THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 2ND OCTOBER, 2019

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 29TH JULY, 2019

"C73   ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT : 2018/19 (SCH) (ALL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES) –

There was corporate responsibility to ensure that there were effective arrangements in place for safeguarding children and adults who required specific Council services.

The Annual Report provided an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding Group work plan and other safeguarding activities taking place across the Local Authority.

Historically, safeguarding activity by different parts of the Council had been reported separately to Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and Corporate Management Team. The annual report brought together safeguarding activity undertaken by the Social Services, Learning and Skills, Managing Directors Office and Resources, Environment and Housing Directorates and also an overview from Corporate Safeguarding Group. This provided a more holistic representation of safeguarding activity across the Council. The report provided a composite update of activity across the directorates. Scrutiny Committees would need to consider the elements of the report in line with their portfolio areas.

This was a matter for Executive decision

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1)   T H A T the work that had been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults be noted.

(2)   T H A T Cabinet continue to receive six monthly reports on work carried out to improve Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant Policies.

(3)   T H A T the report be referred to the Audit Committee and the Environment and Regeneration, Healthy Living and Social Care, Learning and Culture, Home and Safe Communities and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

<u>Reasons for decisions</u>

(1)   To ensure that Cabinet is aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.

(2)   To allow Cabinet to exercise effective oversight of this key area of corporate working.

(3)   To respond to requests that each Scrutiny Committee be provided with update reports and to ensure that Audit Committee receive the Wales Audit Office report and the Corporate Safeguarding Group's work plan."

Attached as Appendix - Report to Cabinet: 29th July, 2019

Meeting of:	**Cabinet**
Date of Meeting:	**Monday, 29 July 2019**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report : 2018/19
Purpose of Report:	To update Cabinet on the work that has been undertaken in relation to Corporate arrangements for Safeguarding across the Council.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This is an issue which affects all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet

Executive Summary:
- There is Corporate responsibility to ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for safeguarding children and adults who require specific Council services.
- This Annual Report provides an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding Group work plan and other safeguarding activities taking place across the Local Authority.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults.

2. That Cabinet continues to receive six monthly reports on work carried out to improve Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant Policies.

3. That the report is referred to Healthy Living and Social Care, Learning and Culture, Home and Safe Communities, Audit and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that Cabinet is aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.

2. To allow Cabinet to exercise effective oversight of this key area of corporate working.

3. To respond to requests that each Scrutiny Committee is provided with update reports and to ensure that Audit Committee receive the Wales Audit Office report and the Corporate Safeguarding Group's (CSG) work plan.

1. Background

1.1 Historically, safeguarding activity by different parts of the Council has been reported separately to Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and Corporate Management Team. Attached at Appendix 1 is the annual report that brings together safeguarding activity undertaken by the Social Services, Learning and Skills, Managing Directors Office and Resources, Environment and Housing Directorates and also an overview from Corporate Safeguarding Group. This provides a more holistic representation of safeguarding activity across the Council. The report provides a composite update of activity across the directorates. Scrutiny Committees should particularly consider the elements of the report in line with their portfolio areas.

1.2 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 was implemented in April 2016. This has brought about changes in particular relating to the introduction of a 'Duty to Report' which has meant a revision of the corporate safeguarding policy to bring staff's attention to this duty.

1.3 The 'Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance' under Part 7 of the Act provides guidance on corporate safeguarding for the council. Guidance on handling individual cases (Volumes 5 and 6) to protect children and adults at risk was launched in 2017. The Guidance provides advice on what should happen if an individual has concerns about the well-being or welfare of a child or an adult at risk.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

2.1   The Welsh Audit Office undertook a follow-up review in February 2019 of their 2014 review, and issued their final report in May 2019 (attached at Appendix 2). The purpose of the review was to seek assurance that the Council had effective corporate arrangements in place and had addressed the findings and recommendations from their 2014 report and the subsequent recommendations made.

2.2   The 2018-19 review found that overall the council had implemented most of the previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, some areas needed further attention. They have identified five proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the council's safeguarding arrangements. The areas for improvements will be addressed within the CSG work plan, at Appendix 3, which will be referred to Audit Committee.

2.3   Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) remains a key priority area for both the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. There is a Lead Manager for Child Sexual Exploitation who ensures there is appropriate identification, response and co-ordination in CSE cases. This role facilitates multi agency safety planning when required and contributes to the networking and intelligence meetings that regularly take place.

2.4   In 2018/19 there were four Child Practice Reviews published by the Regional Safeguarding Board, one relating to a child in the Vale of Glamorgan. During this time there was a concentrated focus on addressing the backlog of 12 Child Practice Reviews that were required. There are now a further 6 reviews in progress however only one of these reviews relates to a child in the Vale of Glamorgan, and this was a widely publicised review. Following the completion of that review an action plan was developed that detailed the recommendations for learning. Each agency is required to implement these recommendations and report back their progress to the Regional Board.

2.5   The Learning and Skills Directorate continues to invest considerable effort in supporting schools to achieve compliance with Safer Recruitment. Compliance rates have improved significantly since 2014 with schools recording 100% compliance in recent months. The Directorate has been clear that anything less than 100% compliance is unacceptable.

2.6   Recent recommendations to the Corporate Safeguarding Group will strengthen the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy. This is monitored through the CSG to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy across all the Directorates and school appointments.

2.7   In the last few months HR have recently implemented an electronic transfer system for DBS checks. This will speed up the DBS checking process which forms part of the pre-employment checks. The system provides an electronic portal where applicants are able to apply for a DBS check online, allow checks to be approved and tracked by the Council, and the disclosure outcome will be available in the majority of cases within 24/48 hours.

2.8 The Vale of Glamorgan Council adopted the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Regional Strategy on 30th July 2018 (min C392). Structures and accountability are in place to ensure that we are able to deliver positive outcomes against the overarching objectives that have been agreed.

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

3.1 Long-term – Considering ability across Directorates to meet long-term demands and horizon scanning in relation to our safeguarding responsibilities.

3.2 Integration – Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each other of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

3.3 Involvement – Ensuring voices of children and adult at risk are acknowledged and respected in all our interactions and service planning.

3.4 Collaboration – Cross Directorate ownership, accountability and understanding of our safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

4.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from the Corporate Safeguarding work. However, the increased awareness of safeguarding and the responsibility to respond to concerns of those who may not be eligible for our services has brought about significant pressures within social services teams, and consequently we need to review processes to ensure clarity for people raising concerns and who responds to these enquiries/notifications about individuals who are considered 'at risk', but are not known or eligible for our statutory services.

4.2 The other financial implication of note is the resource that will be required to implement some areas of the Corporate Safeguarding Work Plan which directorates will need to manage within their existing budgets.

Employment

4.3 The Safer Recruitment Policy legitimately excludes consideration for appointment of all applicants for posts within regulated activity whose criminal actions/convictions mean that they are deemed unsuitable or who are included within the barred list.

4.4 Any application for employment for those posts included within the definition of regulated activity by candidates who are included on the relevant barred list will be considered a criminal act and reported to the Police and relevant registration body (if appropriate).

4.5   In relation to DBS arrangements, key elements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 have been implemented.

Legal (Including Equalities)

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

4.7   The Director of Social Services must ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place, both within the Local Authority and by relevant Partners. The Director of Social Services must oversee and report to Councillors, on a consistent basis regarding the operation, monitoring and improvement of child and adult safeguarding systems within the Local Authority. Defined arrangements with other Officers within the Local Authority, particularly the Head of Adult Services and Head of Children Services must be clear in relation to delegation and reporting arrangements relating to safeguarding issues.

5. Background Papers

Welsh Audit Office Report – Follow-Up Review of Corporate Arrangements for the Safeguarding of Children – Vale of Glamorgan Council

Corporate Safeguarding Vale of Glamorgan Council

Annual Report

April 2018 – March 2019

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to reflect on safeguarding activity over the past financial year across the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The report outlines key activities on a corporate basis for the following:

Section A: Social Services

Section B: Learning and Skills

Section C: Managing Director and Resources

Section D: Environment and Housing

Section E: Corporate Safeguarding Group

A. Safeguarding in Social Services

1. This section of the update brings together the safeguarding activity that has taken place across the three Divisions of the Social Services Directorate during the period **April 2018 – March 2019.**

2. The following activities will be addressed in turn:

    o   Child Protection Conferences/Registration

    o   Allegations against Professionals (Part IV, All Wales Child Protection Procedures)

    o   Child Sexual Exploitation

    o   Adults at Risk (formally POVA)

    o   Audit

    o   Consultation

    o   Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Children Board

    o   Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Adults Board.
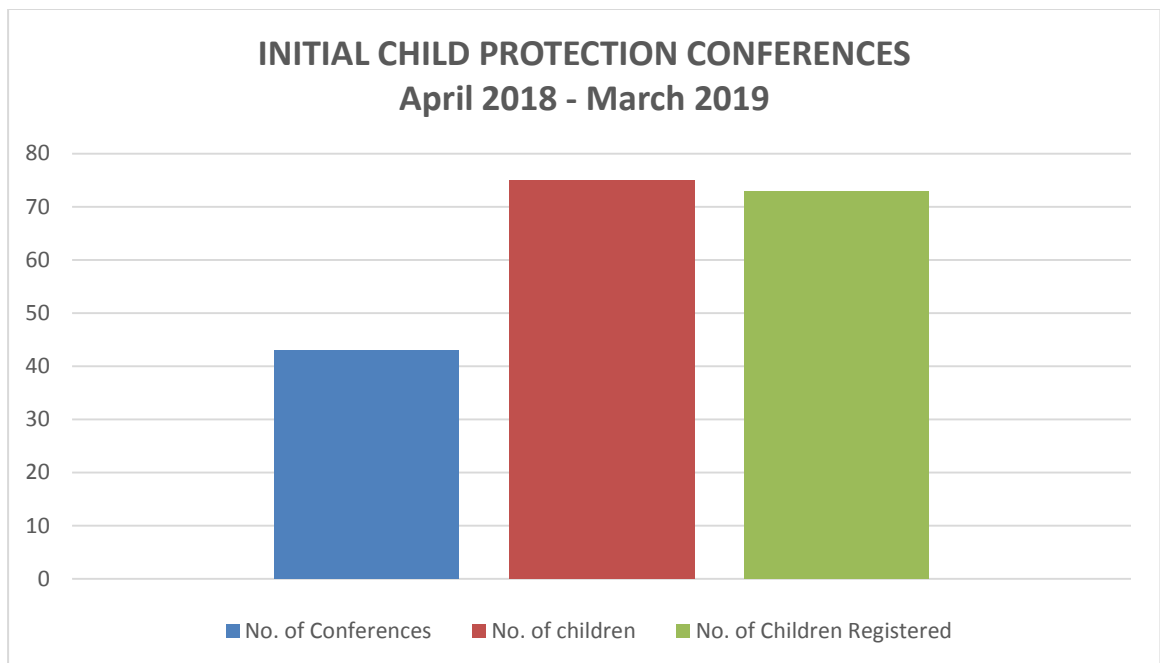
3. **Child Protection**

    Child Protection Conferences are multi-agency meetings that include children and their parents/caregivers and take place when Child Protection (S.47 of the Children Act 1989) enquiries have identified that a child is at continued risk of harm. The S.47 enquiries will have been conducted by a social worker within the children and young people's team alongside an assessment. These enquiries and subsequent outcomes will have been informed by multi-agency discussion and consideration of the child's individual circumstances in the context of their wider family.

4. If these enquiries determine that a child is at continuing risk of harm a child protection conference must be held with 15 working days of this decision.

