



**Bwrdd Diogelu Annibynnol
Cenedlaethol Cymru**

**National Independent
Safeguarding Board Wales**



Annual Report 2020–21



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Introduction

The 2020-2021 Annual Report of the National Independent Safeguarding Board covers a year like no other before it. The Covid-19 pandemic changed the world and affected our day-to-day lives in ways none of us could have imagined. It inevitably also had a significant impact on the way safeguarding was delivered in Wales but the focus remained on protecting the most vulnerable in our society from abuse and neglect.

New challenges were faced, as working from home became the norm, most activity moved online and we retreated behind our front doors. Everyday oversight ceased as schools closed for the majority of children, day centres shut, domiciliary care reduced and visits to care homes and hospitals all but ended.

Despite this, front-line staff in social care and its partner agencies continued to work in safeguarding throughout. It was business as normal if not business as usual, as exceptional service delivery models were developed. The commitment and dedication to keep going no matter what is to be both commended and celebrated.

More than a year on, even as we see glimmers of hope for the end of the pandemic, there is still much to be done. Staff are feeling the effects of 18 months of this 'new' way of working, services that have been over-stretched for so long feel fragile and lack resilience as winter pressures approach. There is also the unease about the level of harm being revealed as restrictions are lifted and life returns to something more normal. The levels of domestic abuse, violence among young people, the impact on mental health and wellbeing are all well documented. Effective responses to these issues will be challenges we face in the years ahead. As always, this can only be done together with strong partnership working. No one agency can do it alone. Safeguarding is Everyone's Business, has never been more relevant than at this time.

National Independent Safeguarding Board [NISB]

Duties and Responsibilities

The National Board has three primary duties set out in the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014:

1. To **provide support and advice** to Safeguarding Boards with a view to ensuring that they are effective
2. To **report on the adequacy and effectiveness of arrangements** to safeguard children and adults in Wales
3. To **make recommendations** to the Welsh Ministers as to how those arrangements could be improved (S.132 (2)).

In addition, eight specific responsibilities of the National Board are set out in *Working Together to Safeguard People*, the Part 7 Guidance on Safeguarding. They are that the National Board:

1. **works alongside** Safeguarding Adults Boards and Safeguarding Children Boards to secure consistent improvements in safeguarding policy and practice throughout Wales (para 246)
2. will **engage with the chairs** of the Safeguarding boards, and relevant inspectorates...at least twice a year (para 258)

3. will **stay abreast of evidence and policy** approaches to safeguarding and protection in other parts of the UK and beyond in order to learn from those and to evaluate Wales' relative performance (para 261)
4. where a **theme of concern** is identified... the National Board could recommend to Welsh Ministers that the matter be escalated to Welsh Government for exploration or to the relevant inspectorate (para 263)
5. will use mechanisms to regularly **engage with a range of expert reference groups**, practitioners and individuals (para 264)
6. will **publish** its own **annual reports** including any **work it is planning**. It will also hold an annual engagement event or events (para 265)
7. has a specific duty under section 133 (2) (d) of the Act to "**consult with** those who may be affected by arrangements to safeguard adults and children in Wales." It will use that duty to enhance its understanding of and extend its experience of safeguarding and protection in Wales (para 266)
8. will **consider the learning from the 'user engagement' activities** of the Safeguarding Boards (para 266).

Annual Report of the National Independent Safeguarding Board

The information that must be contained in the National Board's Annual Report is specifically described in The National Independent Safeguarding Board (Wales) Regulations 2015.

Membership of the National Independent Safeguarding Board April 2020 – March 2021



Tessa Hodgson



Karen Minton
(Until June 2021)



Jan Pickles



Jane Randall
(Chair)



Lin Slater



Tony Young

National Board's Support and Advice to Safeguarding Boards to ensure they are effective

Towards the end of 2019-2020, the UK faced the Covid-19 pandemic and Wales went into lockdown in March 2020. National Board members worked alongside the Regional Boards throughout the year participating in Regional Safeguarding Board meetings and sharing their knowledge where appropriate. The Board meetings increased in frequency to manage and oversee the challenges of delivering safeguarding in a new and predominantly, virtual world. This new pattern continued all year in the context of changing guidance on ways of working and a series of lockdowns, school closures, care home visiting restrictions, cycling through easements, 'firebreaks' and back into lockdown.

The NISB also engaged in the weekly meetings with Regional Safeguarding Board Business Managers and fortnightly meetings between Regional Safeguarding Board chairs and Welsh Government. By the end of the year, these continued on a monthly basis as the pandemic response progressed.

During the year, the NISB received a number of formal requests from RSBs for advice or assistance:

Public Health Wales [PHW] National Safeguarding Team [NST] COVID-19 Position Statement – June 2020

This communication, sent to the chairs of the RSBs, was sent on to the NISB. It stated that as a result of the Covid 19 response 'the team have significantly reduced capacity to deliver objectives on our current work plan and to fully attend and support Regional Safeguarding Boards. We will also be unable to act as chairs or reviewers of practice or domestic homicide reviews, although attending Case Practice Review subgroups may be possible'.

The NISB wrote to the Safeguarding Team lead expressing concerns that this decision had been made on a unilateral basis, without consultation with RSBs and without an impact assessment on the delivery of safeguarding responsibilities and duties in the regions. Further concerns were raised that in later correspondence there was reference to the 'longer term' nature of the withdrawal of support. This was in stark contrast to the response of other agencies who despite substantial pressures on capacity and resources for these agencies, continued to contribute to the work of Regional Safeguarding Boards.

A number of meetings between PHW, Welsh Government Officials, NISB and RSB Chairs followed to try to resolve this issue. PHW were keen to make clear the difference between the statutory roles they must discharge as an NHS organisation and the advisory, leadership role of the NST as part of the NHS Safeguarding Network. How these differing roles and functions are effectively discharged in the future is yet to become clear.

Provision of Appropriate Secure Accommodation Placements & Alternatives.

In December 2020, the Chair of Mid & West Wales Safeguarding Board wrote to the NISB following the publication of an Extended Child Practice Review. The review highlighted a number of complex issues professionals face when supporting young people with multiple and complex needs. As well as identifying several areas of good practice, significant shortfalls in both the availability and provision of appropriate secure accommodation placements and appropriate alternatives to this in Wales were highlighted in the review findings.

The RSB Chair was aware the Mid and West Wales Board was not alone in identifying such challenges and requested that within the context of our national role, we would consider how this issue can be further highlighted and collectively how agencies can work together to improve provision in Wales.

NISB were able to raise this with Welsh Government officials in their monthly meetings and received updates on their position. Assurance was given that this is a Welsh Government priority for 2021-22. The Integrated Care Fund guidance published in January for the 2021-22 year also incorporates guidance on the safe accommodation for children with complex, high-end emotional and behavioural needs to prevent escalation to/facilitate de-escalation from secure or inpatient care.

This guidance informed an Expression of Interest process, which resulted in three Regional Partnership Boards receiving, shares of £2m funding to pump prime safe accommodation provisions in this year. In addition, the Programme for Government for the new Senedd Term 2021-2026 included a commitment to 'fund regional residential services for children with complex needs ensuring their needs are met as close to home as possible and in Wales wherever practicable'. This commitment is being met via funding which is in the process of being agreed, to the remaining three regions and this area of provision overall will remain a priority via the replacement ICF arrangements due to start in 2022-23.

Other work undertaken by the National Board, or by supplementary groups set up by the National Board, and the outcomes achieved

Development of collaborative working arrangements with stakeholders

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic the National Safeguarding Board (NISB), has been able to build on the existing relationships developed in previous years with a set of key partners and stakeholders in the world of national safeguarding governance.

What struck us early on in our term however, was the extent to which the safeguarding 'landscape' in Wales was at best opaque and at worst somewhat invisible even to those within it. No single body or organisation had a clear overview of what this network looked like, what the respective roles and inter-relationships consist of or how they worked together around national safeguarding practice and priorities. This prompted the NISB to initiate a new area of enquiry: An informative schematic, which captured safeguarding, and governance operating arrangements and key relationships in Wales.

Mapping the safeguarding landscape

The Board commissioned the Institute of Public Care Oxford Brookes University to map the safeguarding landscape in Wales with a view to enhancing shared understanding of the agencies and their roles in safeguarding in Wales.

The result is an interactive guide and directory which broadly categorises the different bodies and agencies into four groups – oversight and co-ordination; safeguarding delivery; statutory inspection, regulation and improvement; non-statutory advice and improvement.

The guide and directory are both available through the [NISB website](#) and are living documents, which will be reviewed and updated as and when required.



Of particular significance during this year of the pandemic has been our dialogue with various bodies as follows:

Welsh Government

The Board meets on a monthly basis with the Deputy Director Enabling People, (Social Services and Integration Department) and the Head of Safeguarding, Advocacy & Complaints. This regular dialogue allows for a frank exchange of views, discussion of priorities and an opportunity to raise concerns around national safeguarding issues and agree pieces of work that benefit from the independent oversight of the NISB.

In addition the board met with the Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services in August 2020 to share views on safeguarding in Wales during the Covid pandemic, and in December 2020 to discuss our latest annual report and our recommendations to ministers, which were accepted. Progress against these recommendations are addressed later in this report.

Social Care Wales (SCW)

The National Board's strong links with SCW have been maintained throughout the year giving us the opportunity to discuss issues including the role of SCW in the registration of staff and the Fitness to Practice processes being developed. In addition, to comment on the development of safeguarding training standards and resources for Wales and to support their work with CIW by chairing their safeguarding Webinar for care home staff in January 2021.

Care Inspectorate Wales [CIW]

Our regular meetings with CIW increased in frequency this year to share concerns and discuss how CIW have adapted their ways of working during the year and how they have provided assurances during the pandemic. A full account of their work is contained within their [Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2020 - 2021](#).



Healthcare Inspectorate Wales [HIW]

In keeping with its now well established relationships with key national agencies the NISB has been meeting with HIW since October 2020 and welcomes the regular liaison.

HIW's commitment to monitor that people in Wales are receiving effective, good quality care, safely provided and in line with recognised standards has continued throughout the pandemic albeit with necessary changes in the approach.

Published findings from HIW's COVID-19 themed [national review](#) (30 June 2021) overall found good standards of care despite the unprecedented challenges and noted the outstanding efforts of healthcare staff.

HIW continues to undertake joint work with CIW to review services, which require coordinated working across health and social care and in March 2021 launched "Speaking up to keep people safe" inviting staff from health and social care settings to speak up about their experiences of care quality.



Education Workforce Council (EWC)

Regular liaison in relation to shared national policy concerns affecting safeguarding, has continued with this key national workforce regulator.

It is disappointing that as in our previous annual report, it is necessary to highlight once more, the continuing inadequacy of regulatory provision in respect of Teacher Registration. The EWC first drew this gap to the attention of the Welsh Government in 2015 and the NISB remains highly concerned that the relevant loophole in regulation, which it believes is relatively straightforward to address, has yet to receive the attention required by Welsh Government. That said the Board has recently learned (at the time of writing) that the new minister for Education has declared a firm commitment to address the gap and officials are preparing the ground to enable this to move forward over the term of government.

