Cwm Taf Morgannwg Bwrdd Diogelu Safeguarding Board

Annual Report
2020-2021

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr BRIDGEND County Borough Council

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol MERTHYR TUDFUL MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Gwasanaeth Prawf Cenedlaethol National Probation Service

BAVO

VOLUNTARY ACTION MERTHYR TYDFIL GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL MERTHYR TUDFUL

Interlink Rhondda Cynon Taf

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES | Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Cwm Taf University Health Board

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1. Introduction and Foreword - Chair of the Regional Safeguarding Board

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Annual Report for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

This Annual Report presents an overview of the work that the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board carried out in 2020/2021 in pursuit of our aim to ensure that the people of Cwm Taf Morgannwg are safeguarded from abuse, neglect or other forms of harm.

In March 2020, the Board published an Annual Plan setting out its priorities for the coming year. At the same time, we entered a period of unprecedented challenge and uncertainty when the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the nation with a devastating impact for so many individuals, families and communities. Understandably, the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had a significant impact on the Board's ability to carry out some of its functions, with resources being targeted towards critical safeguarding activities only. Many of the Board's non-essential meetings and sub groups were stood down and in their place, local Bronze-Command groups were set up to ensure that our most vulnerable people continued to be protected.

Our partner agencies rose to the challenge with determination and dedication, despite continual pressures on staffing capacity and the need to comply with strict government guidelines around social distancing and self isolation. I would like to thank each and every person working for and on behalf of our partner agencies, in hospitals, care homes, in the community and on the front line of service delivery, for their hard work and commitment to safeguarding the people of Cwm Taf Morgannwg during the past year.

This year's Annual Report recognises the shift in the priorities of the Board to focus on critical activity only in the past year. Despite this, we were still able to deliver on some of the additional targets that we had set ourselves at the start of 2020 and outstanding tasks will be carried forward into the coming year.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board please contact our Business Unit by e-mailing: ctmsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk

Paul Mee, Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

2. Safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

The area of Cwm Taf Morgannwg Morgannwg covers the local authority areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf with a population of approximately 428,000[1]

The **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board** is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board's Business Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

The two key **safeguarding** objectives of **protection** and **prevention** underpin the work of the Board and inform the priorities each year.

The responsibilities and functions of the Board are set out in the statutory guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It has an overall responsibility for challenging relevant agencies so that:

- There are effective measures in place to protect children and adults at risk who are experiencing harm or who may be at risk as the result of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
- There is effective inter-agency co-operation in planning and delivering protection services and in sharing information.

Safeguarding Children

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Statutory Guidance define a 'child' as a person who is aged under 18.

S.130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a child at risk as a child who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

What do we mean by Harm?

Harm is defined as:

[1] Source: Census 2011

- ill treatment - this includes sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and psychological abuse
- the impairment of physical or mental health (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).
- the impairment of physical intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

Types of Harm

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples for each of the categories of harm, abuse and neglect included in vol 5 Working Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk:

- **physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be:
    - not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or
    - complaints that personal property is missing.

- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

Risk from other actual or potential harm to a child or young person may also result from:

- Criminal Exploitation such as County Lines
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Radicalisation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Safeguarding Adults

S126(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as an adult who:

1. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,
2. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and

3. As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Abuse:

- can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial (includes theft, fraud, pressure about money, misuse of money)
- take place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place.

Neglect

This describes a failure to meet a person's basic needs physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health).

It can take place in a range of settings, such as a private dwelling, residential or day care provision.

The following behaviours could also place the adult at risk of abuse or neglect (this list is not exhaustive):

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) this includes Honour-based Violence (HBV) and Female Genital Mutilation
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic abuse and violence against men
- Criminal exploitation

Reporting Concerns

In Cwm Taf Morgannwg, all safeguarding concerns are reported to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). For the relevant contact details please refer to the information at the end of this report.

The **Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** sits within the structure of the Safeguarding Board and acts as the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns across Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The MASH has been fully operational since May 2015, having been set up to enhance safeguarding practice, with agencies working together to receive all safeguarding referrals and share relevant agency information to make joint decisions. The Cwm Taf MASH partners are: South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, National Probation Service, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Children and Adult Safeguarding Teams, Education, and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

MASH activity comprises:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Adults at Risk Safeguarding
- Domestic Abuse (MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

The key aims of the MASH relate to the following themes:

- Improved co-ordination and consistency of threshold/decision making when a safeguarding report is raised
- Improved response times leading to earlier interventions
- Reduction of repeat referrals

During 2020/2021 the Cwm Taf MASH has continued to ensure that the main focus is to respond to all safeguarding concerns promptly in a multi-agency setting. Partners have operated on both a virtual and physical platform with a combination of both office based and remote working working within Covid risk-assessed parameters.

The **Bridgend Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** has been operational since July 2018 with the official launch having taken place in October 2018. The Bridgend MASH partners are South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, National Probation Service and Bridgend County Borough Council (Adult Safeguarding Team, Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) (Children and young people), Early Help, Education, Housing and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

The key aims of the Bridgend MASH are:

- Streamlined decision making through enhanced intelligence
- Risk is collectively addressed
- Opportunity for early intervention and prevention of repeat referrals
- Demand being created but repeat referrals can be effectively reduced

Bridgend MASH is governed by the Bridgend MASH Operational Board and Bridgend MASH Executive Management Board with both boards including representation from all partners. These Boards and Groups have continued to meet throughout the year 2020/21 to guide Bridgend MASH on an operational and strategic level.

Bridgend MASH has continued to operate on a physical and virtual platform during 2020/2021 to ensure individuals in Bridgend continue to be supported wherever there are safeguarding concerns. A comprehensive risk assessment was completed that has enabled people to work in a safe environment. Partners work on a rota basis within their agencies to ensure social distancing is maintained

3. Members of the Safeguarding Board

The Lead Partner for the Board is Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the membership complies with the statutory guidance issued under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014.

A list of members is attached as Appendix 1.

4. What did the Board do in 2020/21 to meet its outcomes?

In March 2020, the Board developed a strategic response to the pandemic, recognising that the impact on the wellbeing of our most vulnerable children, young people and adults may be significant. We needed to be sure that those most at risk continued to be protected from abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm and that partner agencies had effective measures in place to carry out their critical safeguarding responsibilities.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID WE FACE?

Board partner agencies faced unprecedented challenges in the past year, the impact of the pandemic on organisations, staff and the people we serve was evident, some of which are summarised below:

Organisational Challenges:

- The swift introduction of exceptional delivery models
- The need to make best use of technology and new platforms
- The need to respond innovatively and quickly to assess risk
- Additional demands in relation to safeguarding checks by Police and the need to house rough sleepers and the homeless
- The management of the vaccine roll-out
- The additional pressure on healthcare settings
- Increased emphasis on partnership working to manage risks, support business continuity and support the pressures on Health.
- Working with third sector organisations to support adults and children in our communities.

Workforce Challenges:

- Reduced ability to deliver services due to fluctuating staff absences at short notice.
- Needing to implement home working arrangements at short notice
- Separating work and home life, home schooling, ‘pandemic fatigue’ and increased levels of anxiety
- The need to enhance staff support
- Steep learning curves for the provision of PPE, testing of staff and Track Trace and Protect
- Bereavements, in particular in care homes which had a significant impact on residents and staff wellbeing
- Reduced services leaving individuals and carers without their support networks

Challenges for the People We Protect:

- Long term effect of children not being in school or seeing friends and family
- Increased social isolation and mental health issues
- Increased risks linked to substance misuse, domestic abuse, suicide/self harm
- Significant impact in our care homes

HOW DID WE RESPOND?