5. The child protection conference functions, chairing roles and responsibilities, are delivered by the Resource Management and Safeguarding Division of Social Services. It has a function that is independent of Children's Services,

although there is close collaboration and communication. This enables a level of independence and scrutiny in ensuring that effective practice is taking place, to enable children's voices to be heard and this reflects good outcomes for children and their families. It also ensures that appropriate and effective risk management is evident for those children deemed to be at most risk within our communities.

6.   The table below demonstrates how many initial child protection conferences were held in 2018/19.

INITIAL CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES
April 2018 - March 2019

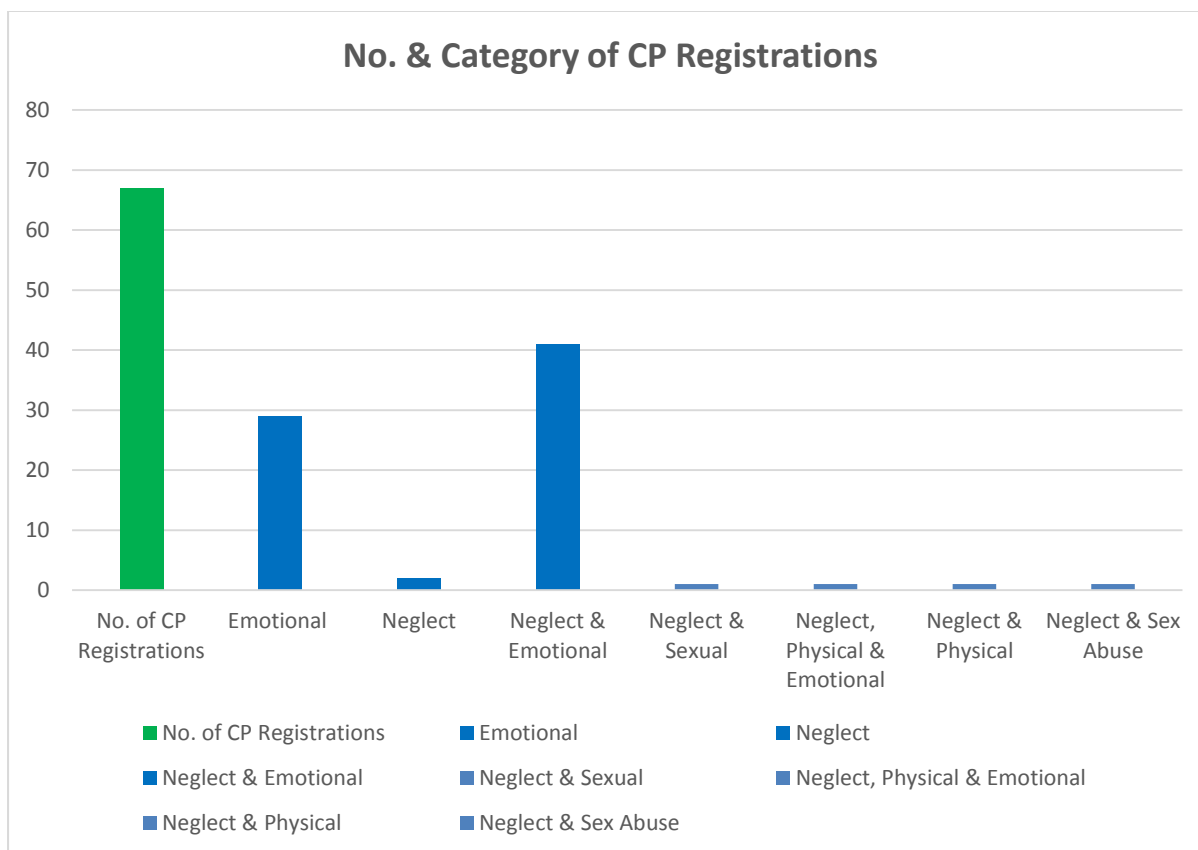- No. of Conferences ■ No. of children ■ No. of Children Registered

7.   Of those 43 initial child protection conferences that took place, 73 children became subject to child protection registration during the period. The decision for a child to be registered indicates that they have been identified as being at risk of significant harm. There are more children than conferences taking place as the figures reflect sibling groups of children. Not all conferences result in the child becoming subject of registration, in some cases it may be decided that the child is not at continuing risk of significant harm and there may be care and support needs to consider. The decision for a child to be registered and what category of registration is required, is determined within the child protection conference and considered within the parameters of the risks being identified.

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The categories of risk for registration are:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional or Psychological Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Neglect

8. Children can be recorded as being at risk of abuse, neglect or harm under one, or more of these categories.

9. The chart below details figures as of March 2019 in relation to Child Protection Registration and the categories of risk against which these children are a recorded:

No. & Category of CP Registrations

Legend: No. of CP Registrations | Emotional | Neglect | Neglect & Emotional | Neglect & Sexual | Neglect, Physical & Emotional | Neglect & Physical | Neglect & Sex Abuse

10. 2018/19 has seen a decrease in the numbers of children subject to child protection registration. This has been identified through analysis of quarterly performance data by the Operational Manager for Safeguarding. Some initial consideration of this has taken place and it is known that during this period a number of large sibling groups were de-registered due to the risks decreasing and the need for care proceedings being concluded, meaning that the children

no longer required protection planning via the child protection system as they had become looked after by the local authority. A review is being undertaken of all cases de-registered during this period to provide a degree of understanding and scrutiny in regards to the reasons behind this and to consider any particular themes or issues that have resulted in the low numbers being seen.

Allegations against 'Professionals'

11. Part 4 of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures provides the framework when there is an allegation that any person who works with children, in connection with their employment or voluntary activity, has:

- *Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.*
- *May have committed a criminal offence against a child or has a direct impact on the child.*
- *Behaved towards a child, children risk in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children*

12. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has a duty to manage allegations and concerns about any person who works with children and young people in their area. The Operational Manager for Safeguarding fulfils the LADO role for the Vale of Glamorgan Council with some duties being delegated to the Principle Officer for Protection and Policy (Children's Safeguarding).

There are a number of considerations when allegations have been made, the LADO will co-ordinate the multi-agency meetings and monitor the process if there are any investigations taking place i.e. criminal investigations, and ensure that during this process there is appropriate risk management and support plan in place.

13. There are five potential outcome determination to this process, these are:

- **Substantiated**: there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation.
- **False**: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Malicious**: there is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation is entirely false.
- **Unfounded**: there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the allegation or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively they may not have been aware of the circumstances.

- **Unsubstantiated**: this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

14. For all allegations a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was investigated and resolved, a note of any action taken and the decisions reached are recorded.

15. During 2018/19 period the LADO received 75 referrals in relation to concerns/allegations and of these 49 cases met the criteria to proceed under part 4 (as per criteria in para.12).

16. Of the 49 cases that were considered under Part.4 procedures, the professional role/activity of the individuals are as follows:

Education Staff : Dinner Supervisors; Teaching Staff (Teachers/LSAs)

Foster carers (including kinship carer)

Residential Care Workers

Childminders

Taxi Drivers

Supported Lodgings Provider

Scouts Leader

Counsellor/Trainer

Sports Instructor

17. Of the 49 cases concluded during this period, 25 were unsubstantiated; 22 substantiated; 2 unfounded. None of the allegations resulted in the dismissal of the individual and only one case was subject to police prosecution and subsequent court hearing, however, the individual was found not guilty at the hearing. None of the cases resulted in the need for a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Child Sexual Exploitation

18. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a key priority area for both the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. There is a Lead Manager for Child Sexual Exploitation who ensures there is appropriate identification, response and co-ordination in CSE cases. This role facilities multi agency safety planning when required and contributes to the networking and intelligence meetings that regularly take place.

19. At a local level, we comply fully with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures in addressing cases of suspected child sexual exploitation. In this context a Vale of Glamorgan Child Sexual Exploitation Policy has been developed and implemented. Where children/young people are considered to be at risk of child sexual exploitation, an assessment of risk using the SERAF (Barnardo's) tool is undertaken. Scores of 11+, which are indicative of 'significant risk', are referred automatically to the Directorate's Principal Officer in Protection and Policy. She convenes and chairs a multi-agency strategy meeting under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.

20. To ensure that we are giving due consideration to children or young people about whom there are concerns but where there is not a 'significant risk' score on SERAF, we have additional arrangements in place. This asks any agency or professional body referring a case to consider whether there are concerns about child sexual exploitation. If this is the case, the ensuing assessment will consider these issues and the case will be referred to the Principal Officer in Protection and Policy, who will consider the level of intervention required. This might range from the provision of support services to proceeding with a strategy meeting involving relevant professionals. In addition, the new process allows us to capture more effectively data about the number of children where there are sexual exploitation concerns.

21. In the Vale of Glamorgan there is an established Multi-Agency Taskforce Group, and dedicated CSE/Missing South Wales Police team including a Barnardo's advocate working alongside Police officers. Health safeguarding officers, (ensuring links with the Sexual Abuse Referral Centre and Looked After Children), Vale of Glamorgan Education, Youth Service, Youth Offending, Children's Social Work and relevant Licencing and Probation staff also attend the Taskforce Group meetings. This arrangement has established regular information-sharing within the Vale of Glamorgan and with Bridgend on a monthly basis because of the higher numbers of children identified. The Principal Officer Protection and Policy, now chairs this group.

22. During the period 2018/19 16 strategy meetings were held in relation to children at risk of sexual exploitation, this is a reduction from 25 meetings held in 2017/18. When considering the reduction in meetings taking place it should be noted that several children who were high profile cases and requiring significant involvement around CSE, moved out of the Vale area having been accommodated out of county as per their safety planning. Also several of the referrals are in relation to children placed in the Vale by other Local Authorities (LA's) who have since moved area. Other reasons are that the LA's responsible for children they are placing in the Vale, want to hold their own meetings and we are invited. Of the 16 children there is only 1 boy and he was placed in the area by another LA. The girl's ages range from 13 up to 17 years of age and 2 of the girls are from another LA. Of the 16 children 8 are on the CP register the others are living at home. Of the 16 girls 6 are carried over to this year.

23. On the evidence currently available, most children who have been the subject of CSE strategy meetings to date have not been victims of organised abuse.

24. CSE is an area where there has been significant developments in practice and approach across all agencies. It is evident that the awareness; responses; and safety planning for young people are embedded in practice.

25. One of the challenges for professionals working with children and young people who are most vulnerable is helping them to acknowledge that they are being or at of risk being exploited. A programme has been delivered to children in schools to raise awareness, especially regarding online abuse which involves their peers.

26. With significant focus on CSE in recent years, there is currently work being undertaken to develop a Regional Exploitation Strategy that will encompass all forms of exploitation and aims to ensure a consistent approach to all forms of exploitation across the region. It is anticipated that the Regional Safeguarding Board will launch this strategy in autumn 2019. The Operational Manager for Safeguarding, Principal Officer for Protection and Policy and Operational manager, Housing have been involved in the development of this strategy.

Adults at Risk (formally Protection of Vulnerable Adults)

27. Safeguarding duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) apply to adult protection, as safeguarding is preventative as well as protective. Safeguarding is wider than the essential focus on those most at risk or needing protection from abuse, neglect and harm. Safeguarding includes ensuring the provision of safe and effective care; protecting from abuse, neglect and harm; optimising well-being, voice, choice and control, and preventing impairment of health and development.

28. Safeguarding is everyone's business. However, the Act sets out particular duties for Local Authorities and relevant partner agencies e.g. Health and Police, working with adults. The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act, places a duty to report an "adult at risk" for all relevant partners for the Local Authority. There is a new duty for a Local Authority to make enquiries if it has reasonable cause to suspect that a person within its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) is an adult at risk.

29. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect the Local Authority has a duty to undertake section 126 enquiries. These enquiries should normally be completed within seven days and enquiries should be made to determine what actions may be required to support the adult at risk and any ongoing protection planning that may be required. These enquiries should be person centred and ensure that the adult is consulted and spoken with to determine their understanding of the situation and any support needs they may have as well as considering potential risks.