By contrast, the advent during the year of regulatory provision to establish Interim Suspension Orders in relation to teaching and school professionals suspected of abuse, is a welcome development, championed principally by the EWC. It is relevant to report, that at the time of writing, this is now being actively operationalised across Wales with the arrival of the relevant powers that went live in April 2021.

Older People's Commissioner (OPC)

At the beginning of the year, the OPC set up a stakeholder meeting to consider the issues being faced by older people as lockdown took hold. As the Covid-19 pandemic unfolded, the NISB has participated in the OPC Abuse Steering and Action Groups throughout the year. This has enabled the Board to highlight concerns raised in these groups with other bodies, for example safeguarding concerns in care homes with CIW, and to support the communications strategy of the OPC at such a critical time.

Children's Commissioner for Wales (CCfW)

Meetings with the CCfW have given the NISB opportunity to discuss issues and concerns of shared interest. As school closures and restrictions, as a result Covid-19, continued into the summer of 2020 concerns were expressed about the impact on the most vulnerable children being at home rather than in school and for those living in homes with Domestic Abuse.

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)

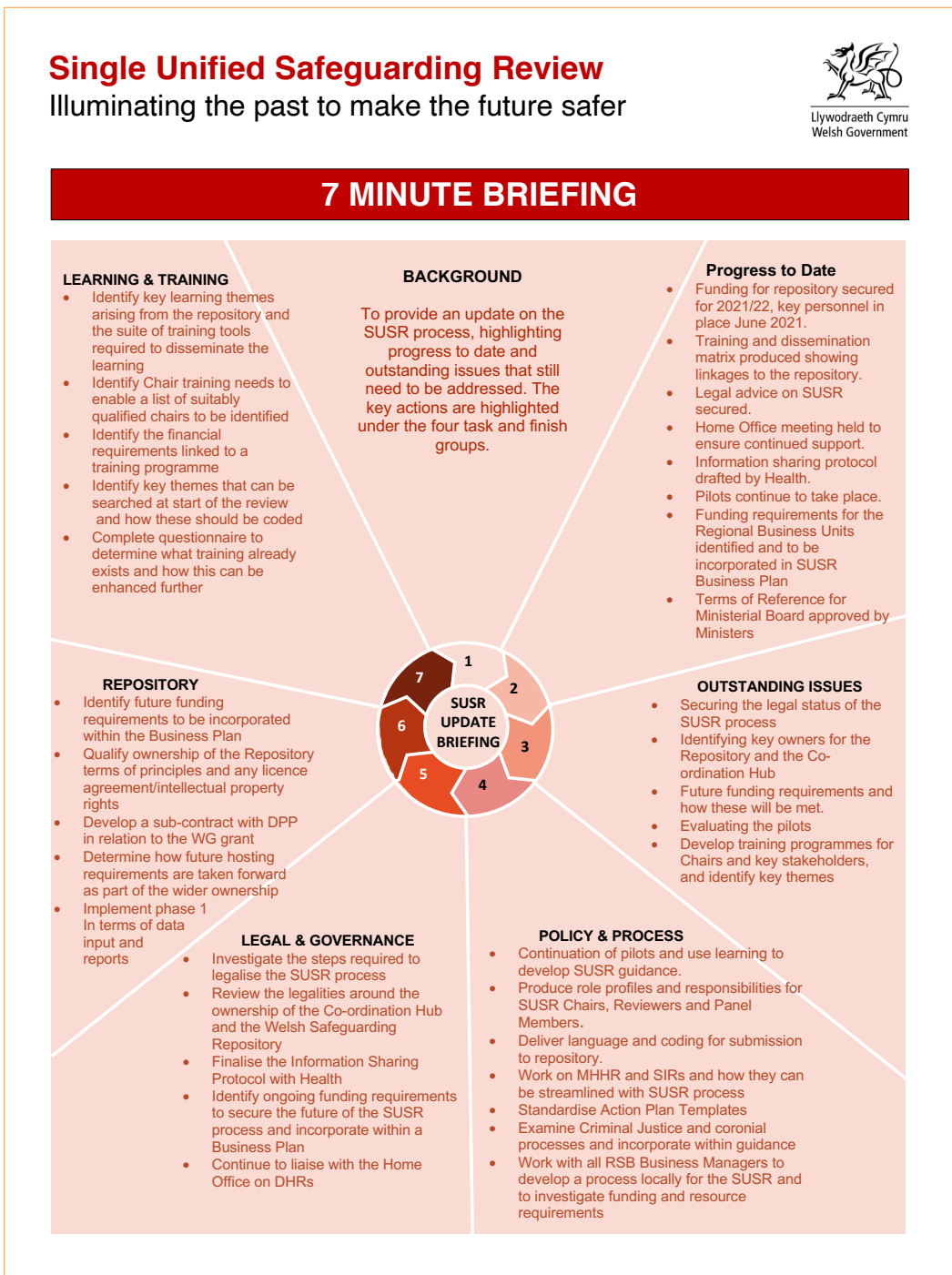
The Board has a representative on the WCVA Safeguarding Steering Group and has maintained this link throughout the year.

Key achievements highlighted were:

- » High engagement with service
- » Suite of COVID-19 safeguarding guidance produced
- » Knowledge Hub resources produced
- » Community of practice launched in September with events held in
- » November and January
- » Free webinars ongoing and training adapted for online delivery
- » Meeting regularly with safeguarding leads in the CVCs
- » Recruiting for new Safeguarding Training Officer

Single Unified Safeguarding Review

The Board is working with Welsh Government, Regional Safeguarding Boards, and a wide range of stakeholders to streamline both the review processes and how learning from reviews can be captured and shared. The 7 Minute Briefing below gives an overview of progress.



There is still work to be done to complete the work on effective governance arrangements and the review processes to ensure the model works for all types of reviews included.

Shaping the Future of Safeguarding in Wales

Evaluation of Integrated Multi-agency Operational Safeguarding Arrangements in Wales – Work Completed in Phase 1

The successful bidder for **Phase 1** of the review was Liverpool John Moore's University, with Dr Michelle McManus, Subject Head of Criminal Justice, School of Justice Studies, as project lead. Commencing on 27 January 2020, the final report of findings and recommendations of Phase 1, is available via the [NISB website](#).

Our plan had been to complete Phase 1 of this project within the previous financial year but as with every aspect of our lives, COVID 19 made that unachievable.

We wish to record our thanks to our researcher, Dr. Michelle Mc Manus, in nevertheless enabling the completion of the work early in the 2020-21 year, despite COVID 19. We also wish to record our thanks for the efforts and support we received from Regional Safeguarding Board colleagues, who without exception went the extra mile to contribute to the evaluation and who all gave generously of their time; we think that this signals just how important the evaluation is for us all.

We are also grateful, like so many, for the availability of effective technology in overcoming barriers to engagement and we note the importance that this had for our concluding stakeholder engagement session in advance of finalising the report.

The primary focus of **Phase 1** was in essence to bring together a clear map of the different Multi-Agency Operational Safeguarding Arrangements (MAOSA) that exist in each of Wales' 22 local authority areas. At the outset and prior to Phase 1 of the evaluation, no one organisation was able to articulate the range and diversity of these arrangements across Wales as a whole, and it was seen as a necessary precondition for an evaluation of their effectiveness – **'how good are the arrangements'**, that we first reach a clear view of **'what is'**.

Prior to the commencement of Phase 1, it had been the NISB's intention that Phase 2 would focus solely on an overall **evaluation of the range of multi-agency operational safeguarding arrangements (MAOSA)**, once mapped and understood in all its diversity. However, whilst Phase 2 will proceed to undertake that evaluation, it will now instead form 1 of 3 inter-related elements in an overall programme of system enhancement over the next 2-3 years and beyond. This widening of focus is in significant part due to the recommendations of the Phase 1 report, but it also stems from a strong pre-existing appetite amongst stakeholders nationally, for the wider strategic development of other key aspects of governance and improvement.

The two additional areas are concerned **firstly**, with the development of a **national statutory safeguarding "performance framework"** and **secondly**, with gaining a better understanding of the **'lived experience'** of those who find themselves, caught-up in one way or another in the statutory safeguarding process.

At the beginning of 2021, providers were invited to tender for these 3 areas of research and development. Liverpool John Moores University was successful in their bid, with Dr Michelle McManus, Subject Head of Criminal Justice, School of Justice Studies, as project lead. The initiation meeting took place in February 2021 with a timetable for the publication of this work by April 2022. This will enable this Board to see the project completed before the scheduled end of our term of office in May 2022.

Taken together as an inter-related programme, the NISB believes that these three strands of work have the potential to significantly improve our capacity as a national professional community to understand 'what good looks like' across the whole system and place us in a better position to act to improve what takes place in the name of 'safeguarding' at every level.

Biannual thematic review of Adult Practice Reviews

Over the five years since our inception, the NISB has been keen to develop the thematic learning from the safeguarding reviews commissioned across Wales. Cardiff University has undertaken this work on our behalf providing three systematic analyses of Adult Practice Reviews (APRs), Child Practice Reviews (CPRs) and some Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs).

Published in August 2021 the latest report on APRs (commissioned in 2020) builds upon the earlier reports of adult death reviews undertaken in 2018 and of CPRs in 2019.

This latest analysis is based on 20 APRs concluded between 2014-2020. These reviews were coded by academics using a social work, criminology and legal perspective. Once coded these themes were tested out with practitioners and managers in two focus groups, one in North Wales and one in South Wales. This was to check if, in their experience, the themes identified were a true reflection of a wider number of cases and to ensure learning is not just from extreme events.

A full report of the process and findings is on the [NISB website](#). It highlighted 5 themes:-

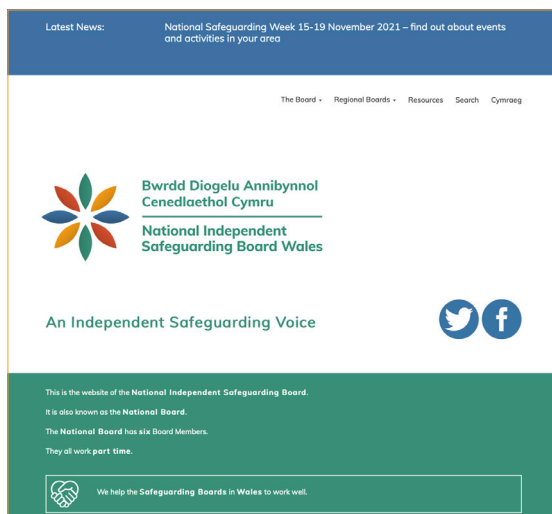
- » A Lack of understanding of Safeguarding processes, capacity, and the duty to report;
- » Issues around Commissioning and the relationship between commissioners and inspection;
- » A lack of communication related to transitions whether that be from child to adult, or the movement between care homes or even the disengagement by a service user from professionals;
- » Some reviews because of the limited time under review failed to capture the voice of vulnerable people, or even a 'picture ' of the whole person;
- » Family and carers not being involved or heard.

