

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 19 December 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Corporate Safeguarding Mid-Year Summary Report – November 2024
Purpose of Report:	To provide a summary on the activity that has been undertaken in relation to Corporate arrangements for Safeguarding across the Council. To provide assurance around safeguarding activity taking place across the Council.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This is an issue which affects all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan Senior Leadership Team
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is Corporate responsibility to ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for safeguarding children and adults at risk. • This report provides a mid-year update on the effectiveness of those arrangements and the developments to date. • A Corporate Safeguarding Group (CSG) ensures that there is scrutiny and assurance of corporate safeguarding arrangements. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet considers the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults.
2. That Cabinet continues to receive six monthly reports on work carried out to monitor Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and its effectiveness.
3. That the report is referred to all Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that Cabinet is aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.
2. To allow Cabinet to exercise effective oversight of this key area of corporate working.
3. To ensure that there is a wide-reaching level of member oversight regarding this important area.

1. Background

- 1.1 This update provides a composite of activity across the Council. Scrutiny Committees should particularly consider any elements of the report in line with their portfolio areas.
- 1.2 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 was implemented in April 2016. This has brought about changes in particular relating to the introduction of a 'Duty to Report' which has meant a revision of the corporate safeguarding policy to bring staff's attention to this duty.
- 1.3 The 'Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance' under Part 7 of the Act provides guidance on corporate safeguarding for the council. Guidance on handling individual cases (Volumes 5 and 6) to protect children and adults at risk was launched in 2017. The Guidance provides advice on what should happen if an individual has concerns about the well-being or welfare of a child or an adult at risk.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The work of the Corporate Safeguarding Group (CSG) continues to take place with a focus on the strategic overview of safeguarding activity across the Local Authority and conduit for exploring emerging issues and priorities that are cross cutting.
- 2.2 The CSG group meet on a quarterly basis and representatives have shared areas of priority and emerging themes. The work of the Regional Safeguarding Board and its priorities have been shared with members. Practice reviews that have been published and associated learning have been shared and noted by the CSG.

- 2.3** Safer recruitment data is regularly reported to the CSG group with any areas of note being actioned and discussed.
- 2.4** Recommendations from Internal Audit that took place during 23/24 have been actioned with the Corporate Safeguarding Group regularly updating progress against specific actions and identified officers responsible for taking forward specific areas of work and providing progress updates. Key areas of development include:
- Developing Group A training for those who are unable to access our I-Dev training platform.
 - Recording of Group A training taking place outside of the I-Dev system.
 - Update of Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
 - Review of DBS renewals and updates.

The Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding (LADO) supports and influences the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Group.

2.5 Corporate Leadership & Accountability

The Terms of Reference for the Corporate Safeguarding Group have been reviewed and updated, all groups' members were able to contribute to this process.

There is appropriate cross directorate representation within the Corporate Safeguarding Group, attendance and participation is monitored. To reflect the new corporate structure there is now a representative from the Place Directorate within the Corporate Safeguarding Group.

The Lead Member for Safeguarding is represented within the Corporate Safeguarding Group.

Membership and areas of responsibility for those within the CSG is available on the council's Corporate Safeguarding Page. This includes recent changes of membership of the Corporate Safeguarding Group due to new appointments and changes in personnel.

2.6 Corporate Policy

The role of corporate safeguarding is expected to be known and understood throughout the Local Authority with a shared understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All employees, volunteers including school governors, elected members, contractors and partners are informed through induction and training of their responsibility to comply with the Safeguarding Policy.

The profile of good safeguarding practice is a core part of the work of the council. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been updated and shared across all areas of the council. This is also hosted within the corporate safeguarding page on

Staffnet. This updated policy strengthens and further promote our corporate safeguarding responsibilities.

2.7 Scrutiny & Assurance

There are identified leads within each directorate. The LADO role is fulfilled by the Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes (Social Services).

Local Authority directorates, employees and volunteers are compliant with Safeguarding Policy and practice. All Local Authority employees, volunteers and contractors are made aware of the consequences of non-compliance with Safeguarding Policy.

The CSG receive data across key areas of safeguarding activity across the Council that is considered within quarterly meetings. Where actions are required they are the responsibility of the directorate safeguarding lead.

2.8 Safer Recruitment

The CSG monitors recruitment and is able to provide assurance that all relevant council appointments are compliant with the Safer Recruitment Policy that covers all services that come into contact with children and adults at risk.

2.9 Training

Employees, volunteers and agency staff are all required to complete mandatory Group A safeguarding awareness training. A review of IDev mandatory training has taken place and the training module has been replaced with the new national Group A training module. Compliance with the mandatory training is monitored on a quarterly basis via the revised CSG data dashboard. This enables scrutiny and follow up where required. In 2025 there will also be a review of our safeguarding training requirements and matrix following the launch of the new National Safeguarding Training Standards.

Schools & Governor training is supported by the Education Safeguarding Team with regular reporting of compliance and training offer shared. There has been oversight and suggested areas of development supported by the CSG.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 Long-term** – Considering ability across Directorates to meet long-term demands and horizon scanning in relation to our safeguarding responsibilities.
- 3.2 Integration** – Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each other of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

- 3.3 Involvement** – Ensuring voices of children and adult at risk are acknowledged and respected in all our interactions and service planning.
- 3.4 Collaboration** – Cross Directorate ownership, accountability and understanding of our safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** There are no direct resource implications arising from the Corporate Safeguarding work. However, the increased awareness of safeguarding and the responsibility to respond to concerns of those who may not be eligible for our services has brought about significant pressures within social services teams. Consequently, processes need to be reviewed to ensure clarity for people raising concerns and who responds to these enquiries/notifications about individuals who are considered 'at risk', but are not known or eligible for our statutory services.
- 5.2** The other financial implication of note is the resource that will be required to implement some areas of the Corporate Safeguarding Work Plan which directorates will need to manage within their existing budgets.

Employment

- 5.3** The Safer Recruitment Policy legitimately excludes consideration for appointment of all applicants for posts within regulated activity whose criminal actions/convictions mean that they are deemed unsuitable or who are included within the barred list.
- 5.4** Any application for employment for those posts included within the definition of regulated activity by candidates who are included on the relevant barred list will be considered a criminal act and reported to the Police and relevant registration body (if appropriate).
- 5.5** In relation to DBS arrangements, key elements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 have been implemented.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.6** Legislation requires the Local Authority to make arrangements for ensuring the function to discharge their duties, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. The Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and codes of practice issued under the Act, makes it clear that Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk of abuse and neglect is everyone's responsibility.

6. Background Papers

Reports to Cabinet : 16th November 2023; 17th November 2022; 22nd November 2021.