30. The duties placed on the Local Authority by the SSWBA, have resulted in a significant increase in the number of safeguarding enquiries being undertaken. This has resulted in increased numbers of citizens coming to the attention of Social Services, where historically they would not have. The new Wales Safeguarding Procedures are being launched in November 2019 and there will be further consideration of the processes and structure in our front door service and within the Adult Safeguarding Team.

31. During the period 2018/2019 445 safeguarding referrals were received. This is a further increase in the number of referrals being received in previous years as the table below demonstrates:

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
235	300	357	323	318	**375**	**445**

32. We are mindful of the increase in referrals of adult safeguarding concerns as a result of the legislative changes and we are reviewing our team structure and processes to ensure the best possible response. With the introduction of Welsh Community Care Information System we are working to develop a consistent reporting mechanism in relation to the number of adult safeguarding referrals received; number of S126 enquiries being undertaken, and the outcomes of these enquiries.

33. Our current data indicates that following 445 referrals, there were 298 s.126 enquiries undertaken during this period. These enquiries were undertaken as there would have been reasonable cause to suspect that the adult was at risk

of abuse or neglect. 60 cases required further protection planning of the adult at risk following enquiries during this period. The new All Wales Safeguarding Procedures will standardise the determination outcomes of enquiries and will enable data capture against outcomes of these enquiries in a consistent manner.

Audit

34.   The Children and Young People Services Division, Adult Services Division and the Resource Management and Safeguarding Division have in place an audit framework and monitoring arrangements, carried out at regular intervals, to ensure that robust information is available about their safeguarding work and other areas of service.

35.   The Regional Safeguarding Board also identifies areas of audit that focus on specific safeguarding themes. The Adult and Children Audit Sub Groups provide an annual audit work plan and outcome recommendations /findings are fed back to the relevant Local Authority department to consider any service or practice development/improvement.

36.   In order to co-ordinate the various audit and quality assurance activity that takes place across the Social Services directorate, a Quality Assurance Framework is being developed to ensure we examine the quality of social care practice and support the improvement of practice by identifying strengths and areas for development and improvement within teams and services. This framework will assist in implementing learning and service development from the information gleaned through audit and other quality assurance activity.

Consultation

37.   The process for consultation with service users and professionals is well established within Social Services. The implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 introduced a considerable focus upon qualitative surveys, known as the Qualitative Performance Measures. We must collect the information each year and submit our responses.

38.   Welsh Government issued set of prescribed questionnaires that we must use. There are four paper questionnaires; for children, parents, carers and adults and also an online questionnaire, telephone, and face-to-face interviews that can be used.

39.   The Qualitative measures detail a person's experience of Social Services. This information then informs service delivery and development across the directorate. Overall 2,430 questionnaires were circulated to services users with

691 returns, representing a 28.4% response rate. The questionnaires can be analysed by service user groups. These thematic groups include children and young people, parents, adults, as well as adults who responded to the easy read questionnaire, carers, adults who have received support from the Community Resource Team and parents/guardians who have accessed support via the Families First Information Line

40. During 2018/19, five service-specific consultations were also undertaken that included: Fostering Services, Residential Care Services, Adult Placement Service, Community Resource Team and Flying Start.

41. Incorporating feedback from citizens, staff and partner agencies on their views and experiences is a fundamental aspect of quality assurance and developing a culture of continuous improvement. Our Quality Assurance Officer supports service user engagement through a rolling programme of consultations that focuses on exploring specific service areas in order ascertain levels of satisfaction to inform improvements to policy, practice and service delivery. These service-specific areas are identified and agreed annually by senior management in an Annual Consultation Priorities Plan. These service-specific consultations explore service users' experiences of choice, whether their needs are being met through service provision with a focus on their well-being and has a focus on establishing whether services users feel involved in the assessment processes and/or their care planning.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

42. The domestic violence MARAC is a multi-agency forum for agencies to share information with a view to identifying those at a **'high'** level of risk of serious harm and to jointly construct a management plan to provide professional support to all those at risk. This process is managed and co-ordinated via the Safer Vale Team within the Environment and Housing Directorate.

43. In the Vale of Glamorgan, an effective and embedded fortnightly MARAC Meeting takes place, chaired by the South Wales Police Detective Inspector for Public Protection, with relevant staff in attendance. Representatives from both adult and children services attend these fortnightly meetings and contribute to the overall action planning.

44. The Operational Manager for Safeguarding sits on the MARAC Steering Group. This Group has a strategic role to monitor and review the progress effectiveness of the MARAC process.

Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Children's Board

45.   The Regional Board is in a very busy consolidation and delivery phase. Until recently Director of Social Services, Lance Carver, had been chairing both the adult and children boards, following the retirement of the previous chair. The new Director of Social Services in Cardiff has been appointed and is now chair of the Children's Board. The agenda and delivery of the board priorities are overseen by the Board members. There is a small Business Unit in place to work with partner agencies to develop sub-group activity and meaningful performance information.

46.   The Board has a programme of audit which examines the effectiveness of all agencies working together under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. The Audit Sub-Group has undertaken an audit of cases of children whose names were removed from the child protection register but re-registered within a 12 month period. Recommendations have been made to the Board and an action plan has been developed that will be addressed through each individual board agency. Implementation will be monitored via the business planning group.

47.   The 2018-19 Annual Safeguarding Children's Board Business Plan identified four priority areas these being:

Priority 1: Effectiveness of child protection system
Priority 2: Children on the edge of the child protection system
Priority 3: Securing service-user participation
Priority 4: Learning Lessons from reviews

The work of Board and sub-group members has been focused around these priority areas.

48.   During 2018/19 there were four Child Practice Reviews published by the Regional Safeguarding Board. During this time there was a concentrated focus on addressing the backlog of Child Practice Reviews that were required there were 12 historic reviews to complete. There are a further 6 reviews in progress.

49.   Only one of these reviews related to a child in the Vale, and this was a widely publicised review. Following the completion of the review an action plan was developed that detailed the recommendations made for learning. Each agency is required to implement these recommendations and report back their progress to the Regional Board. All Child Practice Reviews are disseminated and each board agency has responsibility for implementation and reporting of this within their own agencies.

50. The Operational Manager for Safeguarding was part of CPR panel for this case and had an overview and involvement with the subsequent action planning and implementation along with the Head of Service and Operational Managers from Children and Young People's Team.

51. There is representation from all our senior management structure within the Regional Board from various Directorates across the Vale of Glamorgan Council. This ensures there is a shared ownership, accountability and understanding of safeguarding priorities across the region.

Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Adults Board

52. Chaired by the Director of Social Services, Vale of Glamorgan on behalf of the region, the Regional Board is in a very busy period of development. Development sessions have taken place to feed into the overarching priorities and annual planning

53. The development sessions determined the main priorities for the annual plan have been determined. There is a combined 3 year Action Plan under the Safeguarding Boards Governance and Strategic Priorities 2017-20 for these key areas.

    Priority 1: Domiciliary and Care Home Sector
    Outcome: Assurance that the quality of care in care homes is of a high standard.
    Objective: To produce meaningful performance intelligence that provides assurance, strengthens accountability and enables the analysis of trends.

    Priority 2: Workforce
    Outcome: The board have assurances that there is effective inter-agency safeguarding practices, which are supported by policies and procedures, with robust multi-agency training.
    Objective: Agencies can demonstrate that they have a workforce who are supported, skilled, capable and knowledgeable, in order to effectively safeguard adults in the region.

54. The Board has not published any Adult Practice Reviews during this period, however, there are two reviews in progress at this time and it is anticipated that they will be published later this year. Neither of the reviews are related to adults who are/were resident in the Vale of Glamorgan. However, any recommendations/findings in relation to learning and improving practice will be implemented via an action plan within the Vale of Glamorgan.

B. Safeguarding in Learning and Skills

1. Safeguarding activity in the Learning and Skills Directorate continues to evolve in response to continuous review and the requirements of national, regional and local developments in legislation, guidance and policy.

2. The Directorate Management Team routinely monitors operational safeguarding practice across the Directorate, including during a standing safeguarding agenda item at monthly DMT meetings that has a particular focus on safer recruitment, safeguarding training, allegations against employees and volunteers, actions from Adult Practice Reviews (APRs) and Child Practice Reviews (CPRs) and compliance with statutory duties in relation to the licensing of Children in Employment and Entertainment (CIEE).

3. Mandatory annual safeguarding training is delivered consistently across the Directorate to standards set by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board (RSB) and all employees and volunteers are expected to comply with statutory and local guidance in relation to safeguarding children and adults.

4. Directorate safeguarding policies and procedures remain under continuous review and subject to regular update in response to local practice and national developments in legislation and statutory guidance. Policies, guidance and standard forms are available to support safeguarding practice for all employees and volunteers in the Directorate, Schools, Youth Service, Libraries and Adult Community Learning (ACL) for consistency in practice across the Directorate. All Vale schools have a safeguarding policy based on a Model Safeguarding Policy provided by the Directorate that is consistent with Welsh Government guidance and incorporates the Vale Corporate Safeguarding Policy. The adoption by schools of model policies for safeguarding, bullying, physical intervention and time-out is monitored by the Directorate, with all schools currently compliant.

5. The DSP/DDSP role continues to operate effectively across the Directorate, with appropriate annual training and written guidance made available as required. The role initially was established in all schools in accordance with Welsh Government statutory guidance but has been extended to apply elsewhere within the Directorate. Available evidence indicates that the confidence of officers operating in these roles is developing appropriately, with improved quality of referrals to Children and Young People Services and effective participation in multi-agency safeguarding meetings. There is an established expectation that the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection

(DSP), Deputy DSP, and Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG) for every school and Directorate team attends annual Level Two Safeguarding Training appropriate for their role, based on course content and learning outcomes set by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan RSB. The Directorate monitors DSP and DDSP attendance at safeguarding training provided by the Safeguarding Officer. Colleagues in Governor Support monitor safeguarding training attendance in relation to DSGs.

6. The transition from three-yearly to annual refresher training has affected training compliance rates as some schools have not adapted quickly to the revised expectation. Level Two training for DSPs and DDSPs is delivered three times each academic term to maximise the opportunities for attendance. Some school-based DSPs, DDSPs and DSGs might attend appropriate training commissioned directly by the school and therefore not attend training provided by the Directorate. All Directorate-based staff, including DSPs now have access to iDev accounts that will facilitate much easier maintenance of safeguarding training records currently held in standalone spreadsheets. The intention is to provide school-based DSPs with iDev accounts so that all DSP participation in safeguarding training from any source can be captured in one record and therefore improve attendance data. Pending the full introduction of iDev, all staff receive an e-mail reminder when refresher safeguarding training at the appropriate level is due.

