

Corporate Safeguarding Steering Group Annual Report 2014/15

1. Introduction

1.1 Safeguarding vulnerable people is one of the most important functions that any local authority is required to deliver. This is reflected in the fact that, safeguarding vulnerable people is one of the five City and County of Swansea's Corporate Priorities.

1.2 In September 2013 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) was embedded and became part of the Council's policy framework. The Council developed a Children & Young People's Rights Scheme which sets out the arrangements in place to ensure transparency in the processes that are being followed to ensure we pay 'due regard' to the UNCRC.

Everyone is responsible for protecting children from neglect and working in a way that promotes and supports their best interests. Article 3 of the UNCRC (1989) states that "The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers".

The Children & Young People's Rights Scheme ensures we consider the rights of the child in all of our work, ultimately resulting in better services and lives for children and young people, this clearly links to our Corporate Priorities, including Safeguarding.

1.3 In April 2014 an All Wales Audit of Local Authority Arrangements to Support Safeguarding of Children took place. The Corporate Safeguarding Steering Group was set up initially to manage this audit. Members of the group were drawn from across the Local Authority in recognition that Safeguarding is everybody's business. The findings of the Audit were produced in September 2014. There were five proposals for improvement. These have formed the core of the work of the Steering Group which has continued to meet. Its remit has been widened to include adult safeguarding as a key component of the work. Despite the pressures on resources, progress has been steady and the commitment of the designated safeguarding managers from each of the Authority's departments and other members of the group who have supported the development and delivery of the work has been commendable. There is still much to be done to promote the idea that safeguarding vulnerable people

is everyone's responsibility. However the progress during this first year has provided a good foundation for the work to continue in this important area.

2. Progress to date

2.1 Policy development

The City and County of Swansea Operational Safeguarding Policy has been produced. The purpose is to set out how the City and County of Swansea will meet its obligations towards the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults and to give assurance to members of the public, service users, councillors, employees and people working on behalf of the Council, that there are clear arrangements in place. The Policy is implemented via the Safeguarding Operational Group comprising Designated Safeguarding Managers from all departments which meets bi-monthly.

The policy has been disseminated widely across the authority, including its publication on the public and employee City and County of Swansea websites.

<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/corporatesafeguarding>

2.2 Performance Framework and reporting cycles

2.2.1 Response to the Wales Audit Office Review of Local Authority Arrangements to Support the Safeguarding of Children

The Audit took place in April 2014. The report was received in September 2014. It contained five proposals for improvement.

1. Ensure all elected members are made aware of the concept and use of risk management and its central importance in safeguarding.
2. Improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to provide adequate assurance that systems are working effectively.
3. Improve the work of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to ensure it is providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements.
4. Ensure all elected members and staff who encounter children on a regular basis receive training on safeguarding and child protection issues and the Council's corporate policy on safeguarding.
5. Identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding.

2.2.2 To avoid duplication and to embed the Safeguarding reporting on a truly corporate basis, the actions required to respond to the WAO report have been incorporated into the Corporate performance reporting on safeguarding vulnerable people using a scorecard approach.

In addition to this the following arrangements have been set in place:

- Members of the Performance Scrutiny Committee will receive information regarding the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Operational Group through the Annual Safeguarding report. This will provide an opportunity for Members to scrutinise, steer and influence the work programme and progress.
- Key risks, issues and performance are reported to the Corporate Executive Board on an exception basis.
- Reports are provided to the Public Protection Executive Board for information.
- The Corporate Executive Board has safeguarding as part of its work programme and regular agenda item.
- The Leadership Team and Senior Management Group has safeguarding as a regular agenda item and provides the forum to raise awareness about Safeguarding and to cascade information.
- Team Meetings (at service unit level as a minimum) has safeguarding as a regular item on their agenda and will escalate risks, issues and training needs to the relevant designated lead manager for safeguarding. Information is cascaded throughout the wider workforce as and when required.
- Safeguarding is reflected in the business planning process within all departments
- The Local Authority risk register in relation to safeguarding vulnerable people has been reviewed and revised at a Corporate and Peoples Directorate level.
- Safeguarding is now included in every job description across the Local Authority in recognition of it being everyone's business.
- Staff DBS checks are routinely reported to P&FM

2.3. Training

2.3.1 The implementation of the Policy has been supported by a Corporate Safeguarding Training Plan, clarifying which members of staff should receive safeguarding training and to what level.

