

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 FEBRUARY 2019

**LOCAL AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS TO
SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK**

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES, AND
GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH
THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR MORGAN**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report updates Overview and Scrutiny Committee on arrangements currently in place and those planned that support the Council's Corporate Safeguarding responsibilities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Reviews the progress made against planned actions to support Corporate Safeguarding requirements and requests further information on any areas where this is deemed insufficient.
- 2.2 Considers the requirement for further updates to Scrutiny.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council has considered safeguarding as a whole Council issue. Crucially it has equipped staff with information about what constitutes a safeguarding issue and how to raise a concern.
- 3.2 The recommendations in this report seek to ensure that elected Members are satisfied with the progress and plans in respect of the Council's safeguarding arrangements.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 The **Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (CTSB)** is the statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf. The aim of the CTSB is to ensure that people of all ages, living in Cwm Taf, are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening. The Board produces an annual report which has been scrutinised via the relevant scrutiny committees including the Council's [Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee](#) 12 September 2018 and the [Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee](#) on 25 September. The Board's final 2017/18 report can be found [here](#).

4.2 In addition to the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board, the National Independent Safeguarding Board was set up under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Specifically, the National Board has three primary duties. These are:

- To provide support and advice to Safeguarding Boards with a view to ensuring that they are effective
- To report on the adequacy and effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children and adults in Wales
- To make recommendations to the Welsh Ministers as to how those arrangements could be improved

The National Safeguarding Board's annual report 2017/18 can be accessed [here](#)

4.3 Every child, young person and adult at risk has the right to live their lives in safe communities and be protected from harm, neglect, exploitation and abuse. Keeping people safe is a high priority for the Council and we all have a key part to play in the arrangements set out above. Councillors, staff and volunteers who work for or on behalf of the Council, no matter where they work and what they do, can play a valuable and vital role in **Keeping People Safe**. This has been reflected in the Council's [Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#) which was approved by [Cabinet in March 2016](#).

4.4 Harm, neglect, exploitation and abuse have devastating effects on the lives of families and communities. We have all seen publicity about Baby P and Operation Jasmine which highlighted the plight of the most vulnerable on our society, i.e. children, young people and adults at risk. We can all help to protect these and other vulnerable people in our communities. Some of the actions or behaviour that we may see that would cause us concern are:

- Physical abuse e.g. hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication
- Sexual abuse e.g. sexual assault or sexual acts without consent
- Psychological abuse e.g. threats of harm or abandonment, control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse
- Neglect –e.g. failing to get medical care, services or prescribed medication, or by not providing food, shelter, clothing
- Financial abuse e.g. having money or other property misused or stolen;

4.5 Councillors, staff and volunteers who work for or with the Council have always had responsibility for protecting children, young people and adults at risk and also working in a way that promotes and supports their best interests. The formal term for this is *Safeguarding*. However, from April 2016 as a result of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, Councillors, staff and volunteers who work for or on behalf of the Council now have a legal duty to report concerns. This training and information will help us to spot when a child, young person or adult at risk needs protection and if we have concerns, where to report them.

4.6 The development of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements, which included a programme of accountability, policy development, training and communication, was set out in a report to [Cabinet on 17th March 2016](#). At this meeting, Cabinet also adopted the [Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#)

5 **CURRENT POSITION**

5.1 **Training and Awareness**

The Council has put in place an ongoing programme of Training and Awareness sessions for elected Members and staff. Examples of this programme include:

a. Elected Member update

As part of the training arrangements for elected Members, 30 elected Members attended Safeguarding training prior to a meeting of Council on 16 January 2019.

b. Staff update

Staff training has been undertaken through face to face methods and through e learning modules through [RCT Source](#).

Whilst staff numbers are constantly being updated through for example natural turnover, current statistics indicate that of the staff employed by the Council, 6,450 (61%), have received training. The current available data is as follows

Total no. staff trained	10,629	
Current no. staff trained	6,450	
Training Method used	Face to Face	RCT Source e learning
	4,631	1,819

5.2 Staff Survey

A staff survey was undertaken during November and December 2018. As part of the survey, staff were asked about their current knowledge and understanding of the Council's safeguarding arrangements. The detailed analysis of the responses is currently being finalised, but preliminary indications from the feedback in respect of safeguarding arrangements is positive, as summarised below:

Safeguarding Questions – extract	Finding subject to confirmation/finalisation	
	Yes	No
Have you received safeguarding awareness training/information? (Face to face, management briefing or e-learning)	89.40% (1,000)	10.60% (118)
Do you know where to report suspected or known abuse?	90.50% (1,013)	9.50% (106)
How can the Council help to make information about Keeping People Safe more visible?	Suggestions include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcing the message through ICT, e.g. Intranet, email and screen savers. • Regular training and awareness raising. • Use of posters and notice boards, pay slips. • More visible MASH. • Availability of appropriate information about where staff reporting has helped. 	

6. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The success of awareness raising amongst staff in respect of Corporate Safeguarding is something that will need to be tracked over time. With trend data available in future years, the aim will be track referral numbers and tie these back hopefully to the processes being put in place now. This is an area where further development is required and officers across the various services are committed to supporting this work.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 No specific consultation required at this time.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 Additional costs are likely given the scale and depth of training required, but these can be met from within existing resources.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Extracted from the [Council's Safeguarding Policy](#):
- Social Services and Well Being Act 2014
 - Education Act 2002 – plus 'Keeping Learners Safe' -The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002
 - Children Act 1989 and 2004,
 - 'Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004'
 - 'In Safe Hands' 2000
 - Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998,
 - Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
 - Housing Act 2004
 - Licensing Act 2003
 - Human Rights Act 1998

11 LINKS TO THE COUNCIL’S CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

Safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk is a key priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and ***‘is everyone’s business’***. Further, by keeping our residents, both young and old, safe the Council is contributing to a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales and one of more cohesive communities.

- 11.1 The Council’s Corporate Safeguarding arrangements support the ‘PEOPLE’ priority of the Council’s Corporate Plan, particularly “....*more people supported to live longer in their own homes*’ and “.....*children young people will receive a great start in life*”.

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The Council continues to make progress in delivering its Corporate Safeguarding responsibilities as evidenced by the information provided in this report and the ongoing nature of the actions being delivered.