Compliance with annual safeguarding training

Directorate DSPs

- Compliant
- Non-Compliant
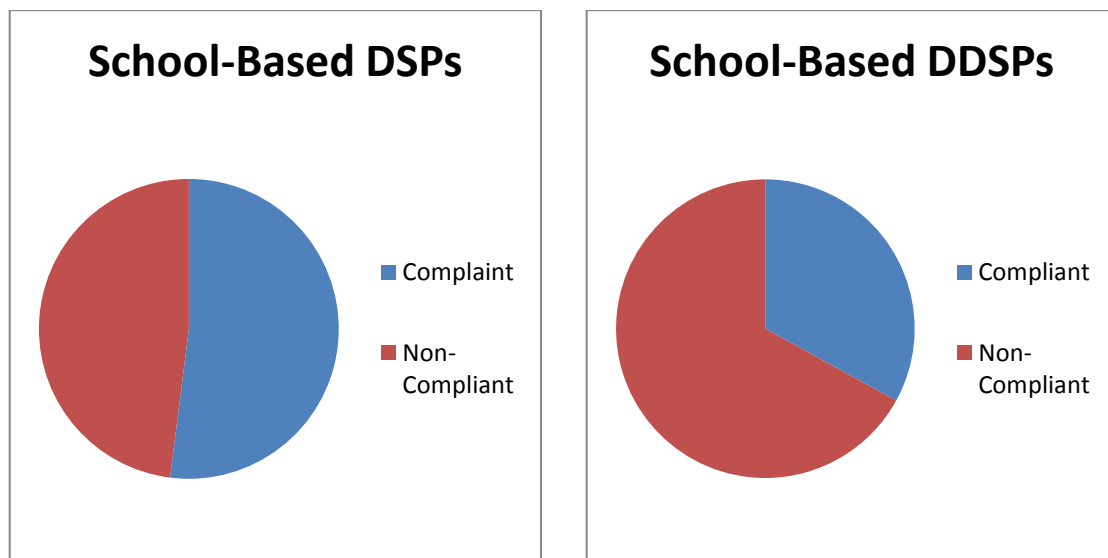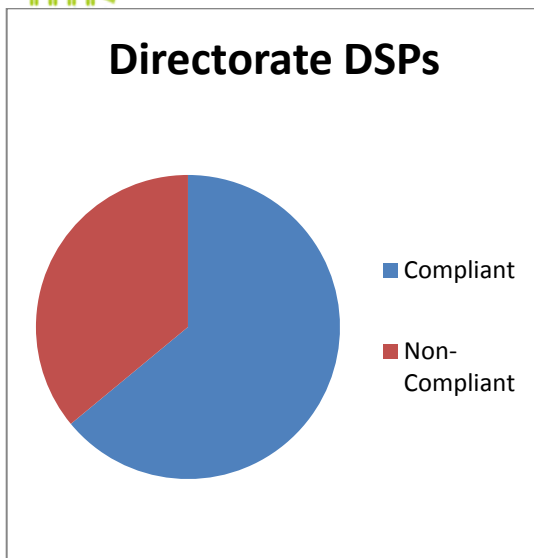
7. DSPs, DDSPs, DSGs and other staff have access to a programme of single-agency subject-specific Level Three safeguarding training delivered termly, with content developed in response to national, regional and local priorities. Current training priorities for the Learning and Skills Directorate include Neglect, Radicalisation and Extremism, Sexual Exploitation, Criminal Exploitation, Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking and Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. DSPs and DDSPs also are expected to attend multi-agency safeguarding training to develop their knowledge and understanding of partnership working to safeguard children, although the availability of this training continues to be severely restricted by a significant reduction in the RSB training programme since 2014. School DSP/DDSPs are trained to deliver Level One training to all school-based staff, including caretakers and kitchen staff, on a whole-school basis as part of the school inset programme. This system of cascade training is the only effective model to operate within existing resources.

8. Schools continue to develop a recognised Safeguarding Team that includes DSP, DDSP and DSG. Schools are encouraged to identify and promote membership of this team for all staff so that all employees and volunteers are clear about the mechanism for reporting safeguarding concerns, including the process for escalating safeguarding concerns outside the school where necessary. Schools are encouraged to include their Designated Safeguarding Governor in development of the Safeguarding Self Evaluation Report (SER), use of the safeguarding self-evaluation Audit Tool and Guidance that accompanies Keeping learners safe, the review of policies and compliance with training expectations and safer recruitment and in monitoring the general effectiveness of safeguarding practice within the school.

9. The Directorate Safeguarding Officer continues to support School Governing Bodies in fulfilling statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. In partnership with the Governor Support Unit, termly safeguarding training is provided for all governors, including those in the DSG role. The development of twilight training for governors delivered in schools and available to governors of local clusters to promote accessibility remains popular and attendance rates have improved. Other training for Governors, Youth Service and other specific groups is delivered at times and venues to promote accessibility, including in the evening and on weekends. A programme of safeguarding training and advice developed to support the introduction of Community Libraries has been difficult to deliver within existing resources. All training is evaluated and reviewed to facilitate regular development and ensure that safeguarding training is fit for purpose and meets Directorate need. Training for Governors continues to be evaluated positively.

10. The twice-termly DSP Forum continues to offer an opportunity for all Directorate and school-based staff with a specific safeguarding role to share information and receive briefings on relevant subjects. The Forum is repeated each term, to allow schools to release DSP and DDSPs to attend without being absent from the school on the same date. The Forums are well-attended and participant evaluation forms indicate that the Forum is valued by safeguarding colleagues. The continuing objective is to develop the knowledge and confidence of DSPs, DDSPs and DSGs in their specific safeguarding roles. The participation of local independent educational establishments in the DSP Forum to ensure consistency in safeguarding practice across Vale educational provision has been acknowledged by Welsh Government as good practice.

11. Schools are encouraged and supported to use safeguarding self-evaluation tools to develop an effective Safeguarding Self-Evaluation Report (SER) as an essential mechanism for monitoring safeguarding compliance and to review the SER termly to ensure that up-to-date information is available on all aspects of the school's safeguarding practice. Support is available to schools in the development and review of the Safeguarding SER, particularly in advance of Estyn inspection visits. Adoption and review of the SER is monitored termly. All schools recently inspected by Estyn have been successful in relation to consideration of safeguarding practice, including the quality of SERs and the effectiveness of procedures to safeguard children. Schools are encouraged to adopt other self-evaluation processes in relation to specific safeguarding issues, such as radicalisation and extremism (Respect and resilience Self-assessment tool 2016) and online safety (360° Safe).

12. The Directorate continues to demonstrate regulatory compliance in relation to licensing children in employment and entertainment, including the licensing of chaperones. The Directorate has made significant changes to licensing practice

since the introduction of the Children (Performances and Activities) (Wales) Regulations 2015 to ensure that the process for scrutinising licence applications is as robust as practicable. The Directorate continues to participate in national discussions to achieve consistency in licensing practice across local authorities in Wales.

Child Employment Licensing

Academic Year	Work Permits Issued
2013-14	119
2014-15	132
2015-16	107
2016-17	66
2017-18	39
2018-19	42 to date

Child Performance Licensing

Academic Year	Performance Licences Issues
2013-14	172
2014-15	191
2015-16	249
2016-17	522
2017-18	190
2018-19	230 to date

Chaperone Licensing

Academic Year	Chaperone Licences Issues
2013-14	11
2014-15	15
2015-16	19
2016-17	5
2017-18	12
2018-19	18 to date

The Directorate currently licenses forty-one chaperones, who are being issued with photo-card ID licences in addition to the standard letter confirming their status as a chaperone. Chaperones report that this simple development creates a sense of professionalism and improves confidence in their role.

The Directorate is in the process of updating the byelaw that supports the statutory process for issuing work permits to children in employment, with a consultation process planned for summer 2019.

The Directorate is engaged in new work in relation to location filming in the Vale of Glamorgan, to ensure that production companies filming in the Vale are compliant with child performance licensing requirements but also to enable inspection visits to filming locations when resources and capacity allow.

13. The Directorate continues to invest considerable effort is supporting schools to achieve compliance with Safer Recruitment. Compliance rates have improved significantly since 2014 with recent months recording 100% compliance, although this has proved impossible to sustain previously. Anything less than 100% compliance is unacceptable. Recent recommendations to the Corporate Safeguarding Group are intended to strengthen the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy. The Directorate also continues to negotiate with HR to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy across all Directorate and school appointments.

Safer Recruitment Compliance Rates 2018/19

Month	Total New Starters	Total Compliant	% Compliance within Schools
April	13	8	62%
May	8	7	88%
June	21	19	90%
July	6	5	83%
August	1	1	100%
September	117	115	98%
October	19	18	95%
November	31	30	97%
December	9	7	78%
January	32	31	97%
February	5	4	80%
March	11	9	82%

Safer Recruitment Compliance Rates 2019/20

Month	Total New Starters	Total Compliant	% Compliance within Schools
April	15	15	100%
May	23	23	100%
June	10	10	100%

14. The Directorate is engaged in ongoing work to support School Governing Bodies and headteachers in the development of effective relationships with organisations providing out-of-school activities on school premises, such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, sports and music clubs, etc., with the intention of encouraging compliance with nationally recognised best practice and registration with CIW wherever possible. This activity represents the Directorate's commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children in all settings, inclusive of services that extend beyond the school day.

15. The Directorate has established a safeguarding web presence on Hwb, the Welsh Government digital platform for Wales, to provide all Directorate staff with easy access to all relevant safeguarding materials, including national guidance, local polices and training materials. The virtual Safeguarding Network will allow access to safeguarding material and resources by school-based and Directorate staff, dissemination of training opportunities and facilitation of online safeguarding debate.

16. The Directorate continues to work with schools and partner agencies to develop mechanisms for promoting key safeguarding messages with children and their families. This development is particularly important because of the significant role of families in supporting the safety of children, including online safety in the context of child sexual exploitation and the exploitation of children associated with criminal activity.

17. The Safeguarding Officer and other senior officers continue to represent the Directorate at the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan RSB and on all RSB sub-groups, thereby strengthening working relationships with partner agencies. The Directorate is recognised as making a valuable contribution to the work of the RSB and for consistent attendance at meetings. Directorate officers also participate actively in the Corporate Safeguarding Group. The Safeguarding Officer also contributes to the Wales Safeguarding in Education Group and to national and regional multi-agency working groups in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking, Children in Employment and Entertainment and Elective Home Education. The Safeguarding Officer also participates in local multi-agency activity such as the Cohesion and Engagement Steering Group, VAWDA Steering Group and Regional Channel Panel. The Safeguarding Officer continues to participate in national groups working on revised editions of key All-Wales safeguarding and child protection guidance documents. Participation in national and local groups ensures that the Directorate has access to up-to-date safeguarding information and is able to influence the development of national and local strategies and guidance.

18. The Vale of Glamorgan domestic abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) continues to develop and refine its processes and the participation of a Learning and Skills officer enables appropriate information-sharing to develop robust support for children experiencing the effects of domestic abuse. Schools recognise the importance and value of MARAC, responding promptly and appropriately to requests for information. The standard form developed by the Safeguarding Officer to facilitate provision of relevant information focusing specifically on perceived risks to a child is recognised as helpful to the MARAC process and has been adopted by a local project managing standard risk domestic abuse cases that do not reach MARAC threshold. Vale schools continue to receive Police Protection Notifications (PPNs) from South Wales Police, which significantly enhance knowledge of the child's lived experience in relation to domestic and missing person incidents and allow the development of appropriate support for the relevant child. The Directorate currently is reviewing compliance with the Operation Encompass standard that requires PPNs to be shared with schools before registration on the day of receipt.

19. Vale schools continue to engage with Hafan Cymru, commissioned by the Welsh Government to deliver an educational programme called Spectrum in schools across Wales. The Spectrum project delivers Healthy Relationship lessons in response to the introduction of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. All Vale schools are encouraged to integrate the Spectrum programme into the school curriculum from September 2015. Atal Y Fro continues to support Vale schools, including by the provision of high quality individual work with specific children affected by domestic violence. Regrettably, the ability of Atal Y Fro to deliver healthy relationships and awareness training in schools has been significantly curtailed by resource and funding issues. This loss has been acknowledged by schools.

20. The Directorate continues to prioritise the management of allegations of abuse against teachers and other members of staff in accordance with Part IV of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. A database is maintained to monitor progress of professional abuse cases which meet the threshold for consideration and to inform the Directorate Senior Management Team. A training course to support schools in managing allegations of abuse against staff is available. A leaflet developed in partnership with Human Resources to provide advice and support for teachers and other staff being investigated in relation to an allegation has been recognised as good practice by trade unions.