2.3.2 Training and workforce development was identified by the Steering Group as a key priority to improving corporate safeguarding. A range of training has been developed over the year. A number of Key Performance Indicators have also been developed, to be reported by the Corporate Learning & Development Manager. These PIs relate to the number of Elected Members who have completed safeguarding training, as well as the number/percentage of staff and designated managers who have completed both face to face and e-learning training in Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding.

2.3.3 Face to Face Training

A series of Safeguarding awareness training events have been held, including training Elected Members, Executive Managers, and Senior Management

Group (3rd Tier & some strategic 4th Tier managers). In relation to the attendance of elected members the take up was low, with only 27 out of the 72 attending.

A One hour face-to-face safeguarding awareness training, on a 'Spot it Report it' basis, has been developed for frontline staff who do not have access to PC's. The training session, which is designed to complement the e-learning module, has been piloted with Safeguarding Managers and other staff, amended to take account of feedback and will now be rolled out from July 2015 with attendance being centrally monitored by the Corporate Learning & Development Department.

2.3.4 E learning training

Two separate Safeguarding e-learning modules (one for children and one for adults) have been developed and rolled out to staff supported by a communications plan. The completion of these modules is mandatory. They are regularly monitored centrally by the Corporate Learning & Development Department and reported to the safeguarding steering group. School governors, school staff and elected members have also been encouraged to complete the e-learning module. As of the 15 June 2015, 995 members of staff have completed the children's e-learning safeguarding module and 1042 have completed the adult safeguarding module. This is for a staff group of approx. 2,700 who can access the online course.

<http://swansea.learningpool.com/course/category.php?id=66>

2.3.5 Child Sexual Exploitation training

A half day conference was held on 20 October 2014 at the Liberty Stadium. Over 360 delegates attended from a wide cross section of agencies and businesses including Hotels, taxis, schools, police, youth services, health, fire service, church groups and staff from a good spread of LA departments.

Learning outcomes were to develop an increased awareness of:

- what child sexual exploitation is and what is known about it
- how young people become involved in and react to exploitative situations
- what to do within their own organisations to respond effectively to CSE
- the key partners within single service and multi- agency settings
- how to respond to concerns and disclosures

262 delegates completed feedback forms. They felt that the conference had significantly improved their knowledge and awareness and that they would share information with colleagues. An evaluation including key themes has been compiled and reported to the Corporate Safeguarding Steering Group.

The Western Bay Safeguarding Board has prioritised the topic of Child Sexual exploitation. A Western Bay Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy is currently been developed and a series of face to face training events (April – June

2015) is being rolled out. These dates have been circulated to all designated Safeguarding Managers for attendance and onward distribution to staff, and more widely across the Local Authority. Attendance information will be provided by Western Bay to each Authority for monitoring purposes.

2.3.6 Additional information for staff.

Corporate safeguarding children and child protection pages have been added to the intranet for all staff to access. These add another dimension to employee learning and accessibility to information. Use of these pages are being monitored. Indicators are that staff are regularly viewing the main page.

The page can be viewed at

<http://staffnet/index.cfm?articleid=57786>.

There are plans in place to develop similar pages for Adult Safeguarding in 2015.

3. Future Workplan

3.1 The Corporate Safeguarding Group will now consider its future priorities and compile a detailed work plan 15/16. This will include:

- Ensuring that the reporting cycle and governance arrangements are operational, regularly and properly used, fit for purpose, accessible and understandable.
- Rolling out and monitoring the numbers of staff who attend the face to face 'Spot it Report it' training
- Continuing to monitor the e- learning completion rates by directorate and report to the Safeguarding Steering Group.
- Develop further training on risk management in safeguarding for elected members
- Develop Adult safeguarding intranet pages
- Develop a more systematic approach to communication to reach out more comprehensively to staff, elected members and partners.

Consideration to be given to incorporating the Action Plan to implement the key features of effective corporate arrangements for Safeguarding and assigning designated officers to those tasks (Appendix A)

Appendices: Appendix A - Action Plan to implement the key features of effective corporate arrangements for Safeguarding

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