6.3.1 **Figure 1:1** Shows the number of referrals made to social services. The chart demonstrates an increase in referrals between Q3 (1,297), Q4 (1,550) and Q1 (1702). The data indicates no levelling off of referral rates although there was a slight decrease in Q2. However, despite this, referrals remain high across all Q's compared to previous years. The referral rates are currently being monitored and similar pictures have been observed across neighbouring authorities.

6.3.2 **Figure 1.1A** Shows the number of individuals associated with the referrals, the number of individuals who have had 2 or more referrals during the month and the highest number of referrals received by an individual during the month. This is a significant increase compared to the number of referrals in Q3 and Q4. This increase can be attributed to and correlates to the increase in the overall referrals received.

6.3.3 **Figure 1.2:** Shows the source of the referrals. As in previous quarters, police remain the highest referring agency (44% in Q3, 41% in Q4 and 41% in Q1), followed by Health and Education (both with 14%). In relation to Police being the highest referring agency, this has been the position for many years as Gwent Police Policy dictates that all incidents attended where children are present or linked, results in an automatic referral to Children's Services. As part of the Service Manager's forward working plan, this will be reviewed to understand the nature of the referrals. Currently a Detective Sergeant from Gwent Police is co-located in Children's IAA, to quality assure all PPNs received.

6.3.4 **Figure 1.3:** Shows the numbers of referrals received into the department on open cases. During Q4 the number increased to 1554 from 1116 in Q3, with a further increase to 1643 in Q1. This increase in referrals on open cases correlates with the overall increase in referrals generally into Children's Services. Again, this situation continues to be monitored regularly, especially in light of the current staffing crisis.

6.4 **Child Protection**

6.4.1 **Figure 2.2:** Gives a summary of the number of children on the child protection register and the numbers of registrations and deregistration is also included.

There were a total of 64 children on the child protection register in Q4 from 34 families. This was a decrease of 1 child from the previous quarter, but an increase of 5 in the number of families involved. The numbers of children on the child protection register increased by 13 to 77 in Q1 involving 41 families which represents a further increase of 7 in the number of families involved.

Children's services have been using a strengths based model of assessment and intervention and this has proved very successful in how social workers intervene with families. The strengths based model requires assessments to consider what is working well within the family and what matters to families in respect of change. Risk management is a contributing factor in the assessments and is having a very positive outcome when engaging with all family members. Whilst we have seen a small rise in Q2 there is nothing to suggest the LA need to review its practice as the numbers have remained stable throughout all the Q's. This will continue to be monitored closely and any fluctuation trends will be reported into the Service Managers Meetings which are held on a monthly basis.

6.4.2 **Figure 2.3:** shows the categories of abuse linked to children on the Child Protection register over the past year. Neglect and Emotional/Psychological abuse remain the highest category of abuse.

6.4.3 **Figure 2.4:** relates to the age and gender breakdown of children on the child protection register with Males aged 10-15 being the highest (16), followed by females in the 5-9 and 1-4 age brackets (14).

6.5 **Adults Social Services**

6.5.1 **Figure 2.1:** relates to the number of reports received of an 'adult suspected of being at risk'. During the given period the total was 139. During the same period for the previous year (2020/21) there was a total of 146. This evidences that the figures are fairly static year on year with only a very slight increase.

6.5.2 **Figure 2.2:** 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. The category of abuse most reported is one of neglect and the least reported is sexual which has been the situation for the last three years.

6.5.3 **Figure 2.3:** This relates to the places where the alleged abuse takes place. The majority of referrals were split between the alleged abuse taking place in the person's own home and in Care Home Settings. 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.

6.5.4 **Figure 2.4:** Relates to persons alleged to be responsible for the abuse. Paid employees being alleged perpetrators for 26 in quarter 1, 25 being a relative or friend. 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 discussion and action as required.

6.5.5 **Figure 2.5:** Demonstrates that referrals received are from a variety of sources. The majority of the referrals were submitted from provider agencies. This is a trend every year and something to be expected as the provider agencies have a duty to report to social services if they suspect someone they work with is at risk of abuse or neglect. The category marked other includes referrals from DWP, fire and rescue, anonymous referrals and banks.

6.5.6 Safeguarding is an important part of the commissioning function and requires a substantial resource commitment from the Commissioning Team. The Commissioning Team 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.