The Board put in place the following measures:

- Established Silver (regional) and Bronze (local) Command responses to coordinate the critical safeguarding activities of our partner agencies
- Ensured that reports were submitted to Gold Command and the Regional Safeguarding Board on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, highlighting any risks or issues requiring escalation
- Received guidance from Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board to ensure that the statutory duties of the Board were being fulfilled

Through the Bronze and Silver structure we were able to monitor the risks associated with:

- The scale and nature of safeguarding reports in relation to children and adults at risk, domestic abuse and suicides
- The use of technology and virtual approaches to manage critical work, including strategy discussions and child protection conferences.
- The engagement of families in these processes.
- Visits and investigations, in particular when households and residential establishments were self-isolating.
- Staffing capacity and resources.
- Access to schools, childcare and preventative services.

The Bronze meetings were initially held weekly with representation from a broad range of agencies, some of whom had not attended meetings regularly before or been invited to sit on Board sub groups previously e.g. CAMHS and Drive (which operates a perpetrator programme in the region). New multi-agency safeguarding data was also collected and monitored during the lockdown. Following feedback that agencies were keen for the good work that took place during the first lockdown to continue, the Board agreed the establishment of regional Quality Assurance and Performance Sub Groups, which allowed us to maintain these positive working arrangements.

Virtual meetings also increased the attendance of some agencies who we have previously struggled to obtain regular attendance from. This has provided added value to our arrangements, including being able to identify and source quick solutions with partners for high risk cases, that were being impacted on by access barriers created by the pandemic conditions (e.g. access to specialist CAMHS).

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

The Board is required to carry out a number of statutory functions but clearly business as usual was not possible during the pandemic as partners were called upon to respond to the urgent and unprecedented demands facing services. Non-critical areas were put on hold and as the crisis subsided, virtual technologies improved and further guidance came through from the Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board, the Board was able to re-start some non-critical areas of work.

Executive meetings of the Safeguarding Board were held throughout the year to monitor the situation regularly.

5. How did we implement our Annual Plan and what were our key achievements?

The Board published an Annual Plan on the 31st March 2020, setting out its priorities for safeguarding children, young people and adults in 2020/21.

The Annual Plan for 2020/21 can be accessed at: www.ctmsb.co.uk

As the Board stood down non-critical activities, it was unable to fully implement its Annual Plan this year. However, some work was carried out to progress with its priorities and additional work, as a result of the pandemic, also emerged.

In relation to the Strategic Priorities, a summary of the work carried out is below.

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

Achieving improvement in safeguarding policy, systems and practice is a core function of a Safeguarding Board. We wanted to focus on learning from the experience of professionals working in our partner agencies, through the findings of case audits undertaken on an inter-agency basis, as well as through the learning from multi-agency professional forums and child and adult practice reviews.

As part of developing a positive culture of learning and development, we aimed to ensure that information was widely disseminated within the workforce and that the Board monitored the extent to which any recommendations were implemented.

The development of a Learning Framework, setting out how will we create an enhanced learning culture, was put on hold. However, we were still able to carry out the following improvements:

- Established a multi-agency Monitoring Group to ensure that recommendations from Practice Reviews are progressed, implemented and reviewed accordingly.
- Re-designed our action plans to make them smarter
- Increased the use of 7 minute briefings to summarise learning.
- Trained 23 new Practice Review Chairs and Reviewers
- Undertook 4 multi-agency audits
- Delivered 2 multi-agency practitioner events
- Carried out evaluations on 2 Board protocols

In addition, the Board partner agencies progressed this priority individually, some examples of which are as follows:

RCT Children Services developed a Quality Assurance and Learning Framework (QALF) that sets out to embed a framework that includes the key components of a quality assurance framework, namely; reliable and comprehensive performance management information; audit of cases, both thematic and individual; observations of practice and quality assurance of supervision; training and development of staff; and service user feedback and participation in service development.

South Wales Police began collating and reviewing suspected suicides and drug overdoses. This information has been shared with other partners across the region via the newly-established Suicide Review Group and the Immediate Response Groups. Work continues to try to prevent such tragic deaths and Neighbourhood Teams and Police Volunteers have been utilised to distribute posters, signposting agencies which can assist when individuals are vulnerable.

Bridgend Children Services has continued to share learning in response to national, regional and local issues and to the learning needs of staff across the Council. An important element of Bridgend's outcomes-focused Assuring Quality Framework is to be able to identify and evidence what is working well and what needs to change to respond and support people's wellbeing.

Merthyr Tydfil Children Services considers that the only true way to evaluate practice is to look at it from a 360° perspective. This involves looking at the data, the quality of practice and most importantly, whether there has been a positive difference to the lives of children and families. A key element of Merthyr's Quality Assurance Framework is undertaking thematic audits, these cover safeguarding practice and allows consideration of areas for development and areas of good practice on which to continually build.

Case Study - Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services

An 82 year old women (M) was taken to a hospital by Police due to her husband (T) allegedly slapping her at her home. This was one of several previous incidents.

M was assessed as not having capacity and a nursing assessment recommended an Elderly Mentally Inform residential placement. However, her husband wanted her to return home and ward staff said M was asking to return home to T.

A multi-agency meeting was required to discuss the risks associated with M being discharged and what destination would be in her best interests. As there had been historical events of abuse between both parties, due to capacity issues it was felt that M would be unable to protect herself from harm.

Following Section 126 enquiries, a strategy discussion was held which found that during the 13 year relationship between M and T, there had been an increase in domestic police reports over the past 4 years.

A decision was needed on whether M needed protecting or if this could be managed at home with a package of care and support.

A best interest meeting was held where the views of M were established, as well as those of her husband.

It was felt that the risks could have been mitigated by a robust Care and Support Plan with a large package of care. This was the least restrictive outcome at the same time ensuring that M was being seen regularly by professionals who would be able to report any concerns quickly.

A further meeting was held and attendees in this meeting included the Council's solicitor to give legal advice, as well as a further risk assessment being undertaken and clearly documented.

Along with the implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, the following actions which were agreed included:

- Discharge planning to include 4 calls per day, to be implemented at week of discharge.
- Social Worker to visit weekly plus unannounced visits.
- Advocate to remain involved.
- Social Worker to maintain regular contact with safeguarding and maintain regular updates.
- Social Worker to inform care agency of safeguarding concerns and request that all incidents are recorded immediately reported.
- Clear contingency plans in place.
- Strategy group to reconvene in 6 weeks.

The case is now closed with the safeguarding risks incorporated into the care and support plan and is managed by care management.

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

On 1 April 2019, the regional footprint for safeguarding changed and the Safeguarding Board assumed responsibility for the Bridgend area in addition to Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. The membership and remit of the Board and its Sub Groups were reviewed to reflect this change and we began adopting common processes, protocols and templates. As we entered our second year as a new regional Board, we were keen to further harmonise the joint arrangements to ensure that there is a consistent and joined-up approach to regional safeguarding.

The Board was able to achieve the following in relaton to this priority:

- Continued to regionalise our protocols and guidance, approving 7 updated regional documents during the year.
- Made good progress in relation to child sexual exploitation across the region by making the links between the already established groups set up to address this issue.
- Identified opportunities for the Cwm Taf and Bridgend MASH to collaborate
- Good links established with Parc Prison in Bridgend
- Focused work carried out to regionalise the data that is reported to the Board's Adult and Child Quality and Performance groups to enable clear and consistent regional comparisons to be made. This has put us in a better place to inform what sub-group QA work is needed.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

The Board's updated Pre-Birth Referrals and Conferences policy has been well received. This moved the point of referral to Children Services from 16 week gestation to as soon as possible, giving more time for services to work closely with pregnant women. This policy was also directly informed by a Child Practice Review and included specific advice about the importance of actively seeking information from and actively engaging with fathers during pre-birth assessments.

Board partner agencies contributed to this priority individually, some examples of which are as follows:

South Wales Police underwent a new Force Restructure to mirror the newly created regional Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding geographical area. This resulted in a

reduction of Senior Officers who attend the Board meetings and therefore a review of police attendance at the various meetings was reviewed and developed to meet the demand.

