

The City of Cardiff Council
Corporate Safeguarding Board

Annual Report
2015/16

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Chair's Foreword

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an important issue in which we all have a role to play. Safeguarding is about what we can do to keep children and vulnerable adults safe, with a particular emphasis on protecting them from abuse and exploitation. It is also about being able to respond quickly and appropriately to concerns or allegations that come to our attention. This requires us to have clear and appropriate policies and procedures that are understood by all staff and Members of the Council.

A new Corporate Safeguarding Board was initially established in March 2015 and includes senior representation from all Directorates to ensure that all public facing services integrate safeguarding awareness into their operations. The Board is not concerned with operational practice in Adults or Children's Social Services or in schools but aims to promote effective cross Directorate safeguarding practice particularly in terms of information sharing and data collection, front-line operational awareness, staff training and the vetting and barring of staff who have significant or unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults or children.

I am very pleased to have recently taken on the role of Chairing the Board and would wish to emphasise my commitment and the commitment of the whole Cabinet to this very important agenda.

Councillor Graham Hinchey
Chair, Corporate Safeguarding Board

Executive Summary

As the first of its kind this Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report reflects a much better sense of purpose in terms what the role of a corporate board should be in relation to safeguarding children and adults from abuse. As the Wales Audit Office audit highlighted, the previous arrangements had been insufficiently effective in terms of their tangible impact on a broader range of staff and members across the council. Too few staff appeared to understand what safeguarding might mean for them or where to go if they had concerns. Addressing this is neither a one off exercise or amenable to a 'quick fix'. It needs to be based on a carefully planned approach that seeks to embed understanding over the longer term and that is underpinned by an accurate understanding of our baseline and performance over time.

Inevitably in the first year of its operation, the Board has focused on establishing its functions and arrangements, determining its priorities and ensuring that individual board members have had the opportunity to develop a shared understanding of the role of the board and their own role in relation to the complex technical aspects of safeguarding practice. In terms of ensuring effective impact, the board has developed an appropriate performance monitoring framework and an agreed a set of actions to ensure implementation. The real test of the board's effectiveness will however only be known over the next three years or so when we will be in a better position to understand the depth and durability of impact for staff and members over the longer term.

Tony Young
Director of Social Services

Introduction

The Corporate Safeguarding Board was established in March 2015 in response to specific recommendations from the Welsh Audit Office. This is the first report of the Board and is structured to provide an understanding of its activities. It begins with background information that is helpful in understanding the Board's function and purpose. That is followed by a section that summarises the key achievements of the Board during 2016/17. Conclusions from the Board are presented along with the future work programme and action plan.

Background

Corporate Safeguarding

Corporate Safeguarding is the activity required by all Council Directorates to effectively protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of children and adults so that they are able to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

The corporate safeguarding objective

The City of Cardiff Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2017 included an improvement objective to safeguard people at risk in Cardiff.

The objective was a commitment to support children, young people and adults who may be unable to take care of themselves and empower individuals to protect themselves from significant harm or from exploitation. The objective continued into the 2016-18 Corporate Plan and reflects the ongoing commitment of the Council. The Council is committed to playing a lead role among its partners in protecting and safeguarding individuals who need care and support from abuse and neglect or any other kinds of harm.

Welsh Audit Office proposals for improvement

Between March and May 2014 the effectiveness of arrangements to support the safeguarding of children in the City of Cardiff Council were assessed as part of an all Wales study commissioned by the Welsh Audit Office (WAO).

The WAO proposed that the following improvements should be made:

- P1 Ensure the Council develops effective arrangements to monitor, evaluate and challenge information and performance of safeguarding.
- P2 The Council should clarify who designated officers within responsibility for safeguarding are.
- P3 Improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to provide adequate assurance that corporate arrangements are working effectively.
- P4 Improve the work of the Council's scrutiny committees to ensure it is providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements.

- P5 Ensure all elected members and staff who encounter children on a regular basis receive training on safeguarding and child protection issues and the Council's corporate policy on safeguarding.
- P6 Identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding across the Council.