Many of these themes echoed the previous thematic reviews and are providing us with a rich picture of how we can improve our safeguarding response to intervene earlier to make citizens lives safer.

Communications & Social Media

Review of website and social media

The board's website is updated and maintained by Croatoan Design.



The board also has a presence on social media with both Twitter and Facebook accounts. The website contains details of our annual plan and report, safeguarding resources and is regularly updated with relevant news and articles of interest from NISB and other agencies.



The website had 5,804 visitors between April 2020 and March 2021, with 17,304 page views. The majority of visitors were new users.

Most users arrived at the site through typing the address in the browser directly or through Google searches. Only a small percentage were redirected from social media.

The most popular pages are the homepage and section sub-pages, with most people wanting to find practice reviews, regional board or safeguarding resources.

Figures indicate that most people visit a page or two and spend a few minutes on the site, suggesting that they are looking for something specific, leaving once they have found the information or downloading the report they were looking for.

There is a large spike in page views in March 2020, which could be related to people looking for safeguarding resources due to the pandemic or an event or interest generated by social media.

Facebook and Twitter are both used by the Board to post and share information about the board and other agencies.



safeguardingboard.wales



[@NISBWales](https://twitter.com/NISBWales)



[@safeguardingwales](https://facebook.com/safeguardingwales)

National Safeguarding Week 2020

During the week, the National Board held its first virtual conference. This was made possible with the support of the Wales Violence Prevention Unit who hosted the event for us. Almost all events in NSGW were delivered via on-line platforms and reflected how we all had to adapt to working differently as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The three presentations were:

- » Results of Phase 1 of the work around 'Shaping the Future of Safeguarding in Wales'. Head of Criminal Justice, Liverpool John Moores University.
- » Collaborative approach to managing domestic abuse cases during the coronavirus pandemic. Head of Public Protection, National Probation Service, Wales.
- » Partnerships for violence prevention. Director, Wales Violence Prevention Unit.

In addition, Welsh Government facilitated an on-line discussion with the Children's Commissioner, the Older People's Commissioner and the chair of NISB. This was an opportunity to hear about the experiences of those impacted by the pandemic and the national lockdowns and to share key messages for those who work within safeguarding arrangements to keep people in Wales safe from abuse and neglect.

National Board members contributed to a number of advisory and working groups throughout the year

Vulnerable Children & Young People External Advisory Group

When the decision was taken to put restrictions in place to manage the coronavirus pandemic, the Welsh Government established a vulnerable children, young people and safeguarding workstream to ensure a cross government approach was taken to respond to the risks and challenges for children when schools were closed to all but children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

This advisory group was established to provide a structured dialogue with prominent stakeholders in the children and young people sector, including the NISB, in order to share intelligence and act as a sounding board for the work undertaken through the workstream.

Children's Residential Care Task and Finish Group

The Board has continued to maintain a watching brief in relation to this important area of national policy development, following on from our predecessor colleagues.

The group's remit has included some key areas of much needed development to improve the experiences and life chances of Children Looked After as summarised below.

The group came to an end towards the end of the year albeit some aspects of several workstreams are in effect nearing a conclusion at the time of writing and there is an intention to establish successor arrangements to support ongoing work. A full 'end of term report', setting out the work and achievements of the group, is imminent.

Overall, the work of the group and the developments it has sponsored, reflect the commitment of the Deputy Minister for Social Services to the very important positive role that residential care for children has played and will continue to play in the future in achieving positive outcomes for Children Looked After. It is very encouraging that the needs of Children Looked After have attracted significantly greater Welsh Government attention and priority and that much has been achieved as a result.

One particularly welcome and noteworthy change of emphasis in this regard, is that enhanced measures to address the needs of complex children have now been identified as a priority for the Welsh Government's Programme for Government. In tangible terms, this has included additional development funding being allocated to 3 of the six Regional Partnership Boards, to develop bespoke specialist residential care in order to meet the needs of this cohort more effectively, with the prospect of the remaining 3 RPB's being similarly funded.

Key workstreams have included:

- » **Sufficiency Data Module** – this has resulted in the launch of a data module to operate in each local authority. The module will capture current data regarding the availability of residential provision for children in the relevant LA area, so that the development of new or additional provision, locally, regionally and nationally, can be more closely aligned with known current needs and known current provision at any given time. This welcome development in effect provides a strong and evidence-base foundation for more effective strategic sufficiency planning.
- » **PACE & Remand Beds** – a pilot scheme based in Newport Local Authority Children's Home has been underway and is currently being evaluated. The pilot aims to identify more effective ways of meeting the needs of children at risk of overnight stays in police custody suites.
- » **Decriminalisation of Children Looked After** – an interagency protocol to reduce this risk is in development.
- » **Learning Lessons from Covid** – Initial tender attracted no interest. Tender re-issued.

Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) – Wales Steering Group

A member of the Board joined the work of this group soon after its establishment in 2020 and continues to contribute to its work.

Following the Royal Assent of the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act in 2019, Welsh Government officials have continued to engage with the UK Government regarding the planned implementation of LPS, its transitional replacement of the current DoLS system and the development of the LPS Code of Practice. The UK Government has established its own Governance arrangements for the implementation of LPS – but given the implications of the 2019 Act, the Welsh Government is mirroring these mechanisms in Wales.

Whilst the Welsh Government will lead and coordinate – the implementation of LPS in Wales has to be undertaken collaboratively and in partnership with a range of different organisations and stakeholders. Steering Group members are expected to play a “conduit role” in terms of sharing key developments with their own organisations and stakeholders, which is reflected in the Terms of Reference.

The Steering Group has a key role to play in supporting organisations to undertake their relevant roles e.g. Responsible Bodies. Welsh Government will lead and coordinate the work – and the role of the Steering Group is about support, but also action and leading. For example, there needs to be a focus on supporting transition – and in particular, what happens to DoLS applications waiting authorisation once LPS is implemented.

There are several well-organised and effectively led strategic workstreams in place concerning, among other matters, the development of Draft Mental Capacity regulations; the development of regulations and protocols to support the extension of liberty safeguards to 16+yr old young people; and the development of an all Wales National Workforce (LPS) Strategy.

This work notwithstanding, there is a UK government determination that LPS should be implemented by April 2022 despite some very serious anxieties about the lead in time to effectively prepare and re-train the workforce in what is a highly complex area. Added to which is a concern that at the time of writing no new funding has been allocated to Wales to enable effective implementation.

Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) Wales Reference Group

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse is coming to the end of the Inquiry term. Its regional offices are in the process of being closed down, but an Inquiry presence will remain in Cardiff, London, and Sheffield until the conclusion of the Inquiry. After it's in depth inquiries and evidence gathering into institutional child sexual abuse in children's homes, religious organisations and other settings, the Inquiry is now publishing its reports with significant learning for our institutions in Wales.

The Wales Reference Group will continue to meet until Spring of 2022 and we await Welsh Government's approach to building on the work of the Inquiry, ensuring that all of the learning from past events is embedded in how we manage and monitor our institutions in Wales. The Truth Project has continued to hear from victims across Wales and nine children and young people from Wales have contributed to IICSA's Children and Young People's Report.

The Contextual Safeguarding Advisory Board

The NISB is represented on the UK Contextual Safeguarding Advisory Board programme of the University of Bedfordshire. Some areas in Wales are already heavily involved in developing contextual safeguarding approaches or received a briefing from Professor Carlene Firmin the UK lead.

Professor Firmin will be based at Durham University from September 2021. The NISB keeps a watching brief on the UK projects such as the lottery funded National Scale Up Project, the London Scale Up Project funded by the London Violence Prevention Unit and the Contextual Safeguarding Champions and training work.

The Beyond Referrals project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Trust, looks specifically at supporting schools to prevent and manage Harmful Sexual Behaviour and has created resources for schools dealing with the disclosures made on Everyone's Invited and the cultural change needed to address these issues in schools.

The Advisory Board will contribute to the updated Contextual Safeguarding Toolkit and the end of programme event in 2022 and NISB will share these via their website.

Violence Prevention Unit

The Wales Violence Prevention Unit was established through funding from the Home Office in 2019. The core team comprises members from police forces, the Police and Crime commissioner, Public Health Wales, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), Home Office immigration and the voluntary sector.

The Unit takes a public health approach to preventing violence. This means that it seeks to understand the causes of violence based on evidence. It uses this evidence to develop interventions focused on the underlying causes of violence. The Unit's approach emphasises robust evaluation of these interventions before scaling up each one to help more people and communities across Wales. Through this approach it aims to develop a whole system response to the prevention of violence.

In recognising a shared agenda, the Unit and the NISB was able to form a fruitful partnership in jointly sponsoring national seminars on areas of common interest regarding safeguarding. The Unit has provided very welcome support to the NISB in facilitating virtual NISB events and the Board was in turn very pleased to be invited to nominate one of its members to act as an Associate professional advisor to the Unit. The associate attends the Unit's monthly all staff and associate meeting in order to maintain an active dialogue in relation to a broad range of concerns including in particular, Domestic Violence, ACEs and the impact of crime on young people.

Adult Support and Protection and Safeguarding Five Nations Conference Series

In 2020, the NISB became involved with Scotland, Ireland, England and Eire to set a series of events designed to maximise learning on adult protection and safeguarding activity across the five nations through:

- » Shared debate on law and guidance, within a human rights framework.
- » Published research and analysis

- » Examination of the wider aspects of safeguarding and adult protection in related areas of community safety, and to health social care and police practice
- » Considering how best to draw on user and public expectation
- » Enabling connections between practitioners, researchers, and policy colleagues across the five nations.

These events were advertised on the NISB website and all RSB's informed. This year's events were:

- » Feb 2021. Inaugural meeting opened by The Minister for Mental Health, Ms Claire Haughey (Scotland). John Scott presented on the approach in Scotland followed by discussion with all five Nations sharing the state of Adult Protection in their country.
- » 5th March 2021. Decision Making, Capacity, Rights and Protections. Balancing Autonomy, support, and protection. Speakers included Dr Laura Pritchard-Jones, Programme Director, MA Safeguarding Adults – Law, Policy, and Practice Lecturer in Law, Keele University.

National Board members contributed to the following consultations throughout the year

An oral evidence session with the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Senedd in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on children & young people and the provision of services.

Submitted a response to the Reducing Restrictive Practices Framework consultation.

Submitted a response and met with Welsh Government officials to discuss the safeguarding process proposals for the Children (Wales) Act 2020.