6.5.7 **Figure 2.6:** Referrals of domestic abuse are captured as part of the data return for the Welsh Government. During Quarter 1 there were 30 reports received for domestic abuse, 23 female and 7 male.

6.5.8 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.

6.5.9 **Section 04 Fig 3.1/3.2** – Referrals from Education - The number of referrals to children's services is increasing. It is clear that when schools were re-purposed due to Covid, and closed to the majority of learners, the number of referrals to Children's Services was much lower and decreased significantly during the second lockdown period, though this was not as great as the decrease seen in the first lockdown period from March 2020. During the Summer term, there was a significant increase in referral rates into IAA, higher than the rate seen when schools re-opened to all learners following the first lockdown period. The number of referrals made directly to Families

First from education has remained stable but has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

6.6 **Education**

- 6.6.1 Members will be aware that Blaenau Gwent Council and the Education Directorate is committed to ensuring that Safeguarding in Education processes are robust, fit for purpose and are being consistently applied. Through this report Scrutiny Members are provided with an overview of the work that is undertaken in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are managed effectively and fulfil the requirements as set out in the Estyn framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES). This report is the first report that captures the broader data sets which will include training take up, safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable learners etc. Not all data will be reported to each meeting but over the course of the year all data will be reported so that Members can appropriately scrutinise the safeguarding arrangements.
- 6.6.2 The data presented within this written report is done so on an exception basis to bring key aspects of information to Members' attention and as such not all evidence in the supporting performance report will be included in this narrative.
- 6.6.3 **Section 05 Fig 1.1.1/1.1.2** - The Education Directorate risk register identified an increased risk during the period, in part because of the Corporate/Directorate's response to a critical incident in one school.
- 6.6.4 **Section 05 Figure 1.3.1/1.3.2: Safeguarding Policy** - The Local Government Education Services Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually. For 2021-22, all schools adopted the safeguarding policy. Partner agencies working with schools have a Safeguarding Policy in place which is reviewed annually by the Safeguarding in Education Manager.
- 6.6.5 **Section 05 Figure 2.2.1: Keeping Learners Safe audit tool** - In 2021-22, the Keeping Learners Safe audit tool was used as the model in Blaenau Gwent across the school estate for the self-evaluation of safeguarding. All schools completed this audit tool during 2021-22. One school needed a high level of support and work is on-going to support this setting.
- 6.6.6 **Section 05 Figure 3.1.1: Out of County Placements (OOC)** – A quality assurance process is in place to assess the suitability of placement prior to any placement being decided upon. This considers a review of the settings safeguarding policy and latest Estyn/ Ofsted report. Intelligence is shared across regional networks for local authority-maintained settings.
- 6.6.7 As at the Summer term 2022, one independent setting was identified as red i.e. safeguarding quality assurance processes gave cause for concern. The setting is presently not admitting any further pupils. There are two pupils currently in year 11 at this setting. This setting is monitored on a two-weekly basis by the CLA Education Coordinator.
- 6.6.8

Section 05 Figure 4.1.1: DBS Position Statement - There were 22 DBS/EWC escalations throughout the year: 3 for new DBS checks, all of whom were working from home; 2 were EWC registrations and the remaining 17 were for renewal DBS checks. Of these renewals, 5 were for exam invigilators whose services were not required and 3 were for long term absentees from the workplace. Other factors contributing to renewal escalations were ID verification difficulties and longer time taken for the return of renewal certificates.

6.6.9

Section 05 Figure 4.2.1/4.2.2: Training - There has been a very slight decrease in the number of school staff completing the VAWDASV Group 1 online training over 2021-22 from 72% in the Autumn term to 70% in the Summer term. Designated staff are expected to undertake group 2 VAWDASV 'Ask and Act' training and all staff are expected to complete PREVENT training. Attendance at termly meetings for the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) in schools has remained stable throughout the year, with attendance during the Summer term at 64%.

6.6.10

Section 05 Figure 5.2.1/5.2.2/5.2.3: Electively Home Educated Pupils Annual visits by LA Officers to EHE pupils provides valuable information regarding the efficiency of the education provided and also allows for intervention if the education being provided is not suitable

6.6.11

The number of children EHE in Blaenau Gwent is below the Welsh Mean average (Figure 5.2.1)

6.6.12

Section 05 Figure 5.2.2 identifies at a secondary level the number of pupils becoming EHE. Two of these schools during the year have recorded 13 pupils each becoming EHE.