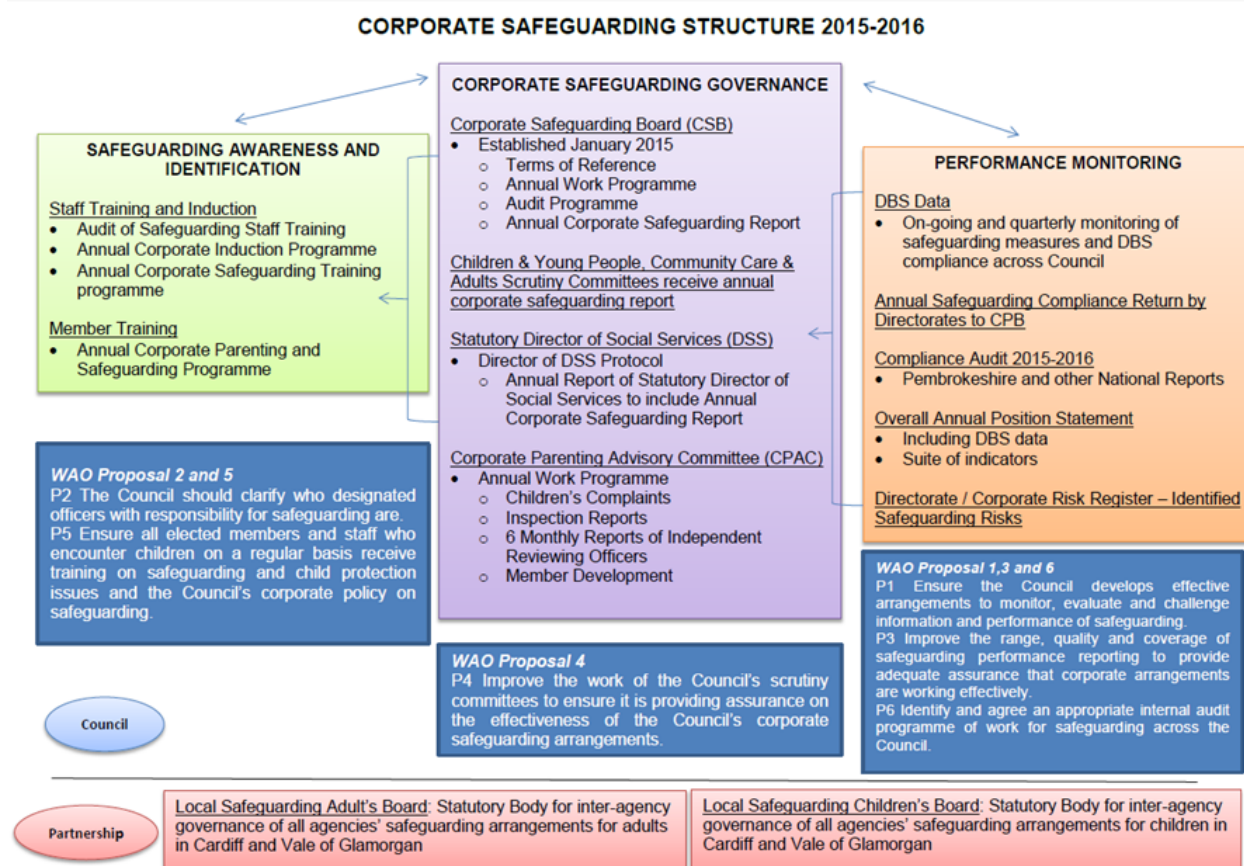
Governance

Improving the work of the Council's scrutiny committees to ensure they are providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements was a key improvement proposed by the Welsh Audit Office to the Council. In response the Director of Social Services presented a report to Cabinet on the 2nd of July 2015 recommending a Corporate Safeguarding Board be established to strengthen governance.

The Board operated within the following terms of reference during 2015/16:

1. Ensure the compliance of all Council Directorates with key safeguarding requirements in relation to children and vulnerable adults.
2. Support the Statutory Director of Social Services in the discharge of his/her wider safeguarding duties.
3. Support HR in the delivery of key vetting and barring requirements and workforce development.
4. Provide an Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report, setting out the performance of all Directorates, in relation to vetting and barring, staff safeguarding training, and the operation of front-line services in terms of their effectiveness in identifying and referring safeguarding concerns.
5. Review and develop relevant corporate safeguarding standards and policy.
6. Review and develop appropriate corporate safeguarding performance measures.
7. Advise the Head of the Paid Service and recommend relevant action in relation to corporate safeguarding standards and policy.
8. Promote effective cross Directorate safeguarding practice particularly in terms of information sharing and data collection, front-line operational awareness, staff training and wider partnership engagement.

The report to Cabinet included the following governance structure.



It can be seen from the diagram that the Corporate Safeguarding Board forms part of a wider governance structure that includes pre-existing Scrutiny committees, the Director of Social Services statutory annual report, a Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and two interagency regional statutory safeguarding boards, one each for adults and children respectively. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee first met on the 8th of October 2014 replacing a previous Corporate Parenting Panel. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee received the Director of Social Services' Corporate Safeguarding Governance report on the 16 June 2015 prior to the report being submitted to Cabinet. The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee will be considering the Corporate Safeguarding Board's first Annual Report prior to its submission to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Cabinet in 2016. The Scrutiny committee is seeking assurance that there has been progress in addressing the Welsh Audit Office proposals and that the corporate Safeguarding Board is effectively discharging its responsibilities as set out in its terms of reference.

Key Achievements

During 2015/16 activity of the Board centred on responding to the Welsh Audit Office proposals and making progress to achieve the priorities specified in the Boards terms of reference. The following sub-sections are structured around emerging themes.

The provision of corporate support for specific safeguarding duties

During 2015/16 the Board met on the 27th April 2015, 2nd June 2015, 27th August 2015 and 18th January 2016 with the objective of ensuring that all Council directorates comply with key safeguarding requirements.