Future work planned by the National Board

The Board published its Annual Work Plan for 2021-2022 in March 2021 and is available to view on our [website](#). There are 10 strategic goals that are linked directly to the Board's statutory duties:

- » To promote safeguarding communications on a national basis
- » To disseminate learning from Reviews.
- » To provide support & advice on their effectiveness to Safeguarding Boards
- » To respond to emerging themes
- » To produce an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Wales
- » To Engage with Chairs of RSBs, RSB Business Managers, Inspectorates and key stakeholder organisations
- » To commission work around Shaping the Future of Safeguarding in Wales
- » To meet with the Deputy Minister and make recommendations on how safeguarding arrangements in Wales can be improved.

Report on the Adequacy and Effectiveness of Arrangements to Safeguard Children and Adults in Wales

Welsh Government

NISB made five recommendations to Ministers in the 2019-2020 Annual Report, some of which were carried over from the 2018-19 Report.

Recommendation 1

Welsh Government should ensure that the Technical Guidance of the Social Care Performance Framework includes information about the abuse of older people by collecting data broken down by age group.

The Performance and Improvement Framework became law in 2020. The adult safeguarding return, which has been carried over, from the previous framework is now collected by much narrower age bands, which allows for a more precise analysis of abuse and neglect by age.

Regular data returns with this degree of detail are yet to be established. How data is analysed effectively to understand the prevalence of abuse of older people and their experiences remains a priority for the National Board. Through the work the Board has commissioned with Liverpool John Moores University [LJMU] we will be developing our understanding of this important aspect of safeguarding.

Recommendation 2

Welsh Government should work with Regional Safeguarding Boards, the NISB and other key stakeholders to develop a Performance Framework for Safeguarding in Wales.

Welsh Government Officials within Health and Social Services are developing an Outcomes Framework for Health and Social Care. This was previously referred to as The Single Integrated Outcomes Framework for Health and Social Care.

This framework is using Results Based Accountability to ascertain what “good” will look like. There is one overarching outcome: “For the population of Wales to have good health and well-being”. There are currently 17 draft indicators, including:

- » “People reporting they feel safe”
- » “People feeling lonely”
- » “Children in secure units, children’s homes, hostels”
- » “Incidence of abuse”

The draft Framework is in the early stage of development and will therefore be subject to change as work progresses. Officials will engage with NISB in order to appraise them of the ongoing development of the Outcomes Framework for Health and Social Care with a view to reducing duplication.

This is vital in light of the NISB commissioned work with LJMU in relation to the multi-agency safeguarding performance framework for Wales.

Recommendation 3

Welsh Government should set a timetable for the publication of the Statutory Guidance for Children Electively Home Educated in Wales as a matter of urgency.

In June 2020, the then Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams announced that it would not be possible to complete the planned work on the home education statutory guidance and database regulations within the Government term.

At the end of February 2021, there were almost 4,000 EHE children, which represents a 37% increase on the previous year.

It is expected that plans for the development of new statutory guidance and database regulations will be reviewed and the NISB will continue to closely monitor progress in order to ensure this is a priority for the new government, observe the development of guidance and offer appropriate expert advice where relevant.

Recommendation 4

Welsh Government should honour the commitment made to amend the regulatory framework around independent schools and the Education Workforce Council to include a requirement that all teaching staff and all school leaders in independent settings register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC).

Welsh Government Officials have advised that work is expected to resume after a pause whilst attention was focused on the response to the pandemic. The Welsh Government recognises the importance of updating the regulatory position in respect of independent schools to ensure that staff are registered with the Education Workforce Council, and work is being taken forward with stakeholders to reflect this.

The National Board will continue to reinforce this advice until the recommendation has been fulfilled.

Recommendation 5

Welsh Government should undertake a review of the future of the NISB specifically to consider:

- » **Role and function of NISB: Expectation versus Capacity**
- » **Resourcing: Financial, time commitment of board members and administrative support.**
- » **Transition arrangements from one board to the next**
- » **Timing of the public appointment process to ensure there is no gap between boards.**

It has been agreed with the NISB that this is not an appropriate time to review the role and function of an advisory Board. Any review might be better informed by the work being undertaken in the project 'Shaping the Future of Safeguarding in Wales' and the mapping of the Safeguarding Landscape in Wales commissioned by the NISB. The work to date demonstrates how complex and extensive the safeguarding landscape is in Wales.

Work is on-going to amend the transition arrangements from one board term to the next, to avoid any gap and to allow for continuous delivery of the NISB work programme. Welsh Government has extended the term of three Board members to facilitate this.

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales [OPC]

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. A key priority for the OPC is to stop the abuse of older people in Wales.

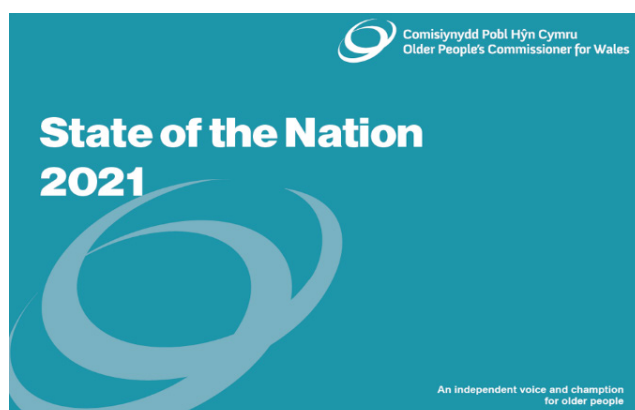
One of the greatest challenges in understanding the impact that the pandemic is having on older people is the lack of available data that is broken down by age and is up-to-date and relevant to our current circumstances. There remain many areas of older people's lives that cannot be assessed because the data simply does not exist, particularly around older people's experiences of abuse. Whilst important steps have been taken to extend the collection of data about domestic abuse to include those aged over 74, significant gaps still remain in our understanding of older people's lives. Without this data, there is a risk that older people's experiences become hidden during decisions about funding or public policy.

Inequalities in our society have been exposed even further during the Covid-19 pandemic, as older people have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and the restrictions necessary to control the spread of the virus.

The Commissioner has published three key reports over the last 18 months:

- » Care Home Voices, published in June 2020, used the voices of older people living in care homes, their relatives and care home staff to give a snapshot of life in care homes during the first peak of the pandemic.
- » Leave No One Behind: Action for an Age-Friendly Recovery was published in August 2020 and set out the actions needed – both immediately and in the longer-term – to ensure that older people can get the help and support they need and are not excluded or left behind as Wales deals with the Covid-19 pandemic and looks towards its recovery.
- » Winter Stories documented the experiences of 21 older people during winter 2020-21 to better understand how their lives were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the lessons that could be learnt when planning for future winters or outbreaks of Covid-19.

The OPC State of the Nation 2021 report builds on the findings of these reports, as well as other work conducted by the Commissioner since her 2019 report and can be read [here](#) in full.



The Children's Commissioner for Wales

Last year we commented on the Commissioners focus on the regulatory issues relating to Elective Home Education and Independent Schools and the intention to initiate an independent review of the position and the role of the WG. This has resulted in a series of recommendations that includes legislative change for both of these policy areas.

Regional Safeguarding Boards

The NISB report on the arrangements to safeguard children and adults in Wales that are the responsibility of Regional Safeguarding Boards is based on the content of the Annual Reports of the Regional Boards and attendance at Board meetings by members of the National Board.

There are six regions in Wales, in **2020-2021** they were:

- » Cardiff and Vale
- » Cwm Taf Morgannwg
- » Gwent
- » Mid & West Wales
- » North Wales
- » West Glamorgan.

All regions produced a single Annual Report to cover the work of the Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adult Boards. In all regions, the boards are supported by a single Business Unit.

Four regions produced their annual reports by the deadline of 31st July set out in the statutory guidance. No extension to the deadline was given this year as it was confirmed that it is not within the powers of the Deputy Minister to agree such an extension. One region had still not published its Annual Report at the time of writing [Oct 2021] but gave the National Board access to the final draft to enable us to include their work in this report.

The content of the Regional Safeguarding Boards' Annual Report is laid down in para 209 in the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard People – Volume 1 – Introduction and Overview'. All the regions' annual reports seen contained the required content.

Themes from the Safeguarding Boards Annual Reports

Impact Covid 19 on Safeguarding Arrangements

As expected, all the reports addressed how the pandemic had impacted on their safeguarding arrangements. Welsh Government issued updated guidance to Safeguarding Boards in April 2020. Boards reported standing down non-critical activities or postponement of elements of their planned programme of work and described having to develop exceptional service delivery models. In addition, two of the Boards reported that the redirection of staff impacted on how they were able to implement their priorities.

It was a little surprising that the reports did not cover the initial concerns about the marked reduction in referrals regarding safeguarding and domestic abuse, and yet Board meetings early in the year focused on this extensively. They responded, in conjunction with Welsh Government, with communications strategies to promote the fact that partner agencies were still working despite the lockdowns and restrictions. An important reminder to professionals and the public that referrals should be made as normal.

As the year progressed, the Boards worked to re-establish 'business as usual' albeit in a virtual world, with marked success.

Strengthening of Partnership Arrangements

The Boards increased the frequency of their meetings to provide assurance around the new ways of working and to discuss key issues including staffing cover, referral levels and impact pandemic restrictions on key groups including care home residents and schoolchildren.

All Boards reported that attendance at meetings and sub-groups was good and at an appropriate level to support the work of the Boards and for them to function effectively. For some agencies, particularly those with a national profile, the move to virtual meetings in fact facilitated their attendance and engagement. Two boards have identified further strengthening their partnership arrangements as a priority for the coming year.

During this year, the meetings between Welsh Government, Regional Safeguarding Boards and the NISB also considerably increased in frequency. Initially meetings with the Board Business Managers were weekly and with the Chairs fortnightly. This enabled discussions around Welsh Government activities and check-ins from each of the regions giving assurance, promoting a cohesive and collaborative response and sharing of issues and best practice to maximise resources.

Delivery of Training and Learning in a Pandemic

All Boards continued to deliver extensive and diverse training programmes throughout the year via virtual platforms.

National Safeguarding Week in November 2020 also went on-line and Boards worked separately and together to deliver a comprehensive range of events across the whole week. One advantage of this shift to the virtual world was the ability to open out access to events beyond the individual regions.

Adapting to new ways of working has been a theme of this year and several Boards held virtual learning events to enable them to complete some of their Adult and Child Practice Reviews. The timeliness of learning from reviews and the engagement with practitioners in this learning is central to the ethos of practice reviews in Wales and although online events facilitated this, the return to face-to-face learning will be welcome for the additional welfare support it provides.

Individual Regional Safeguarding Board Reports



Introduction

The Cardiff and the Vale Regional Safeguarding Board serves a population of more than 500,000. The Board is a multi-agency forum and the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations in the region will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults living in the region. It has three co-chairs, the Director of Social Services at the Vale of Glamorgan Council, the NSPCC Head of Local Services Wales, and the Corporate Director People & Communities at Cardiff Council. The membership of C&VRSB includes all statutory partners, seven representatives from third sector and two members that represent care providers.