21. The Safeguarding Officer continues to liaise closely with colleagues from the Education Welfare Service, Behavioural Support Team and Wellbeing Coordinator in relation to safeguarding concerns arising from attendance, physical intervention and Elective Home Education issues respectively. The

Directorate continues to monitor the effectiveness of the Team Teach Physical Intervention model and training remains available for all schools to improve the ability of school staff to use de-escalation techniques to manage challenging behaviour. Work continues to evaluate the safeguarding implications for children subject to fixed-term or permanent exclusions. The Safeguarding Officer also liaises with senior officers with responsibility for wellbeing and nurture, to ensure that all activity relating to child welfare is linked and supported. The Directorate continues to review the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies and recognises the impact of unresolved bullying on wellbeing outcomes for children.

22. The Safeguarding Officer continues to enjoy effective working relationships with other agencies. In particular, work with the Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People Services (CYPS) continues to flourish, with open communication and appropriate information-sharing recognised as established practice. Appropriate Directorate participation in Strategy Meetings, Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups is valued by the RSB, Social Services and CYPS and schools continue to build effective relationships with social workers. The Safeguarding Officer meets termly with colleagues from CYPS to review safeguarding practice, share information and refine working practices. The Safeguarding Officer also participates in multi-agency interface meetings with colleagues from CYPS, the police and health to maintain open communication, address practice issues and refine collaborative working practices. The Safeguarding Officer participates in the multi-agency CSE Professional Interest Group, Vale Exploitation Taskforce and RSB Exploitation Strategic Group to develop effective practice to safeguard children at risk of exploitation and share intelligence with other agencies.

23. The Safeguarding Officer continues to participate in Corporate activity to enhance safeguarding practice across the Council. The Safeguarding Officer's Recommendation to include DBS information on revised Council staff ID cards, to inform visitor risk assessments undertaken by schools and other bases, has contributed to the development of schools as safe places for children. The Safeguarding Officer continues to work with colleagues from Civil Protection and the Welsh Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit (WECTU) to develop enhanced building security procedures for schools and other Directorate bases in response to increased terrorism threat levels and other security risks.

24. The Safeguarding Officer continues to work with Directorate colleagues to develop the link between the Directorate's traditional safeguarding function and a broader wellbeing agenda. Considerable work has been undertaken over the past two years to strengthen the support provided to children Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS), to ensure that all children not attending mainstream school have access to a programme of engagement and education suitable to

their needs. This work includes valuable contributions from colleagues in CYPS, FACT and YOS. The Directorate also continues to work with all Vale schools to address the safeguarding and wellbeing risks associated with exclusion and all forms of unauthorised absence from school.

25. The Safeguarding Officer continues to champion changes to practice, including a continuing move from paper to electronic safeguarding records within the Directorate and in schools, for improved information security and to allow robust interrogation of data. The Safeguarding Officer has developed extensive resources to support all employees and volunteers in Learning and Skills, updated as required to reflect developing legislative and regulatory frameworks.

26. The Safeguarding Officer supports a developing national educational agenda to raise awareness and understanding of the significance of attachment and the impact of trauma, to promote an early identification and early intervention preventative model to improve safeguarding and wellbeing outcomes for children.

27. The development of a robust and consistent approach to safeguarding across all parts of the Directorate remains a priority.

The Managing Director and Resources Directorate report outlines ongoing progress in relation to compliance with the Council's Safer Recruitment Policy for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

Overall Compliance – April 2017 to March 2018 (Schools and Corporate Services)

1. Compliance with the policy for April 2017 to March 2018 for all appointments was 96%, compared to 95% from the same reporting period last year (April 2017 to March 2018). A full breakdown of figures can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Compliance Rates for Corporate and Schools New Starters

Month	Number of new starters under Safer Recruitment	Number of employees with all documentation or RA in place	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018
April	24	19	79%	94%
May	16	15	94%	94%
June	30	28	93%	100%
July	18	17	94%	88%
Aug	6	6	100%	100%
Sept	142	140	99%	98%
Oct	35	34	97%	100%
Nov	50	49	98%	100%
Dec	28	26	93%	100%
Jan	52	51	98%	80%
Feb	16	15	94%	87%
Mar	26	24	92%	100%
Total	443	424	96%	95%

Schools

1. Compliance with the policy for April 2018 to March 2019 for school appointments was 93%, which is the same percentage in comparison to the same reporting period last year (93%).

2. Members will note that for the month of September (which represents the highest recruitment activity within the school academic year), compliance was 98% which is the same performance rate in comparison to September 2018 (98%).

3. Members will note that in individual months, compliance rates for April 2018 was reduced to 62% (92% in previous year) and reduced to 78% in December 2018 (100% in previous year). Relevant schools were informed of their non-compliance and this has highlighted the need to monitor appointments prior to the start of each term.

4. The current escalation process requires a discussion with the Head Teacher regarding non-compliance and monitoring of repeated non-compliance by particular schools throughout the year.

Corporate

5. The compliance rate for Corporate Services for April 2018 to March 2019 was 100%. This is an improvement when compared to the same reporting period last year (April 2017 to March 2018 was 99%).

6. A full breakdown of compliance rates and actual figures can be found in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Compliance Rates for Corporate New Starters**

Month	Number of new starters under Safer Recruitment	Number of employees with all documentation or RA in place	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018
April	11	11	100%	100%
May	8	8	100%	100%
June	9	9	100%	100%
July	12	12	100%	100%
Aug	5	5	100%	100%
Sept	25	25	100%	100%
Oct	16	16	100%	100%
Nov	19	19	100%	100%
Dec	19	19	100%	100%
Jan	20	20	100%	100%
Feb	11	11	100%	88%
Mar	15	15	100%	100%
Total	170	170	100%	99%

Return of Risk Assessments (Schools and Corporate Services)

7.   Human Resources continue to monitor the return of risk assessments for both Schools and Corporate services. Over the reporting period of April 2018 to March 2019, 19 new starters commenced employment without all the required checks in place or a signed risk assessment as allowed for by the policy. In comparison to the same 12 month period last year (April 2017 to March 2018), 16 appointments commenced employment with documentation outstanding and without a Risk Assessment in place prior to start date.

8.   For the 19 non-compliant Safer Recruitment appointments, the below tables show the breakdown of when non-compliant Risk Assessments have been signed for each of the two reporting periods.
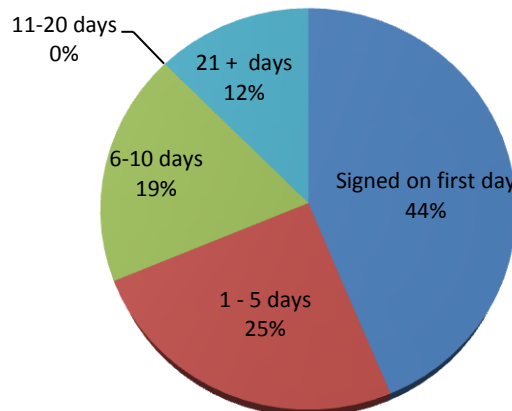
April 2018 to March 2019
Number of days on or post the employee's start date when
the risk assessment or all documentation was received
(Schools and Corporate)
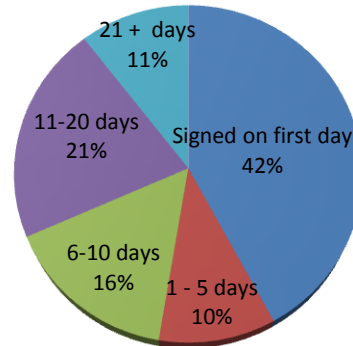
April 2017 to March 2018
Number of days on or post the employee's start date when
the risk assessment or all documentation was received
(Schools and Corporate)

On-going measures

9.   In the last few months HR have recently implemented an electronic transfer
       system for DBS checks. This will speed up the DBS checking process which
       forms part of the pre-employment checks. The system provides an electronic
       portal where applicants are able to apply for a DBS check online, allow checks
       to be approved and tracked by the Council, and the disclosure outcome will be
       available in the majority of cases within 24/48 hours.

10.   The e-learning facility is available to all Vale of Glamorgan Council employees
       within corporate Directorates who have access to the Council's StaffNet

through the new iDev system. Currently all Schools (excluding Stanwell), have access to the Council's StaffNet to enable access the Safer Recruitment and DBS policy and supporting documentation.

11.   The Safer Recruitment escalation process requires Human Resources to identify and monitor outstanding documentation at the 8th, 10th and 12th calendar week following the employee taking up employment. Discussions are then held with the Head Teacher who in turn meets with the member of staff and confirms the outcome with Human Resources. The Directorate Safeguarding Officer for Learning and Skills is also informed at the 8th week. Human Resources continue to monitor weekly and also inform the Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor if the documentation remains outstanding at the 10th week and 12th week. At the time of reporting there are no schools appointments and one corporate appointment at the 8th / 10th / 12th week.

12.   Communication with relevant Head Teachers where issues are identified remains in place as well as when necessary including the subject on the agenda for Head Teacher meetings, Head Teacher Steering group meetings and Designated Senior Person for child protection DSP Forum meetings attended by school safeguarding leads .

13.   In addition, compliance of the policy is discussed at each corporate safeguarding group meeting to continually review the effectiveness of the policy.

Developments since the last report

14.   An update is provided to a number of stakeholders (e.g. Safeguarding Officer, HR) on the compliance rates each week to ensure continual focus is made on increasing compliance.

15.   The Council is committed to ensuring that Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. The Risk Assessment Applicant Sheet provides a dedicated communication portal between Head Teachers/Managers and the applicant to explore safeguarding arrangements can be implemented as outlined in the actual Risk Assessment. This promotes a balance of responsibility for both the recruiting managers and employees in the Safeguarding of children and service users who require support or who are particularly vulnerable.

Conclusion

16. Compliance with the Safer Recruitment Policy remains less than the expected 100% compliance on a consistent basis. The measures outlined in this report will need to continue to be applied to support this.

17. Compliance in corporate services remains high and this will need to remain closely monitored going forward to ensure this trend continues.

D. ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING

HOUSING

Safeguarding remains a key priority for the Housing team and a number of activities and events have taken place over the last 12 months to strengthen processes and raise awareness amongst staff, tenants and partners. The Departmental Management team monitors any safeguarding concerns regularly and these are fed down through team meetings to front line staff. Safeguarding is also standard agenda item at staff meetings and monthly 1-1s.

All Housing staff receive regular training in Safeguarding and related themes. Over the last year, 84 people have completed Safeguarding training and 78 have benefitted from training in relation to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDA-SV).

Staff from Housing are represented on the Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Board as well as several sub groups looking at issues around Exploitation and Child and Adult Practise Reviews. In addition, a number of events took place over the last year which were organised by Housing staff to promote Safeguarding. These included a week-long series of 'drop in' sessions held in the main Reception area in the Civic offices during national Safeguarding week, where staff and customers were able to pick up information and chat informally to staff about Safeguarding issues. There were also community roadshows where Housing staff went out into communities and spoke to tenants about issues. These were in addition to events held in partnership with local schools where children and young people were involved in awareness raising.

The Housing team have also taken an active role in the raising awareness of the issues around Domestic Abuse. This included attending several groups and meetings to tackle issues but also arranging staff sessions to promote the white ribbon campaign, with posters, leaflets and signage put up around Council buildings as well as onto Council repairs vehicles. Male members of staff from the Housing team were also asked to make pledges to challenge Domestic Abuse and there were used as case studies of these used on the staff intranet – to promote the white ribbon campaign.

Safeguarding activity within Community Safety (Housing and Building Services)

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

The Vale of Glamorgan Council adopted the VAWDASV Regional Strategy on 30th July 2018 (min C392). Structures and accountability are in place to ensure that we are able to deliver positive outcomes against the overarching objectives that have been agreed.

