

By 31CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

For Cabinet 21st November 2023

For Governance and Audit 24th November 2023

For Health and Care Scrutiny 1st December 2023

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 update from the Corporate Safeguarding Board.

1.2 A confidential meeting of the Corporate Safeguarding Board was held on 4th August 2023.

1.3 This Activity report relates to the meetings of the Corporate Safeguarding Board on 4th August 2023 and 15th September 2023, and summarises the information provided at those meetings, where appropriate.

2. Agenda discussions 4th August 2023

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

3. Agenda discussions 15th September 2023

3.1 The Board considered a confidential report from the Head of Education. This agenda item will also be considered in the December and March Board meetings to review progress.

3.2 Review of Progress against actions on Safeguarding Regulatory Tracker

The tracker was reviewed and progress noted, with 9 actions rated as green (on track), and one amber (slightly off-track).

Recommendation /Action 97 (amber) – The Council needs to clarify its expectation of contractors in respect of safeguarding training because there are currently discrepancies in the Council’s approach.

Achievements

- A Contract Annual Self-Assessment document is in development. This will assess the extent to which all services with Powys County Council contract have a safeguarding policy in place, training undertaken to assure understanding and the implementation of that policy in all settings.
- Freedom Leisure (management & delivery partner) have Safeguarding Policy & training for all staff in place. This is regularly checked through client visits, meetings and compliance audits. Freedom Leisure undertake 'safe recruitment processes' in line with Powys' Safer Recruitment Policy.
- DBS checks are undertaken for all Freedom Leisure staff as appropriate to roles. There is a named, designated safeguarding officer and safeguarding champions. Staff know who they are able to report concerns against workers to and are trained to recognise when children or adults may be at risk and know what procedures to follow.
- Policies and procedures are available to all Freedom Leisure staff, and they know where to locate them. Public access points are monitored, and all staff are easily identifiable. There are policies and procedures in place for contractors who attend the leisure facilities. Safeguarding risk assessments are undertaken if staff work off site and ICT policies are in place for safe use of the internet by users. Updates and changes are communicated to staff and users.

Future Actions

1. Agree and define Contract Self-Assessment form. Clarify sections of form that apply to all suppliers and sections that only apply to social care contracted services. By 31.12.2023
2. Self-Assessment to be issued to suppliers for completion. By 31.01.2024
3. Contract managers to analyse responses and respond to compliance issues. By 31.03.2024
4. Review Standard Services Contract with a view to achieving consistency across all contracted services. By 31.01.2024

3.3 Annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment / Audits.

The Board were informed that the Safeguarding Self-Assessment information has been built into a dashboard, which allows actions to be monitored and progress tracked. Work is underway with Heads of Service to update their relevant actions.

3.4 Safeguarding in Contract Management.

The Board were shown a presentation about the implementation of a tiered approach to contract management, prioritising resources for the top tier contracts. It was noted that both value and risk need to be prioritised to ensure resources are used effectively. It was suggested that Schools would benefit from accessing Contract Management Awareness training.

3.5 Channel and Community Safety Partnership Arrangements.

The Council has a duty to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. There is a multi-agency approach to identify individuals at risk; assess the nature and extent of the risk and develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

The Channel duty requires Local Authorities to administer a Channel Panel that has both a Panel Chair and Deputy Chair. Concern has been expressed about the resilience of existing arrangements. Emergency Planning, Social Services and Education colleagues will review the arrangements and propose options for the Council going forward. Discussions are ongoing about attendance at the Community Safety Partnership, and dialogue continues with relevant internal and external partners.

This matter will return to the December Board.

3.6 Preparations for National Safeguarding Week.

The Board were reminded of the Conference taking place on 16th November 2023 during National Safeguarding Week and updated on plans regarding the programme and keynote speakers. There will be capacity limits on attendees from different regions, so the Safeguarding Senior Manager will ask if keynote speakers can be live streamed for those unable to attend.