The Annual Report does not provide data on attendance at Board or detail of specific involvement but there are a range of agencies involved in the chairing and membership of the sub-groups and acting as reviewers of Adult and Child Practice Reviews. Supported by a Business Unit the work of the Board is driven forward by a number of sub-groups, which meet, on a quarterly basis. The Board collaborated with many agencies outside of the Board member remit.

The Board worked closely and regularly with Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board via meeting with both Chairs and Business Units and other RSBs. As part of this work with colleagues across Wales, the Board continued to host the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Group and ensure that the procedures were kept up to date.

Delivering the Annual Plan

Due to the Covid pandemic the Board quickly revised its priorities and annual plan and worked to ensure it had due regard to its statutory responsibility to meet their core functions. The Board worked collaboratively to develop a clear picture of the pandemic and its impact on communities, individuals, and agencies. The Board collaborated with colleagues from the Local Health Board and those providing support packages to people who may have been isolated or shielding. Board members were assured by colleagues that each agency response to the pandemic had been safe and proportionate. As a result of this, their Annual Plan for 2021 – 2022 is based upon the 2020 – 2021 Plan, with the addition of some extra actions to cover themes that have emerged from the COVID 19 response.

Safeguarding Themes

The priorities for 2020-21 were agreed from a Board Development session, these priorities cover both the children and adults safeguarding agenda, they were:

Priority 1 – Workforce and Practice

Priority 2 – Rights, Values and Voice of the Person

Priority 3 – Strengthening Links and Contextual Safeguarding

The Board tackled a backlog of review cases, which had built up in their region. They negotiated with Board members, subgroup chairs and other colleagues to ensure that they had suitable professionals to tackle this backlog. They paired up reviewers to ensure that experienced staff worked with those less confident. They provided training for twenty prospective reviewers and panel chairs. The Business Unit prioritised this work and provided unparalleled levels of support to complete the reviews; this support was appreciated by all involved.

The Board looked for innovative ways to complete Multi Agency Professional Forums to ease the burden on staff and reduce the backlog to more manageable proportions.

The Board developed a new procedure for dealing with allegations against those in a position of trust. This deals with all professional strategy meetings and gives step-by-step guidance in line with Section 5 of the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The Board participated fully in National Safeguarding Week by using social isolation as a theme. A variety of virtual events were held across the week culminating in their Regional Safeguarding Awards.

The Board has worked hard to strengthen links with other strategic partnerships in the region and have increased their profile with the Community Safety Partnership in Cardiff and in their participation in the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Process. This has resulted in greater understanding across partnerships of respective roles and responsibilities.

Following several case practice review referrals which related to exploitation and abuse and working with other partnerships, the Board produced an Exploitation Strategy to respond to the increase in exploitative crimes in the area. The initial focus was to begin to understand and tackle how people become involved. The work progressed with a Board delivery plan, which enabled practitioners to access a range of interventions as they became more aware of the difficulties associated with vulnerability and exploitation or abuse.

The Board participated in training for professionals provided by the UK centre for expertise on Child Sexual Abuse creating a coordinated approach to dealing with sexual abuse for front line teams. Practice leads provide help and support to practitioners to recognise and work with children and families where sexual abuse is apparent.

The Board are in the process of completing an historical Child Practice Review which deals with familial sexual abuse and have used the expertise gained to reflect upon and review the differences in current practice to those of the time of the review. There has also been consolidated learning on the connection between sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and work has begun to establish how the two forms of abuse interact.

The Board had also completed production of several regional documents and protocols including:

- » Duty to Report Form
- » Multi-Agency Referral Form
- » Immediate Response Group Protocol

The Board has completed their Data Dashboard and all actions in the Nation Action Plan on Child sexual Abuse.

Information and Learning

As well as developing and facilitating the training course for prospective chairs and reviewers of Child or Adult Practice Reviews, the Board worked to improve the quality of the reviews it produced and to ensure families in reviews had a voice. The Board set up a new subgroup to monitor the action plans and recommendations of all Child and Adult Practice Reviews and ensured that all Board agencies were compliant with these. All reviewers were required to produce a 7-minute briefing to cover all learning highlighted by the review. The Board commissioned two bespoke training packages aimed at a multi-agency audience involved in the child or adult care support and protection processes and also provided a signposting service about a range of available services that may be required due to social isolation or mental health and wellbeing concerns.

A repository now exists on their website, which provides information for both professionals and the public about resources that are available for them to use.

During Safeguarding week, the Board produced and launched information about self-neglect, which is available as a resource for practitioners and the public.

Safeguarding Board Resourcing

The Annual Report notes the contributions made in monetary value as well as the prescribed percentages. Recognising that the financial contributions form only one part of agency contributions, with members providing a significant amount of time to support the Board and its work.

Participation and Involvement

The Board recognised the need to develop participation by the public in the work of the Board. By working with a Children & Young People Advocacy charity, they have begun work on an engagement and participation framework with young people.

During the pandemic, the Board reached out to the most vulnerable by producing and disseminating literature and a radio information piece to ensure that the public were aware how services were operating and how they could be supported.

Annual Report

Once published, the Annual Report can be read in full via the [Regional Safeguarding Board website](#).



**Cwm Taf Morgannwg
Bwrdd Diogelu
Safeguarding Board**

Introduction

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board covers the local authority areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf, serving a population of approximately 428,000. The Boards aim to ensure that all its citizens across all ages are safeguarded, is delivered by a multi-agency substructure and supported by the Boards Business Unit. The Board is well attended at an appropriate level by the multiagency partnership and the subgroups are supported by agencies to function effectively.

Delivering the Annual Plan

In March 2020, the Board published its Annual Plan setting out three strategic priorities; however, the continuing evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic also indicated to the Board the need to set out their strategic response, recognising the significant impact of the pandemic and the restrictions put in place, on the most vulnerable members of communities. Non-critical activities had to be stood down, new priorities shaped, and additional activities undertaken to ensure that those most at risk continued to be protected from abuse and neglect.

Areas of Board focus included residential care homes, support for vulnerable learners and the prevention of suicide and self-harm. The latter resulting from the concerns about rising incidents.

Introducing exceptional service delivery models and developing ways to manage the additional demands and pressures on services became necessary. As was the need for increased collaboration and partnership working across the Board membership and across the regional partnerships. Regional (Silver) and Bronze (local) Command groups were established to coordinate critical safeguarding activities and highlight risks and their management to the Board and Gold Command. Heightened communication with Welsh Government, the National Independent Safeguarding Board and with other Regional Boards supported and aligned the Boards strategic response.

The Board has acknowledged that the need for agencies to redirect resources to manage the pandemic response inevitably impacted on the Boards ability to fully implement the priorities set out in the Annual Plan; however, evidence of progress against the 3 priorities has been provided in the Boards Annual Report. These were:

Strategic Priority 1: Enhance and promote a learning culture where the Board can evidence the difference it is making to safeguarding practice

The Board wanted to focus on learning from the experiences of practitioners, recognising the wealth of learning from reviews and case audits and the need for this to support and influence practice improvement. A Learning Framework was planned but development postponed because of the pandemic. Nevertheless, actions were progressed including the establishment of a monitoring group, put in place to oversee and report to the Board on the implementation of recommendations and actions determined by case reviews. Training for Reviewers and Chairs of Practice Reviews Panels was provided; multi-agency case audits were undertaken to sample practice and multi-agency practitioner events continued to support learning from case practice. Learning was shared widely using the Board website as a platform and the expanded use of 7-minute briefings supported rapid learning across agencies.

Collaborative or single agency working contributed to the work of the Board on this theme. For example, all local authority Children's Services progressed the development of quality assurance frameworks to review practice and to identify what was working well. The South Wales Police collated and reviewed suspected suicides and deaths from drug overdoses to obtain learning and shared this with the newly formed Suicide Prevention Steering Group.

Strategic Priority 2: To have in place a fully integrated, functioning regional Safeguarding Board

This priority built on a previous Board priority determined by the change in regional boundaries bringing Bridgend CBC to join the Board in 2019. A range of actions have been taken to achieve this resulting in the adoption of common safeguarding processes and regionalisation of data sets for Board reporting. New links have been forged including with prison services in Bridgend, with representation on the Board. Collaborative working between the MASH's of Bridgend and Cwm Taf is ongoing.

A key achievement for the Board has been the review, reissue and implementation of the Boards Pre-Birth Referrals and Conferences policy. This resulted from the learning from a regional Child Practice Review, which informed about the importance of actively engaging with fathers during pre-birth assessments. This now brings forward the referral point to Children's Services from 16 weeks gestation to as early as possible to allow for more time in which to engage and work with women and their partners.

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen the links with other Partnerships in the region in relation to areas of common concern

The Boards Annual Report notes the following achievements:

- » Established a cross-partnership regional approach to suicide prevention
- » Progressed with improvements to the MARAC process

- » Made good links via the Bronze Groups with Substance Misuse, Housing and Domestic Abuse agencies

A key achievement for the Board, having identified an increasing number of suicides in the region, is the establishment of a Suicide Prevention Steering Group. This group will now receive and review data to identify any themes, patterns or trends and explore opportunities for collaboration and practice improvement. The membership of the group includes the Community Safety Partnerships, Together for Mental Health Partnership and the National co-ordinator for Suicide and Self Harm Prevention.

Though not explicit in the Annual report strong leadership and effective partnership working shown throughout the pandemic, particularly through the focussed areas of work, should be seen as a key achievement of the Board. There is little doubt that existing partnerships will have been strengthened and new ones now developed as agencies worked together to meet the shared challenges.

Safeguarding Themes

Safeguarding themes are derived from a newly adopted approach to audit work undertaken by individual task and finish groups.

Two completed case audits (Child and Adult) were undertaken with 'themes' or points of practice where improvements could be made for each being noted. The findings from the audits have been shared with practitioners to support learning.

One Adult Practice review was published in the last year. This identifies the following learning themes.

- » Ensuring the most appropriate use of legislation for adults requiring inpatient care.
- » The patient pathway between older persons mental health wards.
- » The reporting and recording of safeguarding incidents.
- » The role of the multidisciplinary team.

The Board has been assured that the Review has been disseminated and learning incorporated into training and that actions to address the key issues have been taken.

The previously mentioned new Monitoring subgroup is now in place to give assurance to the Board on the implementation of Case Practice Review recommendations and actions. The oversight of recommendations will provide future opportunity to identify themes arising from similar or repeated recommendations or learning points.

Information and Learning

The Board has used a range of platforms to share information and learning and to deliver training to staff. The growing of skills in using digital platforms has greatly assisted the Board.

The Board's website is regularly updated and used to share reports and disseminate learning from reviews and audits. A newly created section 'Talking Saves Lives' contains a range of information and support for professionals and the public in support of suicide prevention.

Social media platforms have been established and the Board's Facebook page and Twitter account launched to raise safeguarding awareness and promote well-being. The reach was 37,500 and 24,300 respectively.

