

Committee: **Joint Social Services & Education and Learning (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **2nd December 2019**
Report Subject: **Safeguarding Performance Information for Social Services and Education – 1st April to 30th June 2019**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services
 Cllr Clive Meredith, Executive Member Education**
Report Submitted by: **Alison Ramshaw, Service Manager, Children’s Services and 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)
30/09/19	01/10/19	Oct 19			02.12.19	18.12.19		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide scrutiny members with safeguarding performance information from the Council with a focus on analysis from Children’s Social Services and Education from 1st April 2019 to the 30th June 2019. 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.
- 1.2 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 the Council in particular from Social Services from 1st April 2019 – 30th June 2019, and Education information from 29th April 2019 – 24th July 2019
- 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:

Option1

Accept the approach and information detailed in the report provided.

Option 2

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

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

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

- Corporate Plan;
- Corporate Risk Register;
- Safe Reduction of Children Looked After 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)***

Q1 has seen a rise in the numbers of children on the child protection register, from 56 in Q4 to 70 in Q1, however whilst this number accounts for the numbers of children on the child protection register, the numbers of families has only risen by 3. (56 children to 33 families in Q4, 70 children to 36 families in Q1). Whilst the numbers of children who have needed to be accommodated has also risen slightly, the numbers of court applications continues to be stable which is having a positive impact on the budget.

The Safeguarding Manager has successfully completed an induction and the Safeguarding Team is now running at full staffing capacity which is also having a positive impact on the safeguarding budget as the department no longer requires the services of independent chairs.

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 from April 2019 – June 2019. The chart demonstrates a slight dip in referrals during Q1 (1,091) from Q4 (1,283). The drop in referrals may be an indication that the work currently being undertaken with partner agencies regarding thresholds /assessments of risk and the availability of preventative services is having a positive impact on Children's Services.

Figure 1.2: Shows the source of the referrals as previous quarters, police remained the highest referring agency (31%) followed by education (17%) closely followed by Health (14%).

Figure 1.3: shows the numbers of referrals received into the department on open cases, which were 806. This is a slight increase on Q4's data.

6.2.2 Youth Services

Figure 1.4: Shows the numbers of youth service referrals during Q1 (18) this figure shows that double the amount of referrals were received in this quarter compared to that of Q4 (9).

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 2.1: Gives the number of children (and families) on the child protection register (CPR). The summary of registrations and deregistration is given in figure 2.2. The total of 70 children to 36 families in Q1 evidences a slight rise in numbers however this number is following an overall trend as the numbers in previous quarters demonstrate consistency (see below):

74 in Q1

77 in Q2

75 in Q3

56 in Q4

70 in Q1 (2019)

Figure 2.3: shows the categories of abuse, it is usual to see neglect and emotional abuse being the largest form of categorisation within Blaenau Gwent and Q1 shows no exception to this trend.

The age profile and gender of the children on the CPR is shown in **Figure 2.4**: The graph shows that there is no difference regarding the numbers, with an equal split (35 females/35 males) with boys and girls aged 5 – 9 years being the slightly largest cohort. However the difference in boys to girls is minimal across the age ranges.

The average time a child is on the CPR is shown in **Figure 2.5**. The Social Services Senior Management Team review all those children on the CPR for 12 months or longer on a regular basis to ensure plans are appropriate and there is no drift.

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 during Q1 (30) with 26 children being registered (16 families) and 14 children were registered (1 at birth) 3 not registered.

36 review conferences were held, 19 children continued registration and 17 children who ceased registration.

Figure 2.7: shows the number of initial conferences held within timescales (15 working days). There has been consistent practice in this area throughout the 12 month reporting period, with 100% of conferences held within timescales.

Figure 2.8: relates to review conferences and the graph shows 100% performance which is excellent.

6.3 **Education Information**

6.3.1 **Overview**

Blaenau Gwent Council and 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 greater clarity on the extensive work that is undertaken in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements give no cause for concern and fulfil the requirements as set out in the Estyn framework for Local Government Education Services (LGS), and as such the structure of this report is kept under review.

6.3.2 **Bullying Incidents and Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI)**

There have been processes developed between Education and the Youth Offending Service to tackle anti-social behaviour in schools and a draft policy is in the process of being adopted to look at parenting contracts and parents.

6.3.3 **Numbers of restrictive physical interventions**

Systems are in place within the Local Authority to gather incidents when Restrictive Physical Interventions (*Figure 4.1*) 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.

Figure 4.1: number of RPIs used in school during the summer term.

In the last report, it was noted that not all schools had submitted their information for the previous period. This information has now been submitted and shows the numbers of RPIs as follows:

Autumn term – 82

Spring term – 45

Summer term - 34

From the data, it can be seen that the number of RPIs has decreased as the school year has progressed.

Regular monitoring of incident forms is undertaken by the Safeguarding in Education Manager to ensure the use of physical intervention is appropriate. A small group of pupils account for a large number of the incidents. There has been an increase in the level of complexity which is a contributory factor in terms of RPI. Whilst the figures have reduced as the year has progressed, a focus is needed to this area to ensure any learning is gained and applied.

6.3.4 **Numbers of bullying incidents reported which have led to exclusions**

Bullying has been identified by children and young people as a significant issue they face. An anti-bullying strategy has been developed by the Education Department.