Bridgend CBC is now represented on all relevant Sub Groups and meetings of the Board.

Education and Inclusion Services representatives on the Board have taken full part in discussions on strategic areas to ensure that the move from Cwm Taf to Cwm Taf Morgannwg has been inclusive and explored key themes of how the Safeguarding Board has worked to include a third local authority. Good links exist across the Education Directorates in the three local authorities, and relationships are well established.

RCT Adult Services have contributed to various working groups designed to achieve consistent process and practice across the Region, including work to regionalise the documentation toolkit for Adult Safeguarding. Adult Services provides the Chair for the Adult Safeguarding Quality Assurance and Performance Sub Group and they have worked with partners to achieve Regional performance measures and a dataset.

Case Studies - RCT Adult Services

The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust raised concerns about poor care by a domiciliary care agency of 58-year-old man with alcohol-related self-neglect and serious health conditions.

Following enquiries, the Lead Coordinator arranged a strategy meeting where it became apparent that even with an increased package of care in his current home, his needs would still not be met.

Having received alcohol detoxification in hospital, he was able to make a mentally capacitated decision about where he lived and his care and support arrangements.

He was keen to retain his independence but acknowledged he could not manage in his current accommodation.

The Strategy Meeting resulted in him being referred for extra care accommodation and both he and his family were delighted at the prospect of a move to more supported accommodation.

There was also learning for the domiciliary care agency about sharing concerns about regular refusal of care interventions.

A Learning Disability Day Centre reported unexplained bruising on a 50-year-old woman, who, on account of her learning disability, could not explain how she had sustained the bruises. She lived with her mother, who has health needs herself, and her older brother.

Following enquiries and an initial strategy meeting, a Care and Support Protection Plan was developed that included a clear requirement on the provider agencies and the family to report any issues promptly to the Lead Practitioner and to address home conditions with the family.

After a further incident, the family were visited but there was insufficient evidence for police to pursue any charge. The Lead Coordinator convened an outcome strategy meeting, where it was apparent that the protection arrangements for the adult at risk were much more robust. There have been no further incidents of unexplained injuries, home conditions have improved and the family are communicating much better with all agencies.

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

In pursuance of this objective, this year the Board achieved the following:

- Established a cross-partnership regional approach to suicide prevention
- Progressed with improvements to the MARAC process
- Made good links via the Bronze Groups with Substance Misuse, Housing and Domestic Abuse agencies

Board partner agencies contributed to this priority individually, some examples of which are as follows:

There is a clear commitment to collaborative working across **RCT County Borough Council**. The RCT Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) contributed to the setting up and running of the Education Hubs during lockdown, which provided a safe space for vulnerable and key workers' children to attend. The recent Care Inspectorate Wales Assurance visit highlighted that providers felt relationships with them had been strengthened during the pandemic and a culture of trust had developed. Partnership working was particularly prominent in the MASH, with well-established relationships with partners and co-operation between multi-agency professionals, ensuring effective working in relation to sharing information, identifying, and monitoring children's needs and risks.

Throughout the pandemic **South Wales Police** utilised and shared the conference call facility which was a newly adopted vessel in order to hold virtual meetings during the lockdown phases. This eased difficulties in partnership working and strengthened links with the Board. Discussions were initiated with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office to look at closing gaps where there is cross over in work between the work of the Public Services Boards and Safeguarding Board.

Bridgend CBC has also continued to be committed to working collaboratively across Bridgend, including the setting up and running of the Education Hubs during lockdown. The recent CIW Assurance Visit undertaken to the Council, which had a focus on how well social services continued to help and support adults and children (with a focus on safety and well-being), highlighted that partner relationships are strong, productive and well established, and especially prominent within the MASH.

RCT Adult Services are members of all relevant Partnerships across the Region, including the 'Together for Mental Health' partnership, the Community Safety Partnership and the Regional Public Service Board. There is also representation on the Regional Serious and Organised Crime Board, the MAPPA Strategic and Operational Groups and the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Steering Group.

Specific Focus Areas during the Pandemic

Safeguarding in Care Homes

The three local authorities worked closely together with the Health Board and Public Health Wales during the pandemic, along with other key agencies, to ensure that care home providers continued to be monitored and continued to raise concerns around safeguarding.

Contract Monitoring Teams maintained daily contact, via telephone and e-mail, with all care homes to carry out checks, obtain reports on staffing levels and to provide support. Any concerns with regards staff and resident testing were reported to the Contract Monitoring Officers and, where appropriate, escalated to the CTMUHB testing team.

All relevant information and guidance from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and CIW was shared promptly with the homes. Weekly contact was made to provide advice with regard to complying with the guidance, along with weekly calls taking place between Local Authority Commissioning, CIW and Environmental Health Officers. Weekly written updates, providing a RAG status and key figures in terms of testing and staff figures were submitted and collated on a weekly basis, and shared with CIW.

As the pandemic unfolded, hospitals were under significant pressure and there were occasions where patients were discharged with minimum and/or inconsistent information regarding their level of needs and care requirements and this did result in additional pressure on care homes to provide required support.

The provision of PPE was one of the main concerns within the sector especially during the initial period. Initially, Contract Monitoring Teams facilitated the distribution of emergency PPE based on the care homes where there were confirmed or suspected cases of infection, in line with national and Public Health guidance. Additional PPE was also procured to distribute where needed as it was identified that there was a potential gap between supply and need. As the supply of PPE from WG increased this was then coordinated centrally and distributed by the Local Authority on a weekly basis, based on an agreed model.

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Teams continued to be fully operational. Advice was sent out to all Care Homes at the beginning of the lockdown period to inform them that they should continue to submit DoLS applications and that all applications would be strictly prioritised according to urgency. As it has not been possible to visit Care Homes to meet with relevant people, assessments were completed remotely using available evidence with telephone or video calls to relevant people when they can manage these forms of communication.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Learners

Education Services within Cwm Taf Morgannwg recognised the importance of safeguarding vulnerable learners in the very early stages of the pandemic and took a multi-agency approach to ensure their safety during times when the children and young people would be out sight of professional services, who may have in usual circumstances, been able to identify any signs of harm, abuse or neglect.

RCT Education Services developed a Vulnerable Learner Protocol which used intelligence gathering from Children Services and provided schools with a clear system of the most vulnerable pupils within their school and expectations on frequency of contact.

Schools were opened as emergency hubs for vulnerable learners and key workers' children to provide a level of support, but there were still children identified as vulnerable who either did not take up placements or did so infrequently. Those schools who were unable to contact could request for the Attendance and Wellbeing Service to undertake an emergency visit.

This was further developed by September 2020 to incorporate a revised model of delivery for the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS). An Integrated Wellbeing Pathway was created which involved AWS, Youth Engagement and Progression, Resilient Families Service, Education Psychology and Eye 2 Eye Counselling Services. Schools were able, and continue to be able, to refer to AWS on a 3 day rota for any pupils they have not seen or been in contact with. AWS will undertake a doorstep visit to sight the children, offer wellbeing support and signpost to the above identified services where needed. This led from September to March, over 8000 home visits being completed and pupils remaining to be regularly sighted by professionals.

Merthyr Tydfil's Education Services also developed a multi-agency process to ensure they stayed in touch with their vulnerable learners who may have required access to the Hubs. To enable that the process worked as efficiently and effectively as possible, it was recommended that Hub schools held the relevant details of all of the children from their catchment schools. This would help to facilitate the timeliness of referrals to MASH.

Suicide Prevention

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and its partners recognised a need to address the increasing number of suicides in the region and in considering a suitable response, it was recognised that the responsibility for dealing with and preventing suicides sat with a number of different partnerships and structures across the region. It was noted that although each of these partnerships and structures played an important role in trying to tackle the issue of suicide, there was no joined-up approach in place and opportunities to collaborate had not been maximised.

