

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

For Cabinet 27th February 2024

For Governance and Audit 1st March 2024

For Health and Care Scrutiny 11th April 2024

REPORT AUTHOR: Nina Davies, Interim Director of Social Services and Housing

SUBJECT: Corporate Safeguarding Board Activity Update

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Introduction

1.1 Cabinet is asked to note this Activity Report from the Corporate Safeguarding Board on 14th December 2023.

2. Agenda discussions

2.1 Review of Progress against actions on Safeguarding Regulatory Tracker

The updates against the Actions in the Tracker were reviewed, noting all are blue/completed or green/on track.

2.2 Feedback from Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit.

The Board were advised of the comments and feedback from these governance forums, which had noted the Board's progress.

2.3 Regional Safeguarding Board Annual Report.

The Board were provided a copy of the Regional Safeguarding Board's Annual Report and advised that it provides a strategic overview of Adults and Childrens Safeguarding in the Region. Within it, a snapshot of PCC' safeguarding work was provided, including Powys' Child Exploitation Strategy that has been rolled out in other Regions. The Board were advised that Powys has received awards for their Child Sexual Exploitation work.

2.4 Feedback on National Safeguarding Week (13-17th November 2023)

The Board were informed that many Officers put in considerable work to ensure that Powys' hosting of the Annual Safeguarding Conference went well. There were a wide range of themes across both Adult and Childrens safeguarding subject areas; it was

extremely well received and there was good attendance. Powys represented itself well and will host again in 2026.

The Board discussed the various presentations and speakers. Thanks were extended to all those involved for their hard work and commitment in making a very powerful, enjoyable, thought-provoking day which was a good mix of interacting and listening.

2.5 Child Performance Licensing and Child Work Permits Progress Update.

The Board was provided with a report outlining the number of Licences and Permits that had been awarded. The Board were advised that the team continues to address issues that arise, such as a child being employed without a permit. It was highlighted that that week's 'Spotlight on Safeguarding' focussed on Child Work Permits, directing readers to the 'Child Employment' section of the website.

[News Child employment \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Next steps are being progressed, including some targeted awareness raising communications about the Regulations where child licencing is relevant.

The Board learned that joint work with the Royal Welsh Show is underway to create a positive link and increase knowledge about this matter ahead of the 2024 Show. Next year the team will have a presence at the Show to promote conversations about Child Work Permits, and the Show organisers will make information and applications available to exhibitors and trade stands etc, so applications are made in advance.

2.6 Safeguarding VLOG for Members and Governors

The Board were provided links to a recorded PowerPoint and Talking Head Vlog that consider some of the regular and more unusual questions, alongside some myth busting around safeguarding to provide a problem-solving resource. This will be used to support Member and other's development, creating links to safeguarding. The Board were asked to view the resource and feedback to Education Services.

[Safeguarding Talking Heads](#)

[Safeguarding PowerPoint](#)

2.7 Education Safeguarding Action Plan

The Board considered a confidential report from the Head of Education.

2.8 Reports by Exception were provided as below:

a) Safeguarding in Housing including Young (16/17-year-olds) People's Housing. The Board were informed that the number of 16 and 17 year olds who became homeless had risen by 4 to 7 since the report for the agenda had been written. Reasons for this and outcome of cases were explained, and data back to Quarter 1 provided to show changes or patterns. Data showing homelessness of Powys' Care Experienced young people will be included in future reports.

The Board discussed the demand on Housing Services and the complexity of the work creating continued pressure; numbers in temporary accommodation and the duration of stay was shared.

The Board were advised that a Welsh Government Consultation around the proposals to amend the Homelessness Legislation and duties around homelessness in the

Social Services and Wellbeing Act is underway. The Consultation ends on 16th January 2024, and an update will be provided to the next Board in March 2024.

[White Paper on ending homelessness in Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

b) Safeguarding in Education, including Elective Home Education and Fixed Term Exclusions

The Board were informed that in the last year contact with Elective Home Educated children and their families has increased from 2% to 72%. The number of elective home educated learners who have never been in a school has increased from 7% to 25% in the last year. The Board discussed this, reasons for children becoming electively home educated, and the challenges around how electively home educated children become known if they have never attended a school. The Board were advised that Powys are taking part in a 'Children Missing Education' Pilot which will look at such matters.