One are of development involves the MARAC (Multi Agency Rick Assessment Conference) which is a multi agency meeting to discuss safeguarding issues for victims of domestic abuse that have been assessed as High risk. During 2018/19 there were a total of 257 cases that were assessed as high risk and were subject to a MARAC discussion. Whilst this is a reduction of 62 cases from the previous year there are still opportunities to reduce the number of cases being heard at MARAC through earlier identification and preventative support. This work is being led by the MARAC Steering group which comprises of senior representation across agencies to identify opportunities for improvement. The MARAC Steering group has already arranged specialist training by Safe Lives for practitioners attending the MARAC to ensure they are aware of their safeguarding duties.

During June 2018 the Domestic Abuse Assessment and Referral Co-ordinator (DAARC) Service was launched within the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The service was established as a result of the number of High Risk cases being discussed at MARAC and the need to focus on earlier identification and preventative support to safeguard vulnerable victims. At this point in time there was very little or no support/ co-ordination offered to victims that were assessed as Standard or medium risk. As a result a new service was piloted within the Community Safety team to address this gap in service and provide a much needed earlier intervention service. From June 18th 2018 – March 31st 2019, there were a total of 1658 referrals received, which were assessed, the victim was contacted where consent was provided and further support was provided in terms of onward referral to specialist services or to provide updates on their situation. It is rare that Domestic Abuse will happen in isolation and there are often other support needs identified which were not being addressed for example substance misuse, therefore through the DAARC service they are able to identify these needs and signpost to the relevant team to ensure that appropriate safeguarding is in place and reduce the opportunity for the situation to escalate to high risk. In 2019 the DAARC service was nominated for a UK Housing Award and whilst the service did not win the award it was highly commended, the service did however win the Vale of Glamorgan Council Team Awards for Innovation and Bright Ideas 2019.

The Supporting People team provide funding to Community Safety to provide Target Hardening equipment for victims of domestic abuse. This service is tailored to the needs and risk of the victim for example CCTV, intruder alarm, door locks and lighting that offered in order to make the victim feel safer and enable them to remain in their own home. During 2018/19, 99 properties within the Vale of Glamorgan received target hardening. The majority of victims want to remain in their own home and therefore the service enables us to ensure appropriate safeguarding is in place, meet the needs of the victim and is a cost effective service for the Council in terms of not identifying refuge provision.

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

The Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 enacted new provisions aimed at reforming the anti social behaviour rules and tools previously available. The changes have made it easier for the Vale of Glamorgan to respond swiftly to reports of Anti Social Behaviour.

The Community Safety Team within the Council co-ordinate the multi-agency Problem Solving Group (PSG) that discuss ASB to ensure that early identification and intervention can be offered to perpetrators of ASB and that safeguarding measures are put in place for victims of ASB. During 2018/19 the ASB team developed the way in which they researched cases and cross referenced individuals with other departments / agencies to improve the support offered and information sharing. Within the Vale there is a 4 stage approach to managing ASB which provides the opportunity to identify wider needs and support requirements in the aim of stopping the behaviour turning into criminal activity. For young people the 4 stage approach is the same, however a restorative approach is adopted to maximize the opportunity of stopping any further incidents and to identify preventative support for the Youth Offending Team.

From April 2019 the PSG have widened their remit to include County Lines and Cuckooing within their problem solving and safeguarding duties to ensure information is appropriately shared and action is taken to safeguard vulnerable victims. Numbers remain low in the Vale of Glamorgan however there are process in place to ensure early identification.

During 2018/19, there were 223 victims of ASB (these are classified as victims and not witnesses or informants). Victims were supported through a variety of means, including victim support and multi-agency action plans to ensure that all safeguarding options had been effective.

There is a high proportion of ASB perpetrators that are vulnerable and have additional support needs. The ASB team now access each individual and will complete onward support for them, via Supporting People, Taith, FACT etc in order

to provide help and support that will stop them from committing ASB. The following table highlights the number of perpetrators of ASB during 2018/19.

	Number of Young People (Aged 10 - 18)	Increase/Decrease from 2017/18	Adults	Increase/decrease from 2017/18
Stage 1	207	Decrease 90	276	Decrease 57
Stage 2	51	Decrease 21	60	Increase 19
Stage 3	29	Increase 12	34	Increase 16
Stage 4	0	0	1	Increase 1

Channel Panel (Prevent)

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:

- Identifying people at risk
- Assessing the nature and extent of that risk
- Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

There is a regional Cardiff and Vale multi agency Channel Panel that meet to discuss the referrals and ensure that the appropriate action is taken. In 2018/19 there was 1 individual identified as requirement support through this process, this was a reduction of 5 cases compared to 2017/18.

It is anticipated that there will be new guidance for Channel released from the Home office later this year.

E. Corporate Safeguarding Group

1. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been implemented across the Council. The policy has been promoted through the use of StaffNet and Core Brief to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in regards to individuals considered to be 'at risk'.

2. A corporate safeguarding page has been developed on StaffNet and this will be used to communicate with staff; provide a point for reference for those wishing to understand their roles and responsibilities in regards to safeguarding; identify the safeguarding leads in each directorate; identify the members of the corporate safeguarding group and to provide general information in regards to safeguarding priorities and issues.

3. The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Group meet on a quarterly basis and have produced an annual work plan that considers what actions are required to ensure that there are effective corporate safeguarding arrangements in place across the council.

4. The scope of the work plan seek to ensure that objectives are met in relation to Corporate Leadership; Corporate Policy; Scrutiny and Assurance; Safer Recruitment and Training.

5. The Corporate Safeguarding Group is now considering mechanisms to monitor compliance of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy for all relevant staff, contractors and volunteers.

6. In 2014 the Welsh Audit Officer undertook an audit of the corporate safeguarding arrangements within the Vale of Glamorgan. Following this audit, a report with recommendations was produced and the actions for improvement that were recommended have been addressed.

7. The Welsh Audit Office undertook a follow-up review of the 2014 review in February 2019, and issued their final report in May 2019. The purpose of the review was to seek assurance that the Council had effective corporate arrangements in place and had addressed the findings and recommendations from their 2014 report and the subsequent recommendations made.

8. The 2018-19 review found that overall the council had implemented most of the previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, some areas needed further attention. They have identified five proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the council's safeguarding arrangements. The areas for improvements are detailed below. The areas for improvement will addressed within the CSG work plan (Appendix 2)

9. Several of these areas had been highlighted by the Corporate Safeguarding Group as areas for development prior to the review and will be addressed through the work plan going forward. We will report back to Welsh Audit Office on our progress against these actions.

Improvement Proposals – Welsh Audit Office	
P1	Strengthen the Corporate Safeguarding Policy in the following ways: • Clarify the safeguarding roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Leisure and the Member Champion for Safeguarding; • Set out the role of scrutiny in the Council's safeguarding arrangements; • Provide information on topics that have safeguarding implications such as modern day slavery, trafficking, child sexual exploitation, counter terrorism and the risk of radicalisation, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and self-harm.
P2	The Council should strengthen its contractual provisions in relation to the safeguarding training requirements of third parties, to include: • Specifying that safeguarding training is mandatory where applicable; and • Amending its main agency candidate checks form so that it does not just specify that safeguarding training is mandatory only for Social Care Night Workers
P3	The Council should improve its approach to safeguarding training in the following ways: • Take steps to ensure that the mandatory completion of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV) training is accelerated;

	• Clarify when mandatory safeguarding training needs to be refreshed; • Accelerate the rate of compliance with the completion of its mandatory safeguarding training; • Consider ways in which it could extend its safeguarding training offer, for example to taxi drivers and to those working in the night time economy
P4	The Council should consider producing further performance measures (for example in respect of safeguarding training compliance) to enhance the annual safeguarding report and aid transparency.
P5	The Council should develop a central system for recording and monitoring volunteer information, including any training records and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for volunteers

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Follow-up review of corporate arrangements for the safeguarding of children – **Vale of Glamorgan Council**

Contents

The Council has implemented most of our previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, but some matters need further attention. We have identified some further proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the Council's safeguarding arrangements.

Summary

What we reviewed and why

1 We undertook this review to seek assurance that the Council has effective corporate arrangements in place for safeguarding children. We considered the findings of our 2014 report into the Council's arrangements to support safeguarding of children[1]. We also considered the Council's progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's report, 'Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils' (July 2015)[2].

2 We undertook the review during March 2019.

What we found

3 Our review sought to answer the question: Has the Council acted upon the recommendations and proposals for improvement contained in the national and local reports of the Auditor General published in 2014 and 2015?

4 Overall we found that: The Council has implemented most of our previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, but some matters need further attention. We have identified some further proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the Council's safeguarding arrangements.

Proposals for Improvement

Exhibit 1: proposals for Improvement

The table below sets out the proposals for improvement that we have identified following this review.

Proposals for improvement
P1 Strengthen the Corporate Safeguarding Policy in the following ways: • Clarify the safeguarding roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Leisure and the Member Champion for Safeguarding; • Set out the role of scrutiny in the Council's safeguarding arrangements; • Provide information on topics that have safeguarding implications such as modern day slavery, trafficking, child sexual exploitation, counter terrorism and

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[1] Auditor General for Wales, **Local Authority Arrangements to Support Safeguarding of Children – Vale of Glamorgan Council,** November 2014

[2] **Auditor General for Wales, Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils**, July 2015

Proposals for improvement	
	the risk of radicalisation, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and self-harm.
P2	The Council should strengthen its contractual provisions in relation to the safeguarding training requirements of third parties, to include: • Specifying that safeguarding training is mandatory where applicable; and • Amending its main agency candidate checks form so that it does not just specify that safeguarding training is mandatory only for Social Care Night Workers
P3	The Council should improve its approach to safeguarding training in the following ways: • Take steps to ensure that the mandatory completion of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV) training is accelerated; • Clarify when mandatory safeguarding training needs to be refreshed; • Accelerate the rate of compliance with the completion of its mandatory safeguarding training; • Consider ways in which it could extend its safeguarding training offer, for example to taxi drivers and to those working in the night time economy
P4	The Council should consider producing further performance measures (for example in respect of safeguarding training compliance) to enhance the annual safeguarding report and aid transparency.
P5	The Council should develop a central system for recording and monitoring volunteer information, including any training records and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for volunteers

Assessment of progress against the recommendations from our 2015 report

The Council has implemented most of our previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, but some matters need further attention. We have identified some further proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
R1 Improve corporate leadership and comply with the Welsh Government policy on safeguarding through:	
• the appointment of a senior lead officer who is accountable for safeguarding and protecting children and young people with corporate responsibilities for planning improvements;	Met: The Director of Social Services is the senior lead officer and he chairs the Corporate Safeguarding Group.
• the appointment of a lead member for safeguarding	Met

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
	The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Leisure has safeguarding within his Cabinet portfolio and the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture is the Member Safeguarding Champion.
• regularly disseminating and updating information on these appointments to all staff and stakeholders	Partially met - some areas for improvement identified. • Staffnet has a corporate safeguarding page which identifies the officers with safeguarding responsibilities and the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Leisure. The Council displays safeguarding posters with includes the Council's safeguarding hotline. • Both the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy and its website are silent on the respective safeguarding roles of the Cabinet Members, and the Council's intranet (Staffnet) is silent of the role of the Member Safeguarding Champion. • The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Leisure is not a standing member of the Corporate Safeguarding Group and has only just started being invited to those meetings. • Many Council staff do not have access to Staffnet and the safeguarding posters are obviously high level and understandably focus on the safeguarding hotline, so the Council may wish to consider opportunities to further the awareness of key safeguarding roles amongst staff who do not have access to a computer.
R2 Ensure there is a corporate-wide policy on safeguarding covering all council services to provide a clear strategic direction and clear lines of accountability across the council	We have concluded that the Council has largely met this recommendation but there is scope to improve the corporate safeguarding policy. • There is a corporate-wide policy on safeguarding and it is published on Staffnet. • The policy could be strengthened by setting out the role of scrutiny in the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements. It could also be strengthened by providing information on topics that have safeguarding implications such as those set out in the final bullet of