A Suicide Prevention Steering Group was set up in July 2020, co-ordinated and chaired by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board. Membership of this group consisted of multi-agency representatives from:

- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board
- Together for Mental Health Partnership (including the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Sub Group)
- Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership
- Bridgend Community Safety Partnership
- National Co-ordinator for Suicide and Self Harm Prevention

A detailed scoping exercise on the current provision for tackling suicide in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region was carried out to identify any gaps and/or opportunities to improve co-ordination and collaboration. As a result, the following actions were agreed:

- The regional approach to Suicide and Self Harm should follow the six objectives of the Talk to Me 2 strategy. All current arrangements identified in the scoping exercise should feed in to these objectives.

- Formally adopt the IRG protocol as the regional response to all suicides that meet the definition of a critical incident.
- Set up a regional Suicide Review Group to receive data on, and review, completed suicides in the region. The Group should identify themes, patterns and trends and consideration to be given to reporting its findings to the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Group.

6. Safeguarding Themes

Audit Activity

Achieving improvement in safeguarding policy, systems and practice is a core function of the Board. This year, a new approach to audit work was agreed, to be carried out via task and finish groups and recommendations made by case audits were monitored to identify how practice is adapted to reflect any learning.The key learning themes from two completed audits are summarised below:

AUDIT ACTIVITY	THEMES IDENTIFIED
Child S	**Decision-making and levels of accountability:** Chronologies help to provide a whole picture of what is going on within cases and can be a good predictor of future harm. Where a child has been placed on the CPR more than once, a multi-agency chronology should be completed by the Core Group, which may prevent issues from being looked at in isolation and limit the risk of professional over-optimism. There needs to be improved communication within agencies with regards to escalating concerns to appropriate management within their organisations and with partners. The Core Group guidance needs to be amended to include the need for legal services to sit in on Tier 2 meetings to provide a legal view on thresholds. **Engagement:** The voice of the child, alongside their lived experience must remain at the centre of professional activity and decision-making and direct work must be undertaken to ensure that this known. Conference and Core Group meetings must ensure that children and young people's wishes and feelings are discussed as a distinct agenda item within all meetings.

Assessment and Planning:

Disguised compliance to be considered in all Case Conference and Core Groups as being a potential factor in why a Part 6 Care and Support Plan is not progressing and the Conference Chair should discuss this as an option during meetings.

Core Groups must be given priority by all agencies, and Conference reports must detail when they have taken place and the Conference Chair must question if this information is missing.

Single agency and Safeguarding Board multi-agency audits on CPR cases should monitor that Core Groups are being held as per procedures and if not, that this is being highlighted by the Team Manager, Conference Chair and / or though the triggering of the CTM Safeguarding Board Escalation Process for raising concerns about the effectiveness of multi-agency practice.

Professionals need to have a clear and shared understanding of what neglect looks like. Where a child has been placed on the CPR for neglect and the Core Group cannot agree on what 'good enough' looks like, the assessment tools that are available to assist with this should be completed as soon as possible

Recording:

The quality of documentation completed on children on the CPR needs to be sufficiently detailed, accurate and to be completed on time.

Professional disagreements need to be recorded on a child's records and in meeting minutes, so that there is more emphasis on reporting concerns and challenging partner decisions if little action has been taken, with an audit trail to support that action was taken.

Case responsible professionals need to take ownership for seeking feedback from Children's Services in respect of the C1's they have submitted.

When different decisions on the threshold for action for siblings is being taken, the rationale for this needs to be recorded on their respective files.

Workforce development:

Children subjected to a second+ period of registration must be identified in supervision by their worker (including Conference Chairs), and receive enhanced attention by Supervisors, so that the professionals working with them receive all the support they require

	and timely decision-making that meets the child (ren's) well-being needs is achieved. Supervisors need to ensure that the risk assessment and management tools that exist to help professionals in their work are encouraged and completed at the right time, especially when a case has become stuck and / or there are disagreements about threshold.
Adult L	• The use of Multi Agency Meetings should be more frequent and arranged promptly for complex clients. • Mental Health Services need to trust feedback from providers and react to concerns more promptly and comprehensively. • Care Plans and Support Plans need to work side by side. • Crisis Team need to be more understanding when arranging assessments, by taking into account transport issues for clients especially late at night. • Crisis Team need to feedback to Support Staff their reasons for no support provided in order to explain to the client. • The Adult Safeguarding Team needs a robust process for responding to repeated PPNs and escalating risk and need. • No identified need for transition to adult services from 16+ • It should not be assumed that CMHT input is not required because an individual is receiving support from a Supported Housing Provider. • Communication between the multiple agencies involved in this case must be addressed and a strategy introduced on communication, sharing information on care and treatment, also to include what to do in a crisis or at times of concern. • Clarity needed around the disclosure of concerns when an individual discloses 'at risk' behaviors, particularly when safeguarding issues arise. • The importance of case recordings and that a focus is given to the outcome achieved. • The amount of PPNs should have triggered a process to raise as a significant concern. • There is a general assumption that once health take primacy then there is no need for a PPN as this would be duplication.

Adult Practice Reviews and Child Practice Reviews

The Board is required to carry out a Child or an Adult Practice Review in circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of a child or an adult at risk is known or suspected. The Board did not publish a Child Practice Review in 2020/21.

The Board published 1 Adult Practice Review during the year and this is available on the Board's website APR CTMSB1/2019.

The learning themes coming out of this review were as follows:

1. Ensuring the most appropriate use of legislation for adults requiring inpatient care
   When applying a legal framework for an inpatient, best practice would include discussions with all relevant parties involved in their care and treatment. Staff need to have a clear understanding on how and who makes referrals.Timely referrals to advocacy services should be made where patients lack capacity.

2. The patient pathway between older persons mental health wards
   Where there are concerns over the appropriate placement for any patient these should be escalated through the Care and Treatment Plan review process. Where specialist placements are required, there are established processes for accessing these through the Health Board and Local authority funding panels. Applications will be based upon a current needs assessment.

3. The reporting and recording of safeguarding incidences
   In environments where there are a high number of incidents between vulnerable adults there is the danger that a culture of professional tolerance develops, resulting in high staff thresholds for challenging behaviour and an under reporting of serious incidents.

4. The role of the multi-disciplinary team
   A wide range of evidenced based interventions should be available to all patients on older person's mental health wards. As well as the individual benefits this provides, this will also ensure a balanced multi-professional approach to minimising potentially restrictive practices.

Partner agencies were able to respond to the outcome of this review as follows:

Merthyr Tydfil CBC has considered the learning, referral pathways are in place and working well and there is a commitment to fulfilling the role as part of a multi-disciplinary team in relation to adult mental health.

All Learning is incorporated into **WAST** safeguarding training, policies and procedures as appropriate. There has not been any learning/required actions specific to WAST staff, however identified generic themes are disseminated throughout the Trust.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC disseminated the report to all managers and teams. Training has been delivered on Mental Capacity/Best Interests Decision-Making & applications to the Court of Protection. Training has also been delivered on the use of the Mental Health Act and the interface with the Mental Capacity Act. Further guidance has been produced for staff on identifying cases where application to the Court is necessary, including use of IMCA and other professional advocates in this process. A greater awareness of social work staff and managers in the need for Court proceedings is evident from notifications to the DoLS Team of relevant cases and the increasing number of cases referred to the Court.

RCT Education and Inclusion Services, deal with Child safeguarding issues for the majority and therefore some of the recommendations from this review did not align.

However, Adult Practice Review CTMSB1/2019 highlighted in Recommendation 1 and 4 the importance of staff being aware of their roles and legislation and the consideration of when practitioners should report to safeguarding and when they should report to police. These areas are routinely covered in training sessions with schools and school staff are required to undertake Level 1 training refreshers annually.

7. Information Training and Learning

The Board is required to review the training needs of practitioners in the area and ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding training, taking into account themes and learning arising from the delivery of the Board's functions. This work is monitored by the Board's Training and Learning Sub Group.