Figure 4.2 shows that between April and June there was one exclusion from school where bullying was recorded as the primary reason for the exclusion. This is an increase on the same period last year when there were no recorded incidents. There were two further exclusions where bullying was recorded as a third reason for the exclusion. This is a decrease on the previous period where there were 3 such recorded instances.

It should be noted that due to the small numbers recorded we need to be cautious about drawing trend conclusions.

6.3.5 **Quality Assurance Visits**

The Education Directorate has developed a quality assurance process across Local Government Education settings (LGES) which has been in place since September 2017. As such, quality assurance visits to Local

Government Education Settings (LGSES) include pupil and staff voice through pupil and staff discussions, scrutiny of training, policy, safe recruitment practice, and record-keeping of concerns. A “dip test of activity” Activity is undertaken by the Safeguarding in Education Manager to test the robustness of the safeguarding systems and to ascertain a level of assurance. Over a two year time period, this process has been applied to Schools, Early Years settings, the Youth Service, Leisure Trust, Home to School Transport, Catering and Organisational Development.

Figure 4.3: Since the Quality Assurance protocol was introduced in 2017, 20 visits out of a possible 30 (67%) have been completed under this process (Figure 4.3). There have been no significant safeguarding issues identified and visits have provided reassurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place in schools and other education services. This protocol has been updated for the next two years and is cognisant of emerging learning.

6.3.6 **Estyn Judgements**

Scrutiny members will be aware of the Estyn framework for schools which changed in 2017 and that Inspection area 4 covers the safeguarding element. In arriving at a judgement for this Inspection area within 4.3 Inspectors will consider whether the schools safeguarding arrangements are effective and give no cause for concerns. In coming to a judgment Inspectors will consider a multitude of evidence such as:

- whether the schools safeguarding arrangements protect all children
- the arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers
- how well the school promotes safe practices and a culture of safety
- whether the school complies with statutory guidance in discharging its safeguarding functions
- the arrangements of the management of bullying, harassment and discrimination reporting of physical interventions
- how well the school keeps pupil safe from radicalisation
- arrangements for the provision of pupils educated off site and;
- The health and safety of the school buildings and site.

Figure 4.4: provides an overview of the Estyn judgements for schools inspected under the new arrangements from September 2017 up until July 2019. During quarter 2 there were no full Estyn inspections carried out and as a result the data remains unchanged to the previous quarter 1 report.

6.3.7 **Operation Encompass**

Figure 4.5: shows the number of domestic abuse incidents reported during the period 29th April to 19th July 2019. During the period there were 141 occurrences involving 245 children. When further analysed it is noted that the majority of the children (157 63%) affected are of primary school age.

On an individual pupil level :

- 2 children had 6 reported incidents during the period
- 5 children had 4 reported incidents during the period
- 6 children had 3 reported incidents during the period
- 27 children had 2 reported incidents during the period
- Of the cases reported during the period:
 - No cases were high risk
 - 54 cases were medium risk
 - 191 cases were standard risk

Risk is assessed on a case by case basis by a professional against a risk tool known as the Dash checklist. The purpose of the Dash risk checklist provides a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a Marac meeting in order to manage their risk.

6.3.8 **Compliance Reporting**

The Police compliance target for recording the school name on the PPN is 90%. However, at the end of the Q2 period the compliance rating although still below target had improved from 55% to 72.7%.

Members will be aware that this initiative is a pilot and the evaluation of this is still ongoing at this stage. A member briefing session has also been arranged for later this term.

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

Elective home education (EHE) is when parents decide to provide home based education for their child rather than sending them to school. Home educated children are therefore not registered at mainstream or special schools.

Figure 4.6: The total number of children electively home educated as of 31st July 2019 was 88. At the same point in 2018 the number was 80.

Figure 4.7: sets out the number of secondary age pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the Autumn Spring and Summer term. This is a decrease of 8 pupils coming out of school when compared to the data for last year.

Figure 4.8: sets out the number of additional pupils who have become EHE or who have returned to school from being EHE during the Autumn, Spring and summer term. Again this is a downward trend with the numbers lower than last year.

Figure 4.9: provides a breakdown by year group of EHE pupils. The numbers of pupils in KS4 is the highest which is similar to the pattern across Wales.

Members should note that there are appropriate processes in place to monitor elective home education with formal visits held to check on the suitability of education. However, whilst the number of EHE pupils overall has seen a small increase the work carried out in the last academic year has ensured the rate of rise has been positively impacted.

7.1 Expected outcome for the public

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

7.2 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

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

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

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

7.3 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

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

7.4 Preventative focus

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

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

7.5 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 Q1 partnership working with the police continues to progress through the Early Action Together programme. The Detective Sergeant (DS) has been in post and is making positive contributions to the safeguarding process. Strategy Discussions are now being held in a timely manner (within 24hours) and information relevant to safeguarding decision making happens in a much more efficient manner.

Regarding the quality assurance element to the DS role, it has been reported through the Early Action Together steering group meetings that the police are feeling better supported in the completion of the PPN's and this has been evidenced with the Information Advice and Assistance service as the quality of information in the PPN's is much improved.

7.6. **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.

8 **EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

N/A

8.1 **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 1 – Safeguarding Performance Report*