Activities during Safeguarding Week focussed on positive mental wellbeing and preventing suicide with an emphasis on 'Talking Saves Lives'. A programme of events for young people, the public and professionals was delivered with good attendance and good evaluations. A radio advertisement was broadcast in safeguarding week to direct listeners to the website.

A Board Autumn Bulletin provided information on a range of matters including the Board's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, learning from case reviews and current ongoing campaigns initiated following earlier case reviews to strengthen key safeguarding messages.

Staff training is coordinated and delivered by the local authority training departments and monitored by the Board's Training and Learning subgroup. Whilst planned training was diminished as a consequence of the pandemic, accelerated growth in the use and take up of virtual and on-line training programmes as the pandemic progressed resulted in 183 training sessions being delivered to a range of staff, volunteers and to foster carers. VAWDASV training was progressed throughout the year. The Welsh Government training grant provided for a range of additional staff training that included child sexual abuse and exploitation, suicide prevention and staff well-being. Multi Agency Practitioners Fora provided further opportunity for staff to learn from specific cases. Partner agencies reported to the Board on the training that they had also provided for their staff.

Safeguarding Board Resourcing

The Board's Annual Report provides information regarding its expenditure for staff and premises and an additional expenditure not detailed. This cost is divided between the partner agencies in a prescribed formula of financial contribution.

Participation and Involvement

Where possible digital platforms and phone-in systems were used to maintain contact with people over the year but much of the Board's engagement and participation work was reduced as a consequence of reduced capacity to undertake this work as well as the restrictions put in place to manage the pandemic. Still, there are good examples of agency engagement. For example, WAST Patient Engagement and Community Involvement team worked with children and older people to produce charters expressing their expectations of staff and volunteers. RCT Youth Engagement and Participation Service provided a range of support on social media platforms and Bridgend College delivered workshops to students on self-harm, mental health and on the dangers of gaming and online grooming. Bridgend Youth Council acted to lessen the isolation and loneliness for young people with a range of activities.

A 'Ladder of participation' has been developed to measure how well the Board is engaging with communities and service users going forward.

Annual report

The Board's [annual report](#) provides the full membership and the detail of their collaboration to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk from harm over the previous year.

Gwent Regional Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards



Diogelu Gwent Gwent Safeguarding

Introduction

Gwent Safeguarding Boards area covers the local authority areas of Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Newport and Monmouthshire serving a population of over 591,000.

The Boards identified the following joint strategic priorities

- » To better protect children and adults at risk of exploitation.
- » To better protect children and adults from neglect, physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm.
- » To improve and maintain the effectiveness of the Regional Safeguarding Board.

These strategic priorities are progressed by an active combination of statutory and non-statutory regional partners through a range of highly effective and productive multi-disciplinary and multi-agency sub-groups, supported by a well-resourced Boards Business Unit. Membership attendance at the quarterly Board meetings reflects a high level of commitment by all partners.

Delivering the Annual Plan

As in previous years, the Board had prepared its Annual Plan significantly ahead of the due date, publishing the final version in good time.

Although full board meetings were partially suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic, members remained committed to sustaining the work programme to its fullest possible extent, despite the associated restrictions. This was effectively enabled by convening a regular Safeguarding Board Executive. This met more frequently than the full board but focused strongly on pre-existing priorities where possible, adapting those that implied more direct/in-person engagement and devoting significant effort to monitoring the impact of the pandemic on the capacity of agencies to sustain front-line safeguarding activity and practice.

Members were particularly concerned to gather good intelligence about the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable members of communities, although when the pandemic was at its most acute, this was difficult and inevitably compromised by much lower levels of contact with services, particularly schools for instance. This was supported by enhanced reporting and activity monitoring and by the early emergence of a range of additional outreach activities, undertaken to ensure that those most at risk continued to be protected from abuse and neglect. Areas of focus included residential care homes, support for vulnerable learners, care leavers and the prevention of suicide and self-harm. The latter resulting from the concerns about a level of incidents that continued to rise in step with the lengthening duration of restrictions.

Agencies remained firmly focused on aiming for 'business as normal' wherever possible and this included agency staff on the ground continuing to visit the most isolated with the support of appropriate measures and PPE.

Evidence of good progress against the Board's 3 strategic priorities was identified in its Annual Report and included the following:

- » Effectively concluded a period of governance transition in creating *"a fully joint Board and subgroup structure in order to provide the opportunity to share experiences and ideas across adult, children and VAWDASV agendas"*.
- » Implementation of a child exploitation measurement toolkit and embedding Multi-agency **Child Exploitation** Meetings.
- » Continued an ongoing process of reviewing guidance to align practice with recent legislative changes.
- » Tested a Safeguarding Maturity Matrix Tool to enable partners to test and measure effectiveness.
- » Re-developed the multi-agency training programme on an on-line platform to enable participation during the pandemic.
- » Piloted **Domestic-Adult Practice Reviews** as part of a Home Office trial, applying CPR/APR methodology and contributing to SUSR development.
- » Supported the implementation of the **National Action Plan for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse** including practitioner workshops run by the Centre of Expertise for Child Sexual Abuse.
- » Established links with the Pan Gwent Multi-Agency **Transition** group, as they aim to gather and review evidence about how transition in Gwent is working and how lessons can be learned to improve transitions.
- » **LPS** – Maintained a watching brief and received progress updates on the implementation of the new LPS changes.
- » Commissioned a series of awareness-raising sessions regarding '**Contextual Safeguarding**'.
- » **Financial Abuse** Piloted a classroom-based training session in order to support practitioners to understand the types and consequences of financial abuse and to be equipped to work with victims.
- » **APR learning** – Learning from an APR, board members developed a draft 'Coercive Control Guide' and developed new regional guidance on Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs). APR lessons were with care home forums and providers, across Gwent.
- » **Mental Health** To support a more cohesive and joined up approach to responding effectively to Mental Health concerns, the board
 - » Formalised links to the Mental Health and Learning Development Strategic Partnership Group
 - » Agreed to commission/re-develop the regional Suicide & Self-Harm Prevention Plan to incorporate a more blended learning model in responding to young people.
 - » Commissioned staff wellbeing workshops for up to 500 multi-agency practitioners.

- » **Skin-Management** – Published Adult Safeguarding Thresholds Guidance to ensure that the regional response to keeping people safe is appropriate and proportionate to the abuse/neglect identified, which includes harm relating to skin management. A draft pressure management flowchart was also developed.
- » Initiated the development of a **data dashboard** to include **neglect** in order to establish the prevalence of cases in the region.

Safeguarding Themes

Identifying thematic issues was very much shaped by the impact of the COVID Pandemic and this included

- » Understanding and learning how best to **engage with people** in the community who were in need of direct support, in the midst of social contact restrictions.
- » Understanding and learning how best to remain **resilient** across all workstreams.
- » Community Resilience in terms of **mental health** and in particular, how to mitigate social isolation amongst adults and children. Linked to this
- » Lessons concerning increased **suicide risks** amongst young people, prompting a decision to re-commission suicide prevention training for practitioners.
- » **Child Exploitation**, although there were some signs of increase Covid made it more opaque and much less open to the usual identification routes and the board commissioned Contextual Safeguarding sessions to raise practitioner awareness of its risks

Information and Learning

The Board has used a range of platforms to share information and learning and to deliver training to staff. The growing of skills in using digital platforms has greatly assisted the Board.

- » The Boards commissioned awareness-raising sessions and developed supplementary resources, which were rolled out across the region to almost 400 multi-agency staff to support implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures to practitioners across the region.
- » Commissioned staff wellbeing workshops relating to 'Time to Change' for up to 500 multi-agency practitioners.
- » Shared lessons from an APR with care home forums and providers, across Gwent including publication of Adult Safeguarding Thresholds Guidance to ensure an effective regional response to keeping people safe is appropriate and proportionate to the abuse/neglect identified, which includes harm relating to skin management.

Safeguarding Board Resourcing

The Boards are funded by contributions from statutory partner agencies who have agreed the funding formula as set out in the Welsh Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 1'.

The Report does not detail the contributions but does set out costs incurred in sustaining the business unit, workshop and meeting arrangements. There is no 'budget' as such, within the report.

The report acknowledges the significant in-kind contributions of its partners.

Participation and Involvement

The Gwent Boards continue to evidence excellent partnership between statutory partners and beyond. Partners take a leading role in various sub-groups, including chairing roles.

In addition, during 2020-21 the Boards have established working relationships with the Regional Partnership Board and the Area Planning Board. This has extended and supported good governance and reduced duplication. This year also extended the boards' close relationship with VAWDASV colleagues, including routine updates at respective Boards, promoting shared support and resourcing between coordinating teams and the co-production of work pieces, such as the recently drafted Coercive Control Guidance.

The Gwent Boards have taken a lead in piloting the application of CPR/APR methodologies to DHRs as part of a Home Office national UK initiative.

There were no relevant inspections concluded that were in purview of the Gwent RSB.

Annual report

The Boards [annual report](#) provides the full membership and the detail of their collaboration to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk from harm over the previous year.

The Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board



CYSUR

Introduction

Mid and West Wales is covered by two sister Safeguarding Boards: CWMPAS [Collaborative Working & Maintaining Partnership in Adult Safeguarding] and CYSUR [Child & Youth Safeguarding, Unifying the Region]. The Executive Boards for CYSUR and CWMPAS work together as an overarching Regional Safeguarding Board to monitor and improve regional safeguarding activity across Mid and West Wales. An infrastructure is shared by the two 'sister boards' and there is a single business unit. The membership of the two Boards, including all statutory partners, are listed alongside in the Boards Annual Report.

Delivering the Annual Plan

To ensure an efficient and consistent response to the COVID-19 pandemic across safeguarding services in Mid and West Wales, a COVID-19 Operational Group was established to specifically address key issues relating to the pandemic. This group, with membership made up of Executive Board members and Senior Operational Managers across the multi-agency partnership, agreed, developed, and implemented a number of policies and procedures, to ensure safeguarding practice across all Board agencies was consistent, and that the risks posed by COVID-19 to the community as well as to services were responded to in a timely and effective manner.

All agencies supported a business-as-usual approach, developing creative ways to continue to deliver key services and to meet the Boards statutory obligations. Work included:

- » The formulation of regional interim policies for undertaking Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards; Section 47 investigations; Child Protection Conferences and Children Looked After reviews.
- » Updating guidance on Data Protection and putting in place a safeguarding framework to support multi-disciplinary meetings.
- » Developing and publishing a Regional Escalation and Risk Management Policy for Care and Nursing Homes in collaboration with the Regional Partnership Board.
- » Developing and implementing the COVID-19 safeguarding thresholds document.
- » Activity undertaken to ensure that vulnerable children and families had access to IT and other essential equipment throughout lockdown to enable access to specialist support and to maintain safeguarding processes.

The coordinated multi-agency response to the wide range of risks posed to safeguarding services and the public throughout COVID-19 has been a testament to the good practice and collaboration already established within the Boards. A planned review in collaboration with the Regional Partnership Board will take place next year.