The majority of the multi-agency safeguarding training is planned, delivered and co-ordinated by the local authority-based Training Departments.The delivery of training in 2020/2021 was impacted by the pandemic and agencies had to quickly move towards virtual approaches. Despite this, the **Cwm Taf Training Department** delivered 128 safeguarding training courses to 993 people from a range of agencies. The majority of these people were employed by the local authorities but agencies represented also includes health, nurseries, police, housing providers and voluntary organisations.

At the start of the pandemic, the inability for **Bridgend Training Department** to deliver face-to-face training either in-house or commissioned led to cancellations and postponements of planned events, and interrupted momentum in the delivery of some regional training priorities. Reduced venue availability and social distancing requirements restricted numbers at in person events by 50% on average throughout the year. Covid-19 accelerated growth in the use of digital and virtual learning programmes and Bridgend has seen an increased take up in e-learning, and has significantly expanded safeguarding e-learning available on its website. In Bridgend, 55 courses were delivered to 863 people from a range of agencies, these include staff, foster carers and volunteers. This data also includes schools safeguarding training.

National Training Framework on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Since implementation, 12,231 staff members from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have completed Group 1 training. Figures are not available locally for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust or the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service as they report directly to Welsh Government.

The table below outlines Cwm Taf' Morgannwg progress in 2020-2021:

Group	Numbers completed
1	1735 (LA data only)
2	154
3	0 (no group 3 trainers)
4	12
5	5

In addition, the Health Board incorporates the Ask and Act training package into their Safeguarding People training, which allows them to illustrate the impact of domestic abuse on children and their families, and how this abuse can manifest in adulthood and beyond.

Multi Agency Practitioner Events (MAPF)

A MAPF on **Radicalisation** took place in November 2020. This event included a presentation on Radicalisation, Extremism and the 'Prevent' programme and on the findings from a CTMSB Review of a case where a young person from the region was convicted of terrorism offences.

Welsh Government Training Grant

The Board receives an annual grant from the Welsh Government to support additional safeguarding training activities. This year the grant enabled us to support the following:

- The delivery of Stress, Trauma and Resilience training to members of staff from a variety of agencies.
- ASSIST Suicide Prevention training to 48 members of staff across all partner agencies.
- A Wellbeing workshop, held during Safeguarding Week 2020, where 27 staff were in attendance.
- CSE awareness raising session to 30 practitioners
- On-Line Abuse and CSE training to 30 participants

The **Welsh Ambulance Services** safeguarding team developed appropriate training packages to suit both virtual and face to face delivery to meet safeguarding educational requirements during the Pandemic. This included required updates on Wales Procedures.

- 60% of WAST Training was delivered virtually and 40% face to face.
- 63% increase in demand to train staff in comparison to last year (due to huge recruitment drive within the organisation)
- 95% compliance Safeguarding Children (2985/3141)
- 92% compliance for Safeguarding Adults(2778/3035)
- 84% for VAWDASV group 1 (3430/4091)
- 1110 tot staff trained Group 2 Ask and Act

RCTCBC Education has focused this year on providing opportunities for staff across the central service area and schools to be able to access safeguarding training that may not have been available previously. This has included 4 training dates for Hafan Cymru 'Disclosure of Abuse' training and 6 training dates for Women's Aid delivered VAWDASV Group 1 Training.

Since the Summer 2020, **RCT Adult Services** have adapted to be able to deliver virtual training and have continued to do so. Whilst it is difficult to measure the impact that training has on practice and outcomes for adults at risk, the RCT Adult Safeguarding Team receives the highest number of Safeguarding Reports across the 3 Local Authorities in the Region from a wide range of professionals and agencies, which suggests that there is a high level of awareness of adult Safeguarding across the public service landscape in RCT. There is an equally high level of DoLS applications, again suggesting that awareness of the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act is strong.

Safeguarding Week 2020 took place in November 2020 and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, along with all other Safeguarding Boards throughout Wales, took this opportunity to work with its partners to highlight safeguarding issues and promote safeguarding activities.

The Board and its partners focussed on positive mental wellbeing and preventing suicide, with the emphasis being on **'Talking Saves Lives'** and the importance of people reaching out and talking whenever they may be struggling and feel that things are getting on top of them.

A programme of events and activities was developed for the public, young people and professionals. Some of the events which were included were:

- A presentation on the link between mental health and domestic abuse. 55 people attended.
- Prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation, which discussed real case studies, how multi-agency working, resilience building and intervention can reduce the risk of CSE, in high-risk cases. 37 people attended.
- Managing Mental Health in the Workplace, which gave a first-hand account of how difficult it can be from a supervisor's perspective in managing a member of staff suffering from depression. 32 people attended.
- "Keeping the Peace and Falling to Pieces" was a presentation by former Metropolitan Police Commander, John Sutherland, who suffered a breakdown and who spoke about his experience. 61 people attended.
- A **webinar** By Dr Tom Slater of Cardiff University on suicide prevention was recorded, circulated to the Board and its partners, uploaded to the Board's website and promoted through social media.

Feedback from the above events was very positive. Some comments received include:

"Thank you very much for the event today….. it is vitally important we break any stigmas around mental health and events like this are steps to make that happen!"

"Thank you very much for sharing your experience and reflections with us. It is extremely important to break the stigma of mental health and sessions like these are very powerful and make a difference."

"It's been a privilege listening to your experiences and positive to see that with the right support, things can get better and I think that will give a great deal of hope to many."

The full activities programme can be viewed **here.**

During Safeguarding Week, **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Mind** launched '*Project Speak'* – a three year project to tackle suicide prevention, including a range of training programmes, awareness raising campaigns and postvention support across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

A section called *'Talking Saves Lives'* was created on the Board's **website**, with a prominent banner on the page highlighting this. This section contains information on a range of support services, apps, training and resources for adults, children and young people, professionals and parents and carers.

The visits to the CTMSB website from 11th until 21st November was 692 in comparison to the number of people who visited the site from 1st until 10th November, which was 277.

A **radio advert** with Heart Radio ran from 16th until 20th November, which directed listeners to the Board's website. The estimated reach for this radio campaign was 176,000 listeners.

Dissemination of Information

As part of developing a positive culture of learning, the Board has disseminated best practice and learning within the workforce via Multi-Agency Practitioner Forums (see above), information within the Board's e-bulletin as well as updating the website with reports and learning outcomes from Adult/Child Practice Reviews and audits.

The Autumn bulletin was developed and circulated within the Board and its partners in September 2020 and included information on:

- The Board's response to the Covid 19 pandemic
- The Board's Annual Plan and Annual Report
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Recently approved policies and procedures
- Learning from case reviews
- Campaigns

Social Media

Throughout the year, information on a range of safeguarding issues for both the public and professionals was shared on the Board's Facebook page and its Twitter account which was launched in the Summer.

Social media was a key communications channel used to raise awareness of Safeguarding Week, to promote the messages on well-being, mental health and suicide prevention and sign-posting to support services.

The Board's **Facebook** page reach was 37,055 and the **Twitter** account was 24,300.

Website

Information on a range of safeguarding issues was uploaded to the website throughout the year and in direct response to the pandemic, a specific section was created and called "Keeping Our Communities Safe During Covid-19".

To make this as prominent as possible, a bright yellow banner was placed on the home page of the website taking people to this information, which was been broken down into 'Public' and 'Professional' sections. Please select this **link** to view these pages.

8. How have we collaborated with others?

Working in partnership with other agencies is integral to the work of the Board. We do this in a number of ways, with individuals, agencies, partnerships and organisations both within and external to Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Community Safety Partnerships

The Board collaborated with the Community Safety Partnerships in relation to 4 ongoing Domestic Homicide Reviews during 2020/2021. Representatives from the Community Safety Partnerships sit on Safeguarding Board Sub Groups and joint work on Suicide Prevention and Domestic Abuse continues.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board

Representatives of the Board have continued to engage and participate in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, led by Cardiff and the Vale Safeguarding Board. A theme has emerged with the implementation of Section 5: Safeguarding Allegations/ Concerns about Practitioners and Those in Positions of Trust (Professional Concerns). Discussions are ongoing, with a view to achieving consistency across Wales.

Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board

The Business Managers from all 6 Regional Safeguarding Boards across Wales met with Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board on a weekly basis for most of the year. Discussions focussed on the situation across Wales and the UK with regards the pandemic. Similar meetings were also held with Board Chairs.

NISB members attended all Board meetings during 2020/2021.

Other Regional Safeguarding Boards

The Board Chair and the Board Business Manager have continued regular contact with their counterparts across Wales to share good practice and resolve any common issues/barriers.

9. PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVING

Children, young people or adults who are affected by the exercise of the Safeguarding Board's functions should be given the opportunity to participate in the work of the Board.

How have we achieved this?

Unfortunately, much of the Board's engagement and participation work reduced during 2020-21 because of the pandemic. Where possible, information technology has been used to maintain contact with people and develop new types of service delivery. The use of online platforms such as Teams, as well as the development of the phone-in systems has ensured that schools are more involved than ever in strategy discussions and conference meetings as the ability to remain at school but take a full and active part in meetings has increased

RCT's Youth Engagement and Participation Service, has continued to provide enriching opportunities and support services for young people across RCT. This has included a range of support on its social media platforms for children, young people, parents, and carers. Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers based with the YEP Service, offer specific support and advice for young people struggling with their own mental health. Face-to-face youth work is provided on school sites, ensuring that young people have a familiar face to engage with for 1:1 sessions, and YEPS secured the funding for a School Based Counselling grant to

provide dedicated support to young people with poor mental health and reluctant to return to school following Covid.

For **RCT Children Services**, digital meeting room technological solutions have been sourced to enable the move to a position where hybrid meetings can be held with children and families. During a recent CIW Quality Assurance visit, there was an emphasis on exploring how well the local authority was ensuring people, carers and practitioners are having their voices heard, making informed choices, and maintaining control over their lives. The inspection concluded that the local authority had made clear its strategic and operational intent to support vulnerable young people, adults and carers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and maintained a line of sight on the changing COVID-19 landscape, resulting in clear plans and innovative practice/responses to address the challenges presented.

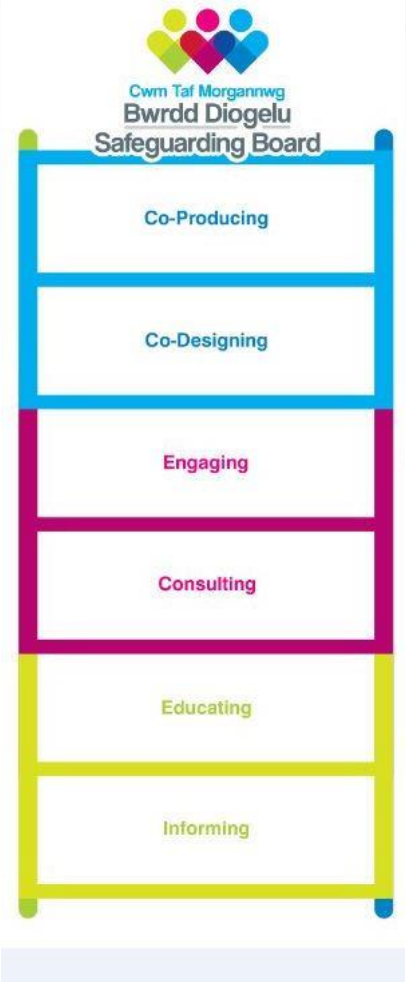
The **WAST** Patient Engagement and Community Involvement team have worked with children and older people in formulating a charter for both groups which provides our staff and volunteer workers with the expectations of these individuals who use our service. They have also worked closely with the deaf community, learning disability groups and currently with carers on how WAST can support them in accessing the service.

South Wales Police has relied heavily upon volunteers, Special Constabulary and communities to improve the engagement of communities. Virtual community meetings are ongoing and ways in which to report crime have been enhanced. Surveys within certain communities has also helped in understanding the needs of communities.

Bridgend College organised a number of activities in 2020 for students on safeguarding issues, including:

- Two workshops on self-harm, which aimed to make students aware of why people self-harm, how to stay safe and where to access support. Students were supported by staff to attend the workshops and feedback was very positive from both.
- Six workshops on mental health which were run by Mental Health UK and Hafal and which raised awareness on mental health and resilience and how to develop proactive strategies. Students enjoyed and benefitted from the workshops, with staff commenting that groups are more cohesive and supportive.
- A session was delivered by the Breck Foundation to staff at Bridgend College on raising awareness of the dangers of gaming and online grooming.

Bridgend Youth Council arranged for a workshop to be held in November 2020, followed by on-going drop-in sessions on the impact of loneliness and isolation on young people's mental health. The Reach Out Workshop with Youth Cymru helped members of Bridgend Youth Council understand the impact that loneliness and isolation can have on their mental health, especially during the covid-19 pandemic and recurring lockdowns.The Youth Council members, aged between 11 and 25, were able to understand and recognise mental health triggers of loneliness and isolation and knew where to access support if needed. This led to regular online Chat and Chill Drop In's so that the young people had a social outlet during lockdowns or holidays and felt connected and supported by Bridgend County Borough Council's Participation Team.



A **Ladder of Participation** has been developed in order to measure how well we are doing in engaging with our communities and service users. This will be embedded into the work of the Board in 2021/2022.

As shown in the diagram on the left, there are six rungs to the ladder, with each rung representing a different level of participation.

Public voice activity on every step of the ladder is valuable, although participation becomes more meaningful at the top of the ladder.

Starting at the bottom is fine – and in fact, to be expected – as long as the ambition is to keep moving up the ladder, reflecting on how much service users and the community are involved.

10. Contributions of Board Members

Each Safeguarding Board partner has a responsibility to ensure that the Board is operating effectively. There are clearly defined Terms of Reference as well as role profiles for Board members.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC)

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council involvement and contribution to the Board comes from Children and Adult Services, Education, Housing and Public Protection. There is good representation on all meetings and sub groups of the Board.

Communications on safeguarding matters are shared with colleagues and schools and the Board website is promoted widely to enable increased participation. An annual Student Conference is held during Safeguarding/Anti-bullying Week with pupils to ensure increased understanding on matters such as County Lines, Racism, Bullying, Healthy Relationships etc. to enable learners to make more informed choices.

During the suspension of some Board activity due to Covid-19, MTCBC chaired Bronze

Command ensuring safeguarding services across Merthyr remain co-ordinated.

MTCBC also contributes to the work of the Board in the following ways:

- Chairing the Board's Protocols & Procedures Group
- Leading and co-producing regional guidance
- Being Vice Chair for Adult MASH Quality Assurance & Performance
- Chairing a Child Practice Review
- Reviewer for an Adult Practice Review
- Panel member for a Domestic Homicide Review
- Supporting the development of the Suicide Review Group

MTCBC provides performance data and contributes to audit work as sub-group activity as required.

MTCBC contributes directly to updating and creating Adult, Children and Joint Safeguarding Board Policies. MTCBC also contributes to the facilitating of safeguarding training across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)

Children's Social Care continues to provide professional representation, consistent attendance and active contribution at the Board and all Board Sub-Groups and Task Groups. During the pandemic period BCBC continued to attend those groups which report to the Safeguarding Board as well as the additional meetings held as a result of the pandemic. Attendance has not been compromised as virtual opportunities have arisen and enable communication and participation to continue.

BCBC are committed to safeguarding at a senior management level through active contribution in the Regional Safeguarding Board, with our Director of Children's Social Care, Head of Children and Adults Social Care in attendance along with the Group Manager for Safeguarding who chairs the Child & Adult Practice Review Subgroup and has responsibility for BCBC's Multi-agency safeguarding Hub (MASH).