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
	P1 above on pages 4 and 5. In addition, it is not clear that those officers listed at Appendix A of the policy are actually the members of the Corporate Safeguarding Group. • The Council is planning to review its corporate-wide policy to strengthen its training arrangements by introducing a 'matrix' which will map roles against the level of training required. The Council also wants to update the safeguarding language and terminology in the policy to ensure consistency with recent legislative developments. • The 2016-17 Internal Audit report on the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements set out that the Corporate Safeguarding Group 'should ensure that employees, volunteers, and contractors without access to Staffnet are made aware of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and relevant safeguarding procedures. The use of posters and leaflets should be utilised to achieve this'. The Council's safeguarding poster does refer to the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, but as the policy is published on Staffnet, the problem of accessing it remains and the Council needs to be able to assure itself that all its staff can easily access the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
R3 Strengthen safe recruitment of staff and volunteers by:	
• ensuring that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and compliance with safe recruitment policies cover all services that come into contact with children;	Met: • The Council has a Safer Recruitment Policy and ensures that DBS checks are carried out where necessary. The Safer Recruitment Policy applies to staff recruitment and also to volunteers, contractors and agency workers.
• creating an integrated corporate compliance system to record and	Partially met:

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
monitor compliance levels on DBS checks; and	• The Council reports performance measures in respect of compliance with the Safer Recruitment Policy and it has escalation procedures where compliance is not fully met. • The Council has a spreadsheet held by HR that contains all staff DBS check information, although volunteers' DBS check information is held separately in Directorates or schools.
• requiring safe recruitment practices amongst partners in the third sector and for volunteers who provide services commissioned and/or used by the council which are underpinned by a contract or service level agreement	Met. The Council's contractual safeguarding provisions confirm the need for DBS checks (where applicable).
R4 Ensure all relevant staff, members and partners understand their safeguarding responsibilities by:	
• ensuring safeguarding training is mandated and coverage extended to all relevant council service areas, and is included as standard on induction programmes;	Met: • All staff are required to complete e-learning safeguarding training. • The Council keeps records on its iDev system of completion rates for this training from 9 November 2018 onwards. • The overall completion rate for the Council is 68%, with 79% in the Environment directorate, 80% in the Learning and Skills Directorate, 60% in Social Services (60%) and 65% in the Resources directorate. The Council told us that one of the reasons for the lower take up in Social Services is that many staff within that Directorate have done a higher level of safeguarding training and the mandatory training is basic compared to that. Nevertheless, the Council have stipulated that the e-learning safeguarding training is mandatory. The Council

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
	should consider if it is efficient to make those staff who have already done advanced safeguarding training to do the basic training. Alternatively, the Council could cross reference and identify those staff who have done the higher level training which would mean they could be exempt from the basic training in order to assure itself that staff have the relevant training.
	• In 2017, all elected members attended training on corporate parenting and safeguarding.
	• Safeguarding training is highlighted as part of the Council's corporate induction and staff are provided with a safeguarding leaflet. New starters need to complete the mandatory safeguarding training within six weeks of their start date.
	• It is mandatory for all managers to attend Recruitment and Selection training. The Safer Recruitment Policy is included in the pre-course study for that training. There is a safer recruitment e-learning course available, but it is not mandatory.
• creating a corporate-wide system to identify, track and monitor compliance on attending safeguarding training in all council departments, elected members, schools, governors and volunteers; and	Partially met: • The Council does not have a corporate-wide system to identify, track and monitor compliance on attending safeguarding training as recommended in the second bullet point of our recommendations. Although all Council staff are on the iDev system, Democratic Services monitor and manage the process of member training and the Learning and Skills Directorate monitor schools' training compliance and keep records. Governor training is not mandated at a national level, but the Council encourages governors to complete safeguarding training and provides various opportunities for them to do so. The Governor Support team retains records for all governor training. The Council does not have a central record of volunteers' compliance with safeguarding training.

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
	• It is a Welsh Government requirement that training in respect of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV) is mandatory, but currently only 52% of staff have completed it. Those figures do not include schools based staff and the Council is currently liaising with Learning@Wales in order to obtain those figures. • Some councils have provided safeguarding training to taxi drivers and are planning to roll out similar training to workers in the night time economy. The Council should consider a similar approach. The Council has started to develop its safeguarding offer within its Licensing Department and is planning to develop a safeguarding guidance leaflet to be issued to all taxi drivers when they renew their licence. Alongside that booklet, the Licensing Department are in the process of updating the knowledge test, which all new drivers must pass in order to obtain a licence, to include some safeguarding questions on what signs to look out for and what to do if they have concerns for their passenger's safety.
• requiring relevant staff in partner organisations who are commissioned to work for the council in delivering services to children and young people to undertake safeguarding training.	Partially met: • The Council could strengthen its contractual provisions in relation to the safeguarding training requirements of third parties. The Council's contractual provisions do not explicitly specify that, where applicable, safeguarding training is a requirement, rather they refer to suitably trained and qualified staff. Furthermore, currently the Council's form for checking agency staff states that safeguarding training is only mandatory for Social Care Night Workers. We feel this is too narrow a definition for those whom such training should be mandatory

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
R6[3] Improve accountability for corporate safeguarding by regularly reporting safeguarding issues and assurances to scrutiny committee(s) against a balanced and council-wide set of performance information covering: • benchmarking and comparisons with others; • conclusions of internal and external audit/inspection reviews; • service-based performance data; • key personnel data such as safeguarding training, and DBS recruitment checks; and • the performance of contractors and commissioned services on compliance with council safeguarding responsibilities.	The Council has met aspects of this recommendation in full but others have not been fully actioned for the reasons set out below. • The Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report goes to all the Council scrutiny committees and to Cabinet each year. This report provides an example of how safeguarding is not yet fully embedded corporately as information from one Council Directorate is absent. The Council have recognised this weakness and the next report (due in July 2019) will rectify this omission. The Council is also looking to reduce the amount of narrative in the report. The report does contain Safe Recruitment statistics which is helpful. The Council should consider producing further performance measures (for example in respect of safeguarding training) to enhance the report and transparency regarding the effectiveness of its corporate safeguarding arrangements; • The Council's 2017-18 annual report contains some safeguarding performance information and that report goes to each scrutiny committee; • The Council has recognised a gap in its monitoring and assurance arrangements in respect of safeguarding service self-assessments. The Corporate Safeguarding Group want to develop a corporate system for these self-assessments; • The Council does not include benchmarking or comparisons with others in respect of safeguarding in the reports that go to scrutiny committees, although the Council said that this was difficult as there is not an agreed set of regional performance indicators; • The performance of contractors is monitored through the Council's contract monitoring and quality assurance arrangements as opposed

[3] Welsh Government were responsible for responding to recommendation 5 so that is not included above

Recommendation from the 2015 report	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
	to through reporting to scrutiny committees, because the Council believes public reporting of this could carry a risk of litigation.
R7 Establish a rolling programme of internal audit reviews to undertake systems testing and compliance reviews on the council's safeguarding practices.	Met: • Internal Audit reported on corporate safeguarding in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18; • There was a 2018-19 Internal Audit report on Safer Recruitment; • Safeguarding is considered as part of Internal Audit's schools programme; • Interviewees we spoke to as part of this review all felt that safeguarding was a topic that was high on Internal Audit's agenda.
R8 Ensure the risks associated with safeguarding are considered at both a corporate and service level in developing and agreeing risk management plans across the council.	Met: • Safeguarding is a standing item on the Corporate Risk Register; • Although the Council does not have Service Risk Registers, there are Service Plans which include safeguarding risks.

Assessment of progress against the proposals for improvement from our 2014 report

Proposal for improvement in our 2014 local report issued to the Council in November 2014.	Wales Audit Office assessment of Council's progress
P1	Ensure that the role and responsibilities of the LADO are clarified and understood across the Council.	Met. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) attends the Corporate Safeguarding Group, and the general consensus amongst interviewees was that this role was known about and understood. The LADO is the Operational Manager for Safeguarding and the Council's intranet safeguarding pages set out her role, albeit the term 'LADO' isn't referred to. The current LADO has been in post for fifteen months. There was recognition that prior to the current appointment, there had been various people in this post over a relatively short period of time, so there had been a degree of instability, which seems now to have been resolved.
P2	Develop a Corporate Safeguarding Policy that clearly specifies roles, responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding and takes into account local circumstances.	See narrative against recommendation 2 above.
P3	Ensure all elected members and staff who come into contact with children on a regular basis receive training on safeguarding and child protection I ssues and the Council's corporate policy on safeguarding.	See narrative against recommendation 4 above.

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VALE OF GLAMORGAN CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING GROUP

IMPROVEMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

Objective: To ensure that there are appropriate appointed persons across the Local Authority who are accountable and responsible for safeguarding

Link to improvement proposal from Welsh Audit Office (P.1 Strengthen corporate safeguarding policy)

Outcomes	Required Actions	Frequency / Timescale	Responsible	How achieved	Progress
Collective responsibility throughout the Local Authority to promote the importance of safeguarding and the well-being and safety of children and adults in the Vale of Glamorgan	Membership of Corporate Safeguarding Group includes representation at an appropriate level from all Directorates	Quarterly	Amanda Phillips, HoS Safeguarding	Monitor attendance & cross directorate representation at Corporate Safeguarding Group	
	Membership of Corporate Safeguarding Group is	Annually/	Amanda Phillips, HoS	Annual review of membership of CSG	

Corporate Safeguarding Group is responsible for ensuring accountability for safeguarding across the Local Authority	regularly reviewed and, where needed, invitations are extended to those who can contribute to relevant areas of development in relation to the Business Plan	As required	Safeguarding Lance Carver, Director of Social Services	Membership updated where necessary Invitations to be extended on individual basis when required	
	Lead Member for Safeguarding is represented within the Corporate Safeguarding Group and receives minutes of meetings	Quarterly	Lance Carver	Lead Member invited to all CSG meetings Minutes of meetings to be sent to Lead Member along with any actions	
	The Corporate Safeguarding group has Terms of Reference to clarify membership, roles, expectations and relationship with other corporate groups, such as the Corporate Management Team	Annually	Amanda Phillips	Annual review of Terms of Reference, to be updated as necessary	

Awareness raising and understanding of corporate leadership and safeguarding roles	Key appointments within Corporate Leadership are disseminated to staff and linked to their safeguarding responsibilities within their role	**As required**	**Tony Curliss**	**Regular review and update of CSG webpage** **Communications exercise**	
	Corporate and Directorate safeguarding roles are known and understood through dissemination of information to all employees and volunteers and updated as required	**Ongoing**	**Tony Curliss**	**Communications exercise** **Regular review and update of CSG webpage**	
	Information on corporate leadership and safeguarding roles to be shared on Safeguarding Hub within StaffNet and in Bi Annual Safeguarding Newsletter	**Ongoing**	**Tony Curliss/Natasha James**	**Communications exercise** **Regular review and update of CSG webpage**	
	Safeguarding Hub to include membership of Corporate Safeguarding Group and areas of responsibility	**As required**	**Tony Curliss/Natasha James**	**Update of CSG information**	