Whilst the ongoing pandemic inevitably resulted in significant changes to the intended annual delivery plan, the Board continued to move the plan forward.

A Board priority to progress the implementation of the regional VAWDASV strategy led to several key actions being taken. This included work to establish a consistent regional response to Child to Parent Abuse (CPA), including a regional policy, training, and a regional pathway to access support. Three specialist Domestic Abuse perpetrator interventions were delivered across the region, including a pilot to deliver interventions virtually and a stalking specific intervention. Additional funding of £1million for the 2020-21 financial year was secured to increase the capacity of specialist services to meet demand resulting from the increased incidents seen during lockdown.

The Boards Annual Plan sets out 4 strategic priorities. These are:

1. Effective Engagement and Communication: To Improve Engagement and Consultation with Children, Adults at Risk, Vulnerable Groups, Professionals and Partnerships.

2. Thematic Learning and Developing

Best Practice: To Ensure a Thematic Approach to Learning and Evaluate the Continued Impact of Board Work overtime, Allowing Key Themes Identified to Inform Strategic Priorities. To Continue to Develop and Share Best Practice.

3. Strengthening the Workforce and

Managing Risk: To Develop and Implement Strategic Initiatives, which will Enable Greater Retention of, and Recruitment into the Social Care Workforce, and to Identify and Respond to Other Significant Risks in the Safeguarding Arena.

4. Leadership, Visibility and Challenge:

To Continue to Provide Visible Leadership and Influence the National Agenda in relation to Mid & West Wales Safeguarding Priorities, and to Enable Constructive Challenge and Active Engagement from all Agencies in our Partnership.

A source of great pride for the Board is the achievements made throughout the year in progressing the Annual Plan, while also managing the impact of the pandemic, in itself a key achievement. The Annual Report evidences a range of accomplishments made possible through multi-agency working and partnership collaborations. The statutory agencies also provide a narrative of their individual contributions to the work of the board. CADW, the well-established Regional Junior Board were also very active across the region. A Board development day, held virtually, reflected positively on progress and the achievements made.

Key themes of work have included:

- » **Tackling child exploitation** – Several initiatives have been led by the Board in response to recent published national research into this area of safeguarding. A new regional model, now being implemented by the Board takes a strategic approach and encompasses children at risk of wider forms of exploitation, including criminal exploitation.
- » **Tackling child sexual abuse** – The Board continues to oversee and implement the National Action Plan with focussed and comprehensive multi-agency work taking place to support this, including public campaigns.
- » **Mental Health, Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention** – remains a high priority for the Board and its partner agencies with early intervention seen as critical. Substantial work continues to take place supported by the appointment of a regional coordinator to drive forward the national Talk to me 2 Strategy Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- » **High-Risk Behaviours for Adults at Risk (Including Hoarding and Self-Neglect)** – The Board has identified a disproportionately high number of cases referred for Adult Practice Reviews and MAPFs, where adults, with these concerns have either died or suffered serious harm. This complex and challenging area of safeguarding has been workstreamed resulting in the development of a regional multiagency protocol and framework to support the understanding of practitioners' in the implementation of relevant Welsh legislation when assessing and meeting the needs of service users.
- » **Accommodation for Those with Complex Needs** – A regional task group has focused on agency collaboration to develop a whole system response that provides the right support in the right place to individuals whilst effectively safeguarding them and protecting the public. Work in the last year has specifically focused on housing needs.
- » **Vulnerability Hub – Dyfed-Powys Police** – The creation of a vulnerability desk within Dyfed-Powys Police in April 2019 for victims of Domestic Abuse led to the development of a much broader force-wide response to vulnerability, to include people who have identified mental health problems and those at risk of exploitation. Following the launch of the Vulnerability Hub in March 2020, the Hub now houses a secondary risk assessment unit to provide a review of all domestic abuse incidents to identify missed behaviours such as coercion and control or stalking. A 'Daily Discussion' between agencies of incidents that meet the MARAC criteria ensure that cases are considered by a multi-agency panel within 48hrs. This has significantly improved the timescales in which survivors receive engagement and support. Whilst the pandemic has delayed progress, capital funding has enabled the purchase of equipment for effective functioning of the Hub in each of the 4 local authority areas, and mental health secondment has been secured to support the policing and joint responses to mental health challenges.
- » **Regional policies and pathways** have been completed and published to guide staff and support the continued development of safeguarding practice in alignment with the Boards strategic priorities.

Safeguarding Themes

The Boards' Quality Assurance and Reporting Framework, which includes a comprehensive dataset alongside a local and thematic regional audit schedule, has continued to aid the Boards' understanding of professional safeguarding practice. The Regional Board has a robust helicopter view of high-level multi-agency safeguarding practice across the region, through scrutinising quarterly overview reports containing analysis of key regional and local trends. Key conclusions drawn from this analysis throughout the year include a general stability in the data for Children Looked After, keeping numbers generally consistent with pre-COVID data. Domestic incidents involving adults was another area of focus with data demonstrating a steady increase in reports of incidents at the onset of the pandemic, followed by a notable reduction in most areas towards the winter months, with rates stabilising by the end of the year.

Themes arising from the case practice reviews undertaken during the year have been considered by the Board to inform training programmes and future priorities. These have included:

- » The need for practitioner training and awareness in relation to professional curiosity and disguised compliance and regarding adult safeguarding, mental capacity legislation, particularly where service users exhibit high-risk behaviours.
- » Highlighting the importance of speaking directly to children as part of their care and support assessments.
- » The need for regional policy guidance where parents exhibit extreme religious views.

- » The importance of improving the national position in the provision of secure accommodation for children.
- » The need for improved national statutory guidance for children who are electively home educated.

Information and Learning

Comprehensive information about the Board, Annual Plans and Annual Reports and published Practice Reviews, along with a range of resources for practitioners are all accessible via a regularly updated website.

The Annual Report includes the details of a full planned training programme including VAWDASV training delivered through the Board or by partner agencies. Training and development sessions on thematic learning from practice reviews have been undertaken regionally. Additionally, during the year, sessions provided by experts in the field have included CSA; Self-Neglect and Stalking behaviours. A S47 development day was also held. All were provided virtually.

In National Safeguarding Week, a regional programme of events focused on the theme of mental health and wellbeing and involved the creation of a social media and website campaign to highlight the cornerstones to positive mental wellbeing with messages reaching as many as 8,000 social media users during the week.

Learning events to disseminate the messages arising from both regional and national practice reviews were held for all practitioners and their managers. As a result of demand these continued throughout the remainder of the year.

Safeguarding Board Resourcing

All statutory partners of the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards contribute time and expertise in addition to the financial running of the Boards.

In 2020-21, most of the Boards' expenditure was dedicated to general running costs, including staffing the Business Unit (69%). The commissioning and delivery of training was the second highest cost (21%).

Participation and Involvement

Young members of the CADW: Junior Regional Safeguarding Board undertook a range of activities across all local authority areas. A few examples of these activities include:

- » Development of an animation expressing the views of children and young people on how practitioners can better support and interact with them. This is now included in safeguarding training.
- » Active promotion to support the participation of young people with three key objectives: Raising awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); Safety [at home, school, and the community]; and Transition to adulthood.

- » Creation of a poem to express how young people felt about COVID-19, which was shared widely across social media.
- » Interviewing of professionals on Zoom so that children and young people could get to know more about the people who safeguard them.
- » Support provided to the interview panel for the Director of Education for Pembrokeshire and the recruitment of a Service Manager for Children's Services.

Annual report

The Boards [annual report](#) provides the full membership and the detail of their collaboration to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk from harm over the previous year.

North Wales Safeguarding Board



Introduction

The North Wales Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adult Boards encompasses six Local Authority areas: Flintshire, Wrexham, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd and Ynys Mon. Serving such a large region does not come without significant challenges but the board and its members continue to be proud of the strong ethos of collaboration and partnership working that has been established at both a senior executive board and sub group level.

Protecting and preventing children and adults at risk from experiencing harm and promoting the wellbeing of the people of North Wales enabling them to achieve better outcomes remains central to the Board's work.

Delivering the Annual Plan

The Adult and Children Boards meet bi-monthly and jointly twice a year. In addition, they hold a joint Business Development Day annually to set the priorities for the coming year and self-assess the progress of the Boards.

Two priority areas for the Children's and Adults Boards were agreed:

1. To promote awareness and compliance around the New Wales Safeguarding Adult Procedures
2. To promote awareness and compliance around the New Wales Safeguarding Children Procedures.

The rationale for the choice of these two priority areas was the need to further promote awareness of the procedures and as a region demonstrate that the procedures were embedded into practice.

In addition, the board identified improvement areas to continue to work on:

- » Strong Leadership & Evidenced of Compliance
- » Increased Knowledge & Continuous Learning

However, after the outbreak of the pandemic, the Welsh Government acknowledged that the ways in which the statutory objectives of safeguarding boards are met may need to look different while COVID-19 arrangements are in place.

Strategic Priorities

Ensure that the North Wales Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards have measures in place to protect and prevent abuse of Children at Risk and Adults at Risk and adherence to the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The Board have created a self-assessment audit tool-kit for all partner agencies to complete in September 21. This work package was due to be completed in March 2020 but all Board members felt this was not possible and is an example of where Covid impacted NWSB work.

The development of Adult Safeguarding Videos to cover all sections and key principles of the procedures were commissioned.

A series of audits to assess compliance with the procedures were scheduled to start in January 2021 but were delayed due to the ongoing pandemic.

Person centred practice is embedded within the safeguarding process across all agencies.

Additional Person centred guidance in relation to adults is being developed to accompany the procedures.

Workshops were held around Child Centred practice and links were established with Tros Gynnal children's group. This forum will be used to ensure input from Children and Young People into all new policy developments /strategies.

Ensure that the multi-agency safeguarding pathway is effective around Domestic Violence and Adult at Risk Cases.

Weekly Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference [MARAC] meetings have been piloted in order to discuss cases in a timely manner.

Ensure that the multi-agency safeguarding pathway is effective around Child Sexual Abuse [CSA] cases.

Work has continued with the implementation of the National CSA Action plan including the development of a specific CSA webpage on the NWSB website.

Key messages of the 'Stop it Now' campaign were shared via the NWSB twitter and leaflets were sent out across the region specifically focussing on education, including Independent Schools. Presentation, Posters, and briefings were shared with the Local Delivery Groups and the documents were circulated across the region.

Improvement Plan

Strong Leadership & Evidence of Compliance

The Board seeks to ensure that it is made aware of any risks within and across services and is assured and updated on any action to be taken to minimise the risk. Key areas this year included: Impact of Covid 19 and Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

An area of progress in reducing potential risk was the move to virtual meetings, which has seen an increase in attendance at sub group meetings.

Links with other partnership boards were seen as limited and not effectively managed. The regional partnership review strengthened the links between respective safeguarding partnership meetings in the region and the Board will seek to identify opportunities to align activity with other partnership arrangements across North Wales in order to provide a joint approach to the efficient use of resources and effective delivery of priorities.