This year, staff within the Educational Engagement Team (EET) made links with both regional and national Safeguarding in Education leads to work collaboratively on developing training, supporting with issues within safeguarding and education directorates and implementing/ reviewing local and national policies. This is then fed back into the CTMSB meetings as appropriate.

During the early part of the pandemic the BCBC Safeguarding Group Manager took responsibility for chairing the Bronze meetings.

BCBC Children's Social Care actively contribute to safeguarding processes including:

- PRUDiC
- Child/Adult Practice Reviews
- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Multi Agency Practitioner Forums
- Immediate Response Groups
- Suicide Review Group
- Case and Thematic Audits

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC)

RCTCBC endeavours to ensure appropriate representation, consistent attendance and active contribution at the Board and all Board Sub-Groups and Task Groups. During 2020/2021 we have tried to ensure that attendance at meetings has been minimally affected by staff absence and service pressures because of COVID 19.

There is a clear commitment to safeguarding at a senior management level through active contribution to the Regional Safeguarding Board, and our Director also chairs the Safeguarding Board. The Service Directors and Heads of Service also attend the Board and there is also representations on the Operational Committees.

During the early part of the pandemic, the RCT Service Director for Children chaired the Silver Command meetings and the Head of Service for Safeguarding chaired the Bronze meetings.

The Head of Service for Safeguarding Children chairs the CQAP subgroup and the Head of Service for the Youth Offending Service chairs the Engagement Participation and Communication Sub group. We also provide the vice-chair for PPG.

Children's actively contributes to safeguarding processes including:

- PRUDiC
- Child/Adult Practice Reviews
- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Multi Agency Practitioner Forums
- Immediate Response Groups
- Suicide Review Group
- Case and Thematic Audits

Education and Inclusion Services have been heavily involved in the work of the Board including the sub-groups throughout the last year.Board meetings have been consistently attended by the Education and Inclusion Services Director and her nominated deputy when she has been unable to attend. Information has been shared as and when necessary with full participations in discussions of Board agenda items.

The pandemic, and the challenge this placed on Education, did make it difficult at times for officers to attend all sub-group meetings but best endeavors were made. In September 2020, the education representatives across the Board sub-groups were reallocated to take into consideration changes within roles and to ensure good attendance. A deputy was also named for all groups to ensure consistency in approach if the initial representative was unable to attend.

RCT Adult Services participated and contributed to all Board meetings during the year and attended the Bronze and Silver meetings, providing data to demonstrate our on-going safeguarding arrangements. We have an excellent track record in attendance at meetings and make a significant and consistent contribution to the work of the Board, including the provision of Panel members, Reviewers and Chairs for Practice Reviews and MAPFs.

South Wales Police

South Wales Police (SWP) has been fully committed in the work of the Board for 2020/2021. The demands placed upon them due to the pandemic and the new force structure required them to restructure roles and responsibilities quickly to adapt to the new demands.

SWP representatives on sub groups, and Board meetings can be generalised as an active participation role and support has been given to workstream leads through the completion of actions, reports, development of policy, and sharing of data to enhance the work around safeguarding practices of the board.

With regards attendance at the Board meetings this is reinforced from a senior management position and the data around attendance is reviewed regularly. Performance around police attendance for 2020-21 being what can be described as frequent; and any incidents of non-attendance by the SWP representative (or a deputy) is by exception due to operational necessity reasons, but updates are provided.

SWP made several contributions to Safeguarding Week for 2020, focused on learning for professionals in managing mental health issues to further promote learning in this subject area.

In addition given the new geographical area SWP has adopted to cover the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area a process of sharing best practice between MASH's has been undertaken and significant improvements have been made in several area of business through this learning processes, PPN demand and risk assessment is one such example increasing professionalism and risk management in domestic abuse.

Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) achieves the safeguarding objectives of each Regional Safeguarding Board by effectively working together to ensure good outcomes for people who have contact with their service within the Board Region. This has included engagement with Child and Adult practice reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and all Safeguarding strategy meetings associated with the protection of individuals and their families within the Safeguarding Board Region. Providing information for Immediate Resource Group meetings, PRUDiCs and members of board sub groups.

The COVID 19 period has resulted in national recognition of increased vulnerability for Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse. The pandemic has impacted the safeguarding team within WAST in all activities. Particularly responsibility in working with partner agencies and ensuring that staff were appropriately trained to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. WAST has continued to uphold the strategic requirements placed upon the organisation despite many of the safeguarding team being re-deployed to support operational and IPC demands during the initial COVID response.

WAST analysis of this impact clearly demonstrates a significant increase in safeguarding activity within our organisation. This is illustrated in an increase of almost 50% in concerns identified and reported to Local Authority by WAST staff. Their safeguarding responsibilities have been supported by the recently embedded digital reporting system (Doc works). This system will enable them to provide regionally specific safeguarding data monthly as well as annually to the Safeguarding Board in 2022.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

Health representation has been present at all of the partnership groups and have participated in the work of the Board. During the pandemic health worked closely with their strategic partners in preventing and protecting the community. The Bronze, Silver and Gold command meetings provided an excellent platform for partners to share learning and practice. In addition, to quickly devise plans to safeguard both children and adults at risk.

Health colleagues have taken on the role of panel members/reviewers for APR, CPR & DHR. The early learning identified at these reviews has been disseminated across agencies.

11. Managing our Resources

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to assess and identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

This is calculated as follows:

Agency	% Split	% Split
Rhondda-Cynon-Taf CBC		55%
Bridgend CBC	60%	32%
Merthyr Tydfil CBC		13%
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB		25%
South Wales Police		10%
Probation Service		5%
Totals		100%

In 2020/2021 expenditure was as follows:

Staff	£228,928
Premises	£7,330
Other	£8,961

Training costs are not included as this sits outside the Board budget.

12. Other Board Activities

Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs)

The statutory guidance issued under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the arrangements for these civil orders to be used by a local authority to enable an authorised officer to speak in private with a person suspected of being an adult at risk.

The Board has ensured that there are 4 authorised officers in Cwm Taf Morgannwg who are appropriately trained and that a regional process has been put in place.

No orders were sought in Cwm Taf Morgannwg during 2020/2021.

Guidance and Advice received from the Welsh Ministers and/or the National Board

This year, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board has maintained stronger connections and worked very closely with Welsh Government and National Independent Safeguarding Board colleagues.This has involved responding quickly to guidance received from the Welsh Government and ensuring that this has been distributed and published promptly.

Throughout 2020/2021, the Board received regular updates from the designated link member of the NISB, which continues to be a standing agenda item at every Board meeting.

Section 137 requests for information

Section 137(1) of the Act provides a Safeguarding Board with the power to request specified information from a qualifying person or body provided that the purpose of the request is to enable or assist the Board to perform its functions under the Act.

In 2020/21 the Board did not use its Section 137 powers to access information.

Are You Concerned About Someone?

If you suspect that a **child or young person** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about children are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425006
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000
In Bridgend: 01656 642320

Opening Hours:
Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

If you suspect that an **adult** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about vulnerable adults at risk are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425003
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000
In Bridgend: 01656 642477

Opening Hours:
Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

To contact Children or Adults Services outside office hours, at weekends and bank holidays, call:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Emergency Duty Team on **01443 743665**.

If you suspect that a child, young person or an adult is at immediate risk of harm call 999 and speak to the Police.