6.6.13

Section 05 Figure 5.2.4 When July 22 is compared to March 22 across all year groups there is an increase in pupils becoming EHE. The level of increase rises at key stage 4.

6.6.14

Support is offered to reintegrate pupils back into school or to signpost to other agencies where necessary. Home visits are offered, parents who refuse are few. Neutral venues are offered, and School Attendance Orders are used appropriately. Multi-agency meetings take place for pupils for whom there are concerns.

6.6.15

Section 05 Figure 5.3.1/5.3.2: Children Missing in Education - The Children Missing in Education Policy has been implemented across the local authority and tracking processes are embedded. Figure 5.3.1 identifies an increase in the number of children missing, it has increased from 14 in the autumn term 2021 to 17 in the Summer term 22. For pupils that move into the local authority welfare visits are undertaken and support to complete in-year transfers is given. Where pupils move out of the local authority, links are made with the receiving authority to ensure that the pupils are supported into school.

6.6.16

6.6.17 The data identifies that nearly all children are located, and Common Transfer Files (CTF) files are sent to the destination school when located in the UK. The occasions where their destination has not been confirmed are where children have moved back to their home country.

6.6.18 **Section 05 Figure 5.4.1: Youth Offending Referrals** identifies that during the Summer term 32 children were accessing support from the Youth Offending Service with a range of different interventions being provided. Most of these pupils are in mainstream secondary schools. The Education Welfare service works with schools to try and ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to education. There is also representation at YOS resettlement and reintegration panel, which discusses pupils with unmet needs.

6.6.19 **Section 05 5.5: Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**
The Council's Community Safety team chairs a multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Case Group. The Group receive referrals about the anti-social behaviour of named individuals from a range of partners, though mainly the Police, which identify concerns about persistent and/or escalating anti-social behaviours in neighbourhoods across Blaenau Gwent. A well-established 4 Strike process is used to deal with the child and each case is assessed on the frequency and severity of the anti-social behaviour and its impact on victims and/or the community.

6.6.20 **Section 05 Figure 5.5.1** shows the number of children identified in the 4-Strike ASB Process, broken down by gender and age. Generally, more males have been involved in anti-social behaviour, this is the same for secondary school age children. The Education Welfare Service ensures that relevant information is shared with schools so that appropriate support can be put in place.

6.6.21 **Section 05 Figure 5.5.2** shows the types of anti-social behaviour incidents identified from children who have received Strike 1 and Strike 2 Warning Letters. Many issues are in relation to being part of a group, nuisance behaviour and setting fires. Schools have been provided with information on the SWFRS Reflect programme which would address fire setting. There is also an ASB policy in schools, which mirrors the 4 strike ASB process in the community.

6.6.22 **Section 05 Figure 5.5.3** shows the number of children identified in each stage of the 4-Strike ASB process. Most individuals do not progress past Strike 1. However, in Q1 there is an escalation in the number of Strike 3 cases, this is attributable to anti-social behaviour in one of our Town Centres. No Strike 4 cases were seen across all Quarters.

6.6.23 **Section 05 Figure 5.6.2: Child Employment** - There were 3 investigations undertaken because of illegal child employment. In the first case the employer was spoken to, and a warning issued. The child did not undertake any further employment. In the other 2 cases parents were spoken to.

Section 05 5.9: Attendance

Officers from the Education Welfare Service are in schools to enable intervention to take place where concerns are raised regarding pupil non-attendance.

6.6.24

Section 05 Figure 5.9.2 identifies that during the Summer term, as a result of poor attendance which fell below 80%, two fixed penalty notices were issued, 6 cases were referred to court via the single justice process and no higher-tier cases were referred directly to court.

6.6.25

Section 05 Figures 5.10.1 to 5.10.3 provides data on exclusion levels. Data is analysed on a regular basis and advice is given to schools to ensure that appropriate interventions/support is in place. Where pupils have been permanently excluded pupils are supported into new educational provision.