3.7 Safeguarding 'Theme of the Month'.

The Board were informed that the VAWDASV Coordinator will lead on this work now badged as a '*Spotlight on Safeguarding*'. The first theme will focus on '*what is safeguarding*' and different themes will follow each month, with November being '*rural safeguarding*' to align with National Safeguarding Week.

The Board were informed that White Ribbon Day is 25th November, and four walks have been arranged across the county on that date.

3.8 Reports by Exception were provided as below:

a) Young People's Housing (16/17-year-olds)

An instant access Triage Centre is being proposed for the longer term; work is underway with Social Services on this.

The Board discussed the location of presentations and consideration of reflective conversations to consider what might have prevented accommodation breakdowns.

b) Safeguarding in Education, including Elective Home Education

The Board were informed that numbers of children educated at home are still higher than pre-pandemic levels. The Board were taken through the new Welsh Government Guidance published in May 2023. It clarified the legal position regarding duties in the Education Act 1996, strengthening the expectation that parents who educate their children at home are to engage with the Local Authority. Escalation processes in Wales were discussed and the steps taken to encourage pupils back into school.

The Board were informed that Education and Childrens Services are looking at the reasons why children are taught at home and developing a reporting mechanism to feed into the Regional Safeguarding Board so children are identified at the earliest opportunity.

The Board were informed that some reports of potential poor child employment practices by some businesses at the Royal Welsh Show were made. This lead to proactive liaison with the Builth Welsh Safety Group to plan ahead for future events. This matter will be discussed further at the December Board.

c) Mandatory Safeguarding Training, including VAWDASV

Compliance rates across the Council sat at 92.4% at 1st September 2023. Compliance rates in HTR have improved with 3 training options being offered (eLearning, workbooks, toolbox talks).

The Board were informed that Health and Care Scrutiny had requested statistics on volunteer training, which is being explored. Discussion was held about Safeguarding Training for School Governors, and about School's responsibility to checking Supply/Agency Staff.

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

The Board were informed that Adult Services are seeing increasing numbers of safeguarding referrals, with a 95% compliance rate with the 7-day assessment target, only two low level referrals were out of timescale.

The Board were informed that there were 260 outstanding DoLS assessment, and work to engage internal Best Interest Assessors has been progressed to undertake the assessments.

e) Childrens Social Services Safeguarding Performance

The Board were informed of the multi-agency Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements taking place in October.

The Board were informed that contacts to Children Services' Front Door remains high, with 91% being dealt with by Early Help Services. The Board were informed that there is an upward trajectory in child protection arrangements both nationally and locally, although the Child Protection numbers remain fairly stable.

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

The Board noted the Forward Plan

Dec 2023 Director of Social Services 22/23 Annual Report - safeguarding
Feedback on National Safeguarding Week in November
Child Performance Licencing and Child Work Permits Update
Review of Channel and Community Safety Partnerships
Builth Wells Safety Group
Safeguarding VLOG from Education for Members and Governors
Education Safeguarding Action Plan

March 2024 Education Safeguarding Action Plan

June 2024 Preparations for National Safeguarding Week (annually, November)
Annual Private Fostering Report
Annual Safeguarding Audits
Annual 'Spotlight on Safeguarding' programme

Sept 2024 Director of Social Services Annual Report - safeguarding

5. Other business included

5.1 The *Volunteering for Powys County Council Policy* was included in the agenda for the Board's information.

5.2 The Board were informed that 98.5% of Member's were compliant with Safeguarding Mandatory training, with mitigating circumstances for the 1.5% non-compliance.

5.3 The Board were informed that the Safeguarding VLOG for Members and Governors would be provided to the December Board, and that the Schools Service will develop some 'talking heads' to answer those questions regularly received.

4. Future Corporate Safeguarding Board Meetings

4.1 Future meetings are scheduled for 14th December 2023; 14th March 2024, 13th June 2024 and 12th September 2024.

5. 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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