Safeguarding Themes from Practice

Practice themes were identified from audits, child and adult protection conference appeals and practice reviews. The following key themes were identified:

Disguised Compliance

In response the Children's Board published its practice guide to support Multi Agency Practitioners in identifying and responding to cases where the parents/ carers may be displaying disguised compliance.

Self-Neglect

The North Wales Safeguarding Board was the first Board in Wales to develop a Regional Self-Neglect Practice Guidance. This year there has been an increase in safeguarding reports in relation to self-neglect and they identified the need to update the practice guidance with a particular emphasis on children services to consider the whole family approach.

The Board also identified the need to update the practice guidance on Supporting Children, Supporting Parents with severe mental health problems & or substance misuse issues.

Compliance with the Mental Health Measure 2010

The lack of a key professional undertaking the role of the Care Coordinator was highlighted as an issue in an Adult Practice Review and has been identified in previous practice reviews across Wales. This absence led to a lack of information sharing between agencies and the individual not having an up to date care and support plan.

The Board is seeking assurance that agencies providing secondary mental health services are ensuring compliance with the measure and that individuals in receipt of secondary mental health services are given information around the role of the care coordinator and a named professional who is undertaking this role

Escalating Concerns

Two Adult Practice Reviews have identified concerns around the robustness of the Escalating Concerns process.

In response, the Business Unit made arrangements to present at the Regional Commissioning Board and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures audit will require assurance around commissioning and compliance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Pre-birth Assessments

Practice issues around the quality of pre-birth assessments had been previously identified. The Health Board implemented regular themed audits around compliance with the relevant practice guide, which is in the process of being updated to reflect the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Information & Learning

Increased Knowledge & Continuous Learning

As a result of better engagement at the Local Delivery Groups there has been more informed discussions regarding safeguarding those most at risk.

The delivery of training on the Wales Safeguarding Procedures has increased awareness of the Practice Guides, which go alongside the procedures

The Board has responded to regional and national reviews to identify and monitor the implementation of action plans and ensuring that Board partners have taken appropriate action to improve areas of concern.

The Board has continued to deliver a programme of training via virtual platforms.

A significant area for the Board over the last year has been the impact of Covid-19 on the Welsh Language and the challenges for officers in contributing to meetings in their first language. The limitations in relation to IT systems that are unable to provide an adequate translation service have needed to be balanced with security concerns around other platforms that do.

Safeguarding Board Resourcing

There has been good attendance at Board meetings and when senior officers have been unable to attend another representative from the organisation has deputised.

The North Wales Safeguarding Board used the national funding formula to identify annual funding from statutory board partners. The bulk of the expenditure was spent on staffing costs.

Unusually this year, the Business Unit provided additional support operationally during the first lockdown period. The board administrator, in addition to her core tasks, was working part-time within a care home setting as a care support assistant. The Business Coordinators were supporting a help-line that was established within the local authority contacting vulnerable residents to check on their wellbeing and the Business Manager provided support to local safeguarding teams if required.

In addition, this year, the Business Manager chaired a number of the sub groups meetings where demands due to the pandemic prevented Board members being available to chair meetings.

Participation & Involvement

This is also an area of work that the Board felt had been impacted during the pandemic.

However, the Children's Business Coordinator attended regular meetings with the regional advocacy provider. The feedback from children & young people was that the number of requests for input into surveys/ attend virtual forums had been significant. Therefore, the Board focused on encouraging children and young people to engage with the National Surveys undertaken by the Children's Commissioner.

The Adults Business Coordinator attended the North Wales Regional Advocacy group to discuss the key themes that Adults at Risk highlighted during the safeguarding process.

Annual Report

The Annual Report of the North Wales Safeguarding Boards covered all the elements laid down in the statutory guidance and was published in line with statutory requirements. It can be read in full [here](#).



Introduction

The West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board covers the local authority areas of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, serving a population of approximately 390,000. The board is a multi-agency forum and the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations in the region will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults living in the region.

Supported by a business unit the board has four sub management groups – Joint Strategic Training; Joint Quality and Performance; Joint Policy, Procedure and Practice; and Practice Review.

The Board and subgroups are well attended and members, their roles and attendance are listed in the annual report.

Delivering the Annual Plan

Due to the Covid pandemic the Board quickly revised its priorities and annual plan and worked to ensure it had due regard to its statutory responsibility to meet the core functions and therefore the board's annual plan reflected this with just one safeguarding priority identified which was to: Ensure a robust, resilient and consistent approach to safeguarding practice during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Under this priority two areas of focus were identified

1. Developing a clear picture of the impact of Covid across the region
2. Ensuring a consistent, legal and measured response and that safeguarding remains the golden thread.

The plan detailed the outcome indicators and assigned to sub groups to monitor and report back to the main board.

Strategic priority 1: To ensure a robust, resilient and consistent approach to safeguarding practice during the Covid 19 pandemic

The board worked collaboratively to develop a clear picture of the pandemic and its impact on communities, individuals, and agencies.

The board demonstrated a clear focus on trying to track the virus with the aim of supporting decision-making and planning. Data sets were underdeveloped and so the Quality Performance Management Group received regular feedback and observations from across the partnership.

As the year progressed data sets became more developed and allowed for the virus to be tracked across the region, enabling an informed and preventative approach to safeguarding practice.

The report references that the pandemic has strengthened communication and collaboration across all agencies during what was an unprecedented time and this is a recurring theme throughout the report.

Safeguarding themes

The key theme was the emphasis on the continuation of safeguarding practice during the pandemic and ensuring the golden thread was evidenced in safeguarding practice.

The board published The West Glamorgan Safeguarding Guidance during Covid 19 this was circulated to all members. Through the Policy, Procedure and Practice Management Group (PPPMG) focus was on ensuring that all agencies were working in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

During the years, seven different policy documents were developed and reviewed. These included Unexpected Death of a Child; Rapid Discharge Protocol; Regional Care Home Protocol; Childhood Obesity; Adult Self-Neglect Protocol; Protocol for the management of complaints relating to child protection conferences and an Information Sharing Protocol.

The board received four child practice reviews referrals – 1 progressed to a concise CPR, 1 extended, 1 multi agency professional forum (MAPF) and 1 did not meet the criteria.

Four adult practice review referrals – 1 progressed to a concise APR, 1 extended, 1 MAPF, 1 did not meet the criteria.

During the last financial year, the board published one adult practice review, one child practice review and undertook two MAPFs

A practice review virtual event was held during safeguarding week. The report referenced the success of holding training and other events virtually and plan to continue to use this format in the future.

The theme for safeguarding week was “Stay Safe, Stay Connected”

Information and learning

The Board used virtual platforms to deliver a range of training linked back to the priorities identified in the work plan. Specific training delivered included exploitation, modern slavery for first responder, assessing the protective skills of mothers, partners and adult carers, promoting positive pathways for young people who have exhibited harmful behaviour, understanding child sexual abusers and understanding child sexual abuse and the internet.

The board provide access to training materials through their website.

During safeguarding week, the board delivered a programme of events with the theme of “Stay Safe – Stay Connected”. This included a virtual conference highlighting the benefits of parental advocacy; A child and adult practice review learning event

Safeguarding Board Resourcing

The Annual Report provides information on how the board is resourced with a breakdown of costs between staffing the business unit and Adult and Child Practice Reviews and associated conferences, learning events, training and admin. The report highlights that the financial contributions form only one part of agency contributions with members providing a significant amount of time to support the board and its work.

Participation and involvement

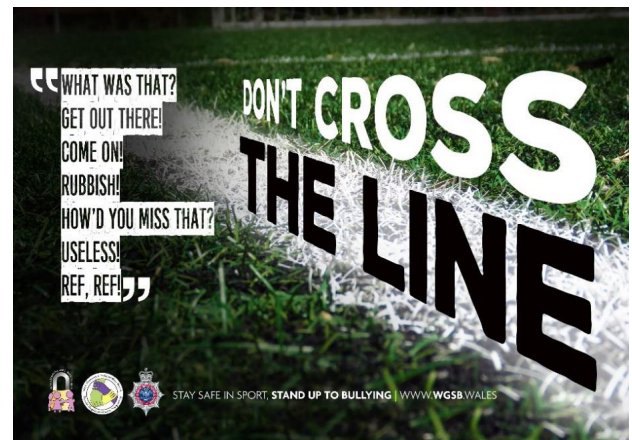
Agency and member attendance at meetings is detailed and how the board has collaborated nationally, regionally and locally is reported.

Both the Swansea Council Education and Neath Port Talbot Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning departments highlight in the report that safeguarding of pupils and staff has been the priority of schools and the directorate during Covid 19. There is also further emphasis on close working partnership approach between schools, social services and health to support all pupils.

The board routinely invites people to participate in its work through engagement with families involved in practice reviews.

There is also an active junior safeguarding board. The junior board identified two broad issues which they wished to champion – Bullying and pressures in sport and equality and discrimination.

A successful [stay safe in sport campaign](#) was launched and some eye-catching visuals produced.



Another project aimed at building relationships and combating feelings of isolation is "Pitchin in the Kitchen: Opportunities for care experienced children and young people. Based around a set of activity packs with opportunities to have fun, bake together, play together and laugh together. Helping young people to participate and feel connected and part of a community.

As well as reports from the sub groups, the annual report also contains summaries from partner agencies including South Wales Police who's report includes the priorities of the Chief Constables Delivery Plan 'Protecting Against Exploitation' and working with partners to deliver 'Early Intervention and Prevention' initiatives.

A section from Swansea Bay University Health Board included improvements to safeguarding information with the addition of a Sharepoint link on the intranet. Also included is data on numbers and categories of safeguarding referrals made to the local authority.

Annual report

The Board's [annual report](#) provides full membership and the detail of their collaboration to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk from harm.

Recommendations to Welsh Ministers on how safeguarding arrangements could be improved

The first four recommendations reflect the Board's recommendations from previous years.

Recommendation 1

Welsh Government should continue to develop the data collection in relation to the abuse of older people and to ensure this data is analysed effectively to understand the prevalence of abuse of older people and their experiences.

Recommendation 2

Welsh Government should ensure that the work being undertaken in relation to the development of safeguarding standards and outcomes frameworks links with the work they asked the National Board to commission in relation to the development of a multi-agency safeguarding performance framework and does not lead to unnecessary duplication.

Recommendation 3

Welsh Government should set a timetable for the publication of the Statutory Guidance for Children Electively Home Educated in Wales as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 4

Welsh Government should honour the commitment made to amend the regulatory framework around independent schools and the Education Workforce Council to include a requirement that all teaching staff and all school leaders in independent settings register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC).

Recommendation 5

Welsh Government should ensure that a review is undertaken to understand the impact and legacy on safeguarding in Wales of the Covid 19 pandemic.



**Bwrdd Diogelu Annibynnol
Cenedlaethol Cymru**

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Safeguarding Board Wales**



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