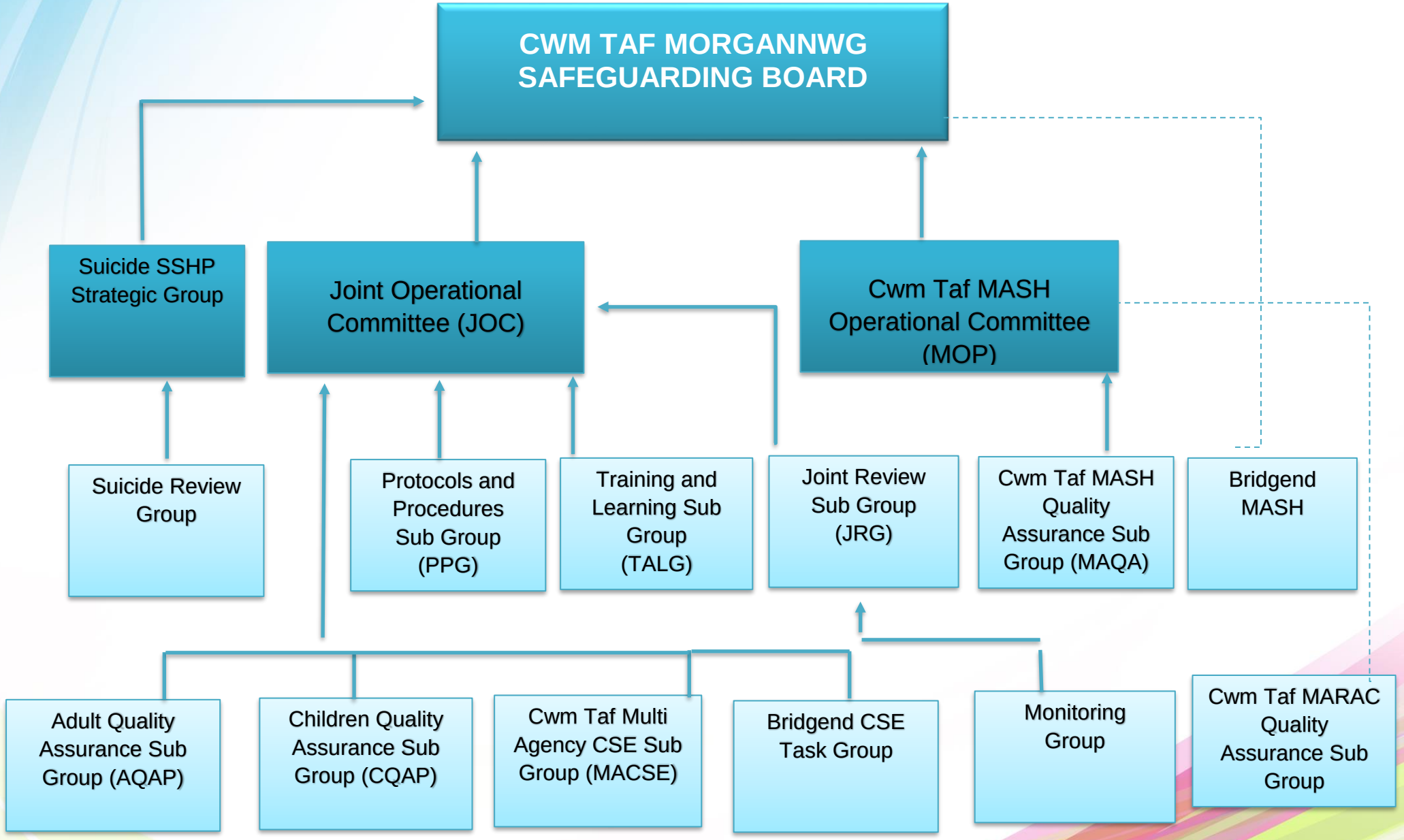
If you would like to report a non-urgent incident, or have a problem or general query, you can call 101, the 24 hour non-emergency number for the police. ***Use 101 when the incident is less urgent than 999.***

APPENDIX 1 - BOARD MEMBERSHIP

NAME	TITLE	AGENCY
Paul Mee (Chair)	Director of Community and Children's Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Lisa Curtis-Jones (Vice Chair)	Chief Officer, Social Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Claire Marchant (Vice Chair)	Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Bridgend County Borough Council
Cheryl Emery	Head of Public Protection	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Jackie Neale	Adult Safeguarding Service Manager	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Neil Elliot	Service Director, Adult Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Julie Clark	Head of Safeguarding and Support (Children)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Gaynor Davies	Director of Education and Lifelong Learning	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Annabel Lloyd	Service Director, Children Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cara Miles	Head of Legal - Community Care and Children	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Jon Eyre	Safeguarding Principal Manager	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Alyn Owen	Chief Officer, Community Regeneration	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Susan Walker	Chief Officer, Education	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Taryn Stephens	Head of Children Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Angela Edevane	Head of Adult Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Carys Kennedy	Head of Legal and Governance	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Jacqueline Davies	Head of Adult Social Care	Bridgend County Borough Council
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care	Bridgend County Borough Council
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education and Family Services	Bridgend County Borough Council
Greg Dix	Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Patient Services	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Louise Mann	Assistant Director for Quality and Safety	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Karen Thomas	Superintendent	South Wales Police
Sue Hurley/John Lane	Independent Protecting Vulnerable Person Manager	South Wales Police
Eirian Evans	Assistant Chief Officer	National Probation Service
Sharon Richards	Chief Officer	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Maria James	Third Sector Representative, Merthyr Tydfil	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Lyndon Lewis	Head of Service	Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
Virginia Hewitt	Designated Nurse	Public Health Wales
Lin Slater	NISB Representative	National Independent Safeguarding Board

APPENDIX 2 BOARD ORGANISATION CHART



Glossary of Terms

Adult Practice Review

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission an Adult Practice Review in cases where an adult at risk has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

Child Practice Review

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission a Child Practice Review in cases where a child has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Children Looked After

A child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.

Community Safety Partnership

Statutory partnership to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment.

County Lines

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs.

Domestic Homicide Review

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a locally conducted multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have,

resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:a person to whom he or she was related, or with whom he or she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship; or,a member of the same household as himself or herself.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but there's no medical reason for this to be done.

Immediate Response Groups

A group which is convened to provide a rapid, multi-agency response to managing the consequences of a critical incidents, such as the unexpected death of an adult and is lead by the Police Superintendent (or a suitable deputy).

MARAC

A monthly risk management meeting where professionals share information on high risk cases of domestic violence and abuse and put in place a risk management plan.

Modern Slavery

The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. It covers a wide range of abuse and exploitation including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, criminal exploitation and organ harvesting.

Monitoring Group

This group, in conjunction with the CTMSB's Joint Review Group, will ensure that the CTMSB discharges its functions in relation to Adult and Child Practice Reviews as set out in the statutory guidance.

Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum (MAPF)

Multi-agency professional forums are a mechanism for producing organisational learning, improving the quality of work with families and strengthening the ability of services to keep children safe. They utilise case information, findings from child protection audits, inspections and reviews to develop and disseminate learning to improve local knowledge and practice and to inform the Board's future audit and training priorities.

PPE

Personal Protective Equipment

Public Protection Notice (PPN)

The forms have two main purposes. One is for police officers to make referrals to partner agencies when they have concerns about vulnerable people. The PPN is also used as a risk assessment tool for victims of domestic abuse and stalking and harassment (DASH).

Prevent

Prevent is about safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation

PRUDiC

This procedure sets a minimum standard for a response to unexpected deaths in infancy and childhood. It describes the process of communication, collaborative action and information sharing following the unexpected death of a child.

Public Service Board

Improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area by strengthening joint working across all public services in Wales www.ourcwmtaf.wales

Quality Assurance and Performance Groups

Two separate groups for adults and children whose objectives are to monitor the effectiveness of agencies' practice within the processes of safeguarding and encourage high standards of practice by all those involved in safeguarding work, promoting agency and individual accountability through the monitoring and evaluation of performance.

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is the law for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

Strategy Meeting

A meeting for social workers and other professionals to plan what they are going to do next about a case.

Test, Trace, Protect

A government-funded service in Wales, first published on 13 May 2020 by the Welsh Government to track and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 focusses on the prevention of these issues, the protection of victims and support for those affected by such issues.