	Bi-Annual cabinet report on activity of the Corporate Safeguarding Group to reference membership/changes to membership of the Group	**Bi-Annual**	**Lance Carver**	**Mid-term & Annual report to Cabinet/Scrutiny**	
WAO Improvement Proposal **P1:** **Strengthen the Corporate Safeguarding Policy**	***Clarify the safeguarding roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Leisure and the member Champion for Safeguarding (P1.WAO)***	**Annually – Immediate**	**Lance Carver / Lead Member**	**Update CSG Policy to reflect roles & responsibilities of Cabinet Member and Champion for Safeguarding** **Extend regular invite to CSG meetings** **Cabinet/Lead member take responsibility for ensuring scrutiny & assurance of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements**	

	Set out the role of scrutiny in the Councils safeguarding arrangements (P1.WAO)		**Lance Carver / Lead Member**	**Cabinet/Lead member take responsibility for ensuring scrutiny & assurance of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements**	
	Provide information on topics that have safeguarding implications such as modern day slavery, trafficking, child sexual exploitation, counter terrorism and the risk of radicalisation, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and self-harm (P1.WAO)		**CSG Leads**	**CSG Policy reflects the role of Scrutiny** **Mid-term/Annual Reporting that provides overview and assurances for all directorates scrutiny and cabinet** **Annual reporting** **Information sharing through Corporate safeguarding Page** **Dissemination of key topics to staff via newsletter; training; national safeguarding week**	

| | | | | **events** | |
| | | | | | |

CORPORATE POLICY

Objective: The Corporate Safeguarding Policy is widely known throughout the Local Authority

Outcomes	Actions Needed	Timescale/Frequency	Responsible	HOW	
The role of corporate safeguarding is known and understood throughout the Local Authority with a shared understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility	• **Corporate Safeguarding Group takes responsibility for promoting, publicising and raising awareness of Safeguarding Policy and good practice in relation to safeguarding** • **Safeguarding Policy is reviewed when there is a significant change in the organisation or to relevant legislation or guidance**	**May 2019 (initial draft)** **As required**	**Natasha James** **Tony Curliss** **CSG Group**	**Communication Exercise** **Dissemination of revised CSG Policy** **Identification of changes relevant to CSG agenda, policy amendment noted accordingly and updated as**	

				per annual review of policy
All employees, volunteers including school governors, elected members, contractors and partners are aware of their responsibility to comply with the Safeguarding Policy	**Council recruitment processes, contracts of employment, codes of conduct and arrangements for procurement and contracting promote the requirement to comply with the Safeguarding Policy and identified good practice in relation to safeguarding.**		**Directorate Leads & Human Resources**	**Policy promotion volunteers** **Exploring roles and activity of volunteers. Understanding volunteering**
			L&S Directorate Lead; Adrian Unsworth	**School Governors role and requirements to undertake safeguarding training and compliance with policies and procedures to be explored. Context of volunteer policy in relation to school**

				governors	
The profile of good safeguarding practice is raised to a core part of the work of the council	• **Safeguarding Policy is supported by good practice guides relevant to all areas of council business**		**Natasha James** **Tony Curliss** **Cllr Penrose**	**Policy, practice guides are shared** **Lead Member for safeguarding champions discussion and awareness raising of good safeguarding practice**	

Scrutiny & Assurance

Objective: There is a sufficient level of oversight and reporting on safeguarding activity within the Corporate Safeguarding Group and the Local Authority.

Link to WAO improvement proposal P4
The Council should consider producing further performance measures (for example in respect of safeguarding training compliance) to enhance the annual safeguarding report and aid transparency)

Outcomes	Actions Needed	Timescale/Frequency	Responsible	HOW	
Safeguarding Activity across the Local Authority is known and understood	• **Bi-Annual Reporting of safeguarding activity and relevant safeguarding data to Scrutiny Committee** **Reports will be required from each directorate and will provide assurances against a balanced council-wide set of performance information covering the following:** o ***Conclusions of internal and external audit/inspection reviews***	**Bi-Annually**	**Identified directorate leads**	**Reporting**	

	o *Relevant service based performance data* o *Key personnel data such as safeguarding training and safer recruitment checks* o *Safeguarding Activity* o *Emerging Themes*				
Risks associated with safeguarding are considered at corporate and service level	• **Corporate Safeguarding group to identify and review safeguarding risks based on national themes, adult and child practice reviews, domestic homicide reviews and local intelligence, with appropriate action agreed in response**	**As required**	**Directorate leads**	**Issues to be agenda'd via relevant lead at CSG group, any actions required to be formulated against a CSG action plan**	
Local Authority directorates, employees and volunteers are compliant with Safeguarding Policy and practice	• **Rolling programme of internal audit and compliance reviews to test awareness and understanding of Safeguarding Policy and good safeguarding practice**	**Annually**	**Directorate Leads**	**Self Assessment**	

All Local Authority employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of the consequences of non-compliance with Safeguarding Policy	• **Non-compliance with Safeguarding Policy are linked to Disciplinary processes.**			**Adrian Unsworth/Natasha James**	**Disciplinary Policy linked to code of conduct** **Code of conduct review**
WAO: Improvement Proposal **P4** The Council should consider producing further performance measures (for example in respect of safeguarding training compliance) to enhance the annual safeguarding report and aid transparency.	**Develop a consistent set of data that is reviewed via CSG and identify lead officers responsible for submitting this data.** **Develop self-assessment tool**	**Quarterly / Annually**	**Directorate Leads**		**Analysis and monitoring of data against a set of performance measures.** **Report this on annual basis to scrutiny/cabinet**

Safer Recruitment

Objective: The Safer Recruitment Policy provides clear and robust arrangements for the safe recruitment of employees, volunteers and contractors throughout the Local Authority and through our contracted commissioned services

Outcomes	Actions Needed	Timescale/Frequency	Responsible	HOW	
Assurance that all relevant council appointments are compliant with Safer Recruitment Policy that covers all services that come into contact with children and adults at risk	• **Safer Recruitment Policy is consistently applied to all applicable new starters (including volunteers)** • **Where pre-employment checks are not in place prior to start date, a Risk Assessment must be completed where circumstances *are deemed exceptional*** • **Data relating to *exceptional circumstances* appointments to be shared within the Corporate Safeguarding Group**	**Ongoing**	**HR Directorate Leads**	**Safer recruitment policy is consistently applied. Performance Information is reviewed quarterly** **To be included within Annual reporting to cabinet**	

	• **Safer Recruitment performance management information is provided to the Corporate Safeguarding Group and reported through annual cabinet/scrutiny report**				
All Local Authority recruiting managers are aware of the consequences of non-compliance with Safer Recruitment Policy	• **Non-compliance with Safer Recruitment is linked to Disciplinary processes**	**Ongoing**	**HR Directorate leads**	**Issues arising to be agenda' d**	**Done**

TRAINING

Objective: All Local Authority employees and volunteers, including Elected Members, have easy access to high quality safeguarding training appropriate to their role that is recorded and monitored

Link to Improvement Proposal, WAO (P2; P3; P5)

Outcomes	Actions Needed	Timescale/Frequency	Responsible	HOW	
Expectations in relation to safeguarding training are known and understood across the Local Authority	• **Corporate safeguarding training strategy to inform all employees, volunteers and contractors of the required content and frequency of annual safeguarding training** • **Corporate Safeguarding**	**April 2020**	**Natasha James** **Tony Curliss & Directorate**	**Develop training matrix** **Standing agenda item for consideration at CSG** **Report compliance across the matrix within mid-term and annual report to Cabinet/Scrutiny**	

	Group takes responsibility for promoting, publicising and raising awareness of safeguarding training strategy	Ongoing	Leads	Communication & Dissemination	
Employees, volunteers and agency staff are trained to fulfil a safeguarding function relevant to their role in the Local Authority	• Annual baseline safeguarding training is mandated and extended to all council service areas and all employees and volunteers, including elected members • iDev will be used to deliver baseline safeguarding training to all employees and volunteers with a Vale email address • Interactive briefings within team meetings will be provided for employees and volunteers without a Vale e-mail address • More advanced safeguarding training will be available via iDev and Directorate training	Ongoing	Directorate Leads	Development of training matrix with compliance figures being received by CSG Corporate Dev Team to provide overview of compliance figures via IDev and link to employee induction	

	programmes to meet the needs of specific groups of employees and volunteers • **Safeguarding Hub to inform staff of additional safeguarding training opportunities relevant to all employees and volunteers**				
Local Authority can respond to developing safeguarding training needs	• **Corporate Safeguarding Group takes responsibility for considering additional training requirements related to national themes, adult and child practice reviews, domestic homicide reviews and local intelligence**	**Annually**	**Lance Carver/Natasha James** **Directorate Lead for Organisational development**	**To be included within the training matrix**	
Contracted services comply with safeguarding requirements outlined within all contracts.	Contracts that reflect the requirements of safer recruitment; safeguarding Monitoring arrangements of these contracts to be reviewed Self-assessment tool to be developed to provide assurance	**January 2020**	**Adrian Unsworth Amanda Phillips**	**Discuss with legal that new contracted arrangements specify that safeguarding requirements are in place and standardised across the local**	

	of effectiveness			authority.	
Review the arrangements for school governors to consider what checks and safeguarding training is being undertaken and how this could be mandated.	Review training currently being provided Identify numbers of governors attendance Provide paper for consideration to scrutiny/cabinet	January 2020	David Davies, L&S	L&S to explore how training and relevant checks could be mandated within the LA	
WAO: Improvement Proposal **P5** **The Council should develop a central system for recording and monitoring volunteer information, including any training records and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for volunteers**	**Develop a central system for recording and monitoring volunteer information, including any training records and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for volunteers (P.5, WAO)**	**Ongoing**	**Adrian Unsworth,HR**	**Collate data from central system to feed into annual reporting and to monitor compliance**	

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WAO: IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL **P3** The Council should improve its approach to safeguarding training	• Take steps to ensure that the mandatory completion of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV) training is accelerated;	**Ongoing**	**Directorate leads Natasha James**	**Compliance with VAWDASV training phase 1 being reported to CSH, phase 2 currently awaited**
	• Clarify when mandatory safeguarding training needs to be refreshed;	**January 2020**	**Natasha James**	**Training Matrix – consider legislative; organisational changes**
	• Accelerate the rate of compliance with the completion of its mandatory safeguarding training;	**Ongoing**	**Natasha James / Organisational development Lead Direcortate Leads**	**Further comms exercise;** **Sharing of compliance data across each directorate** **Timetable of team meeting sessions for those not on IDev to be developed annually**

	• Consider ways in which it could extend its safeguarding training offer, for example to taxi drivers and to those working in the night time economy	**Ongoing**	**Regional SRS Lead / Natasha James**	**Supporting safeguarding level 1 training for those seeking licences**	

Welsh Audit Office, Improvement Proposals

P1

Strengthen the Corporate Safeguarding Policy in the following ways:
- Clarify the safeguarding roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Leisure and the Member Champion for Safeguarding;
- Set out the role of scrutiny in the Council's safeguarding arrangements;
- Provide information on topics that have safeguarding implications such as modern day slavery, trafficking, child sexual exploitation, counter terrorism and the risk of radicalisation, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and self-harm.

P2

The Council should strengthen its contractual provisions in relation to the safeguarding training requirements of third parties, to include:
- Specifying that safeguarding training is mandatory where applicable; and
- Amending its main agency candidate checks form so that it does not just specify that safeguarding training is mandatory only for Social Care Night Workers

P3

The Council should improve its approach to safeguarding training in the following ways:
- Take steps to ensure that the mandatory completion of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV) training is accelerated;

- Clarify when mandatory safeguarding training needs to be refreshed;
- Accelerate the rate of compliance with the completion of its mandatory safeguarding training;
- Consider ways in which it could extend its safeguarding training offer, for example to taxi drivers and to those working in the night time economy

P4

The Council should consider producing further performance measures (for example in respect of safeguarding training compliance) to enhance the annual safeguarding report and aid transparency.

P5

The Council should develop a central system for recording and monitoring volunteer information, including any training records and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for volunteers