The Board were informed that numbers of Fixed Term Exclusions continue to increase, mirroring the Welsh and UK picture and considered to be an impact of the pandemic. The majority of Exclusions are in secondary age learners, but with an increase in Exclusions for primary age learners. The most common reason is persistent disruption. The Board were informed that a Working Group of Head Teachers will develop a common approach in terms of threshold and data to drive change in this area, alongside consideration of how the Pupil Referral Unit can assist.

c) Mandatory Safeguarding Training, including VAWDASV

The Board were informed that compliance was 92.3%, and that increased compliance was seen in frontline services without access to IT, for example HTR showing 97% compliance.

The Board were informed that school staff's compliance with the VAWDASV Level1 training was low but had increased from 47% in Quarter 2 to 59.9% at end Quarter 3. The Board were advised that school's use of the (now) mandatory Training Matrix was improving compliance and that a deep dive had shown the non-compliant staff were largely occasional staff, and that more than one person in each school had been Level1 trained. Targeted comms will be issued in the New Year about this, and other work will progress to improve and maintain compliance.

The Board were informed that a Steering Group has been set up for VAWDASV Level3 trained staff to support their professional development and provide mutual support; and that the White Ribbon Walks in November were very positive, resulting in high number of hits on the White Ribbon Instagram page.

d) Adult Social Care Safeguarding Performance, including Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

The Board were taken through the report about Adult Safeguarding noting there was no significant shift in trends in safeguarding issues. Pressures continue around Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard work (DoLS) in terms of backlog, demand and capacity. Funding and Team structure are being interrogated aiming to increase capacity. Benchmarking data around DoLS work in other Welsh Authorities will be included in the next report to map against Powys data.

The Board were informed that on investigation, the higher number of safeguarding referrals from / about care home staff may be due to a gap in the referrer's knowledge understanding about what is or is not safeguarding, the context and situation. This can indicate a need for increased understanding or training about what abuse and neglect is; this is built into an Action Plan with Providers if / when themes and trends are picked up in the safeguarding process.

e) Childrens Social Services Safeguarding Performance

The Board were updated about the Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) completed in October and advised that it was an overall positive experience giving opportunity for reflection.

The Board were taken through the Childrens Safeguarding report, noting that 88% of referrals did not require statutory intervention, and that domestic abuse, and alcohol and substance misuse were key factors in most referrals. The Board were informed that numbers of children on the Child Protection Register was showing a downward trajectory, with 21 children being deregistered showing interventions had helped to reduce the level of risk.

Discussions were held about the reasons for changes in performance, such as numbers of referrals reducing in August when schools are out, increases in section 47 Safeguarding Assessments increasing in October following on from the spike in referrals from schools after the new term starts in September, completion of these assessments within timescales being impacted by WCCIS downtime/slowness, staff's reduced ability to complete the paperwork because they need to prioritise the direct work, manager ability to sign off the assessment.

3. Future Agenda Items, in addition to the standing agenda items, are currently to include:

The Board noted the Forward Plan and were informed that the Regional Safeguarding Board Quarterly Newsletter will be provided for each future meeting.

March 2024 – Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements Report

- Education Safeguarding Action Plan
- Spotlight on Safeguarding Progress update
- Safeguarding in Contract Management – Next Steps, incl case studies
- 23/24 Safeguarding Self Assessments
- Community Safety Partnership
- Workings of Builth Wells Safety Group

June 2024 - Preparations for National Safeguarding Week (annually, November)

- Annual Private Fostering Report
- Services' Safeguarding Audits in Self-Assessments
- Annual 'Spotlight on Safeguarding' programme

Sept 2024 – For Information - Director of Social Services Annual Report

- Child Employment at the Royal Welsh Show - update

4. Other business included:

4.1 The Board were provided with the Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022-23 for information, in both English and Welsh.

4.2 The Board were provided with the [Regional Safeguarding Board Quarterly \(autumn\) Newsletter](#) for information.

4.3 The Chair thanked the Councillors and officers for their work over the last year in driving the Board's work forward and making significant improvements in that regard. The Chair wished all Board members Nadolig llawen a blwyddyn newydd dda, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

3. Future Corporate Safeguarding Board Meetings

Future meetings are scheduled for 14th March 2024, 13th June 2024, 12th September 2024 and 12th December 2024.

4. Recommendation.

Cabinet receives this briefing as an update from the Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board, to ensure awareness of work to date.

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