

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
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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