6.6.26

Section 05 Figure 5.11.2: Physical Interventions

Systems are in place within the Local Authority to report when Physical Interventions are used in school to manage pupils' behaviour. Following each incident, the school is required to record the incident in a Bound and Numbered book and complete an incident form. The incident form is sent to the Local Authority Education Directorate where it is recorded on a central recording system. During the pandemic, very low rates were reported. The number of incidents has increased over the three terms during 2021-22 and are now similar to pre-pandemic levels. Throughout 2021-22, nearly all physical interventions were reported by the two Special Schools in Blaenau Gwent and in the Summer term, no incidents were reported from mainstream schools.

6.6.27

Section 05 Figure 5.12.1– 5.12.2 Bullying / Racist Incidents

There are established arrangements in place for the reporting of bullying within schools. At the time of writing, the Summer term information is not available for inclusion, but an update can be provided at the committee meeting. The spring term data identified:

- 27 incidents of bullying recorded from 6 schools with all secondary/ all age settings submitting a positive return.
- From the above verbal abuse had the highest rating of incidents (5) followed by racist, homophobic and physical bullying (4).
- 16 schools confirmed that there were no reported bullying incidents.
- This data will be enhanced e.g., the gender of perpetrators and victims, this will improve when using 'MyConcern' safeguarding package now deployed at all our schools.

6.6.28

The three schools who did not complete a return have been supported and reminded of the importance of completing returns. Strategic equality plans continue to be collated on a quarterly basis. Funding has been secured from WG and WLGA for further training to secondary schools on the equality and diversity considerations.

6.6.29

As can be seen from **Fig 5.13.1** very few bullying incidents lead to a pupil being excluded from school.

6.6.30

Section 05 Figure 5.14.1: Peer-on-peer sexual harassment. In response to the Estyn report, 'We don't tell our teachers – experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales', a BG action plan has been developed to address the recommendations in the report.

- 6.6.31 **Figures 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 DBS Compliance** evidences all those within the Council who require a DBS and those who do not. Currently over 72% of Council employees require a DBS check. It is evident that this is an area in which we are performing exceptionally well. All directorates are performing at over 98% and those where no DBS is in place, there is a clear escalation process in place to ensure that managers and leads are aware and can take necessary action to resolve. Operational Teams receive fortnightly reports of all DBS applications currently in progress to enable Safeguarding escalation where required.
- 6.6.32 **Figure 6.2.1 VAWDASV Corporate Online Training** evidences that Corporate training has been provided to staff in respect of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence with 58% of staff having completed the VAWDASV online training.
- 6.6.33 All Wales Safeguarding Training online for staff was included in the online corporate induction module in 2019.
- 6.6.34 In terms of the wider workforce a suitable module is currently being evaluated by the corporate Safeguarding group which has been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic.
- 6.6.35 **Figure 6.4 Risk Register.** All data relating to the Risk Register will continue to be monitored and reviewed.

7. **Expected Outcome for the Public**

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

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

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

The development of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the Departmental Safeguarding Leads meetings have been reconvened in 2021 and will help to ensure all departments within the Authority are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and are kept updated with any emerging issues or trends within safeguarding.

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

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

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

7.2 **Thinking for the Long Term (forward planning)**

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

The rigorous self-evaluation processes ensure that key areas for development are identified and then embedded within business planning arrangements.

7.3 **Preventative Focus**

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

Providing detailed safeguarding information to Scrutiny Committee enables Members to ensure risks are identified and acted on. 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.

7.4 **Collaboration / Partnership Working**

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

Additionally, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy ensures each department has safeguarding leads and these meet together on a quarterly basis looking at safeguarding across the whole Authority. The Leisure Trust lead also participates in this meeting. Throughout the Q's partnership working with the police and statutory partners continued to progress. The Hub model is working well, with multi agency safeguarding meetings happening in a timely manner

7.5 **Integration (across service areas)**

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

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.

EqlA

7.6 N/A

Monitoring Arrangements

7.7 The Local Safeguarding Network Group is a subgroup 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 monitor and review 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.

The performance of the services across the Council is monitored throughout the financial year from April to March and reported to Scrutiny/Executive Committees.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

*Appendix 1 – BG Safeguarding Data Pack Oct22 Final
Containing data relating to April 2022-June 2022 Social Services, April 2022
– July 2022 for Education*

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