The terms of reference require the Board to support the statutory Director of Social Services in the discharge of their wider safeguarding duties. The Board was chaired initially by the Director of Social Services and subsequently by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance, Councillor Graham Hinchey who took up the role at the August 2015 meeting with the objective of raising the profile of the Board and raising Safeguarding awareness across the Council including with elected members.

The terms of reference also require that the Board support Human Resource Officers in the delivery of key vetting and barring requirements and workforce development. During the year members of the Board worked to clarify the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) requirements to ensure that all staff who are legally required to be checked will be checked, that those checks are only carried out according to the DBS check criteria, and clarified the requirements for checks on School Governors. The findings of the year's work were reported to the Board at the first meeting of 2016/17 for subsequent authorisation and implementation during 2016/17.

The terms of reference further require the Board to ensure that all Council Directorates comply with key safeguarding requirements and promote effective cross directorate safeguarding practice in terms of information sharing, data collection, front-line operational awareness, staff training and wider partnership engagement. Through the continued operation of the Board, assurance will be sought from all Directors of their directorates understanding and engagement in safeguarding policies, procedures and training. The following sections outline the mechanisms that will facilitate that.

Responsible officers

The Welsh Audit Office proposed that the Council should identify designated officers with responsibility for safeguarding within each directorate. During 2016/17 Directorate Lead Safeguarding Officers were identified for Adult Social Care, Childrens Services, Education, Finance, HR, Legal and Governance, Leisure & Play. Waste Management Trading Standards and Traffic and Transportation will need to identify Lead Officers during 2016/17.

The role of the Directorate Lead Safeguarding Officers was clarified as:

- To promote Safeguarding within their Directorate.
- To act as the key point of contact for advice and support relating to Safeguarding matters and issues within their Directorate.

- To collect and collate relevant information to support their Director in discharging their Safeguarding responsibilities.

Training

The Welsh Audit Office proposed that the Council should ensure that all elected members and staff who encounter children on a regular basis receive training on safeguarding, child protection issues and the Council's corporate policy on safeguarding.

The Board engaged the Social Services Training Manager to work on identifying who should receive safeguarding training, methods and timing of delivering training, recording attendance, and the development of a procedure to highlight the training as mandatory. A programme of Corporate Safeguarding training and Member training were established as a result and implementation began. This led to a paper in early 2016/17 which further set out options around raising awareness and modes of delivery.

Performance reporting

The Welsh Audit Office proposed that the Council should improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to provide adequate assurance that corporate arrangements are working effectively. In response to this, the Board's terms of reference require the Board to review and develop appropriate corporate safeguarding performance measures. Performance indicators were developed by members of the Board during 2016/17, working towards agreement and implementation during early 2016/17.

Furthermore, the Welsh Audit Office proposals required the Council to ensure the Council develops effective arrangements to monitor, evaluate and challenge information and performance on safeguarding. The Board developed a 'Directorate Engagement Safeguarding Information Return' template with the objective of monitoring the numbers of safeguarding referrals, reports of allegations against staff, training and numbers of lead safeguarding officers within each directorate. Directorates will be required to hold and retain information for the Safeguarding Information Return and each directorate Lead Safeguarding Officer will complete and return the form as part of the quarterly performance information process. A process for pursuing and escalating non-compliance was also developed alongside the template. The Information Return will be implemented during 2016-17.

The new performance indicators and information return mechanisms will allow the Board to robustly respond at the end of 2016-17 to the requirement in the terms of reference to compile an Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report setting out the performance of all Directorates in relation to vetting and barring, staff safeguarding training, and the operation of front-line services in terms of their effectiveness in identifying and referring safeguarding.

Audit programme

The Welsh Audit Office proposed that the Council identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding across the Council.

An audit of professional strategy meetings processes was drafted and progressed during the year. Compliance with the Safeguarding Information Return and performance against the agreed performance indicators will be the focus for the Audit Programme in 2016/17. The responses will inform the Director of Social Services and provide evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Standards and policy

The terms of reference require that the Board review and develop relevant corporate safeguarding standards and policy. Standards and policy will be developed where appropriate in response to the findings of the performance and audit findings, and began during 2015/16 with the development of a paper which outlines member's roles and responsibilities around data protection, and conduct to be observed when in contact with children / young people or vulnerable adults. The paper was submitted to the Standards and Ethics Committee on the 15th of December 2015 and a protocol approved by Council during January 2016.

Matters arising

During the year the Board also considered a number of safeguarding matters as they arose. Those included subsuming actions to clarify licencing arrangements when disbanding a pre-existing Transport and Escort safeguarding subgroup, responding to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, and noting the establishment of a National Scams Hub.

Evaluation

During May 2016 Committee members reflected on the Board's operation during the previous year. The following themes emerged from the discussion.

Members of the Board reflected that in their opinion the new Current Corporate Safeguarding Board is significantly more effective than a predecessor Board which was disbanded several years previously. This was attributed to greater focus and structure in the Board's operation and the appointment of a Cabinet Member as Chair. This leadership was thought to provide a sense of gravitas and to have raised the profile of the Board significantly.

The key challenge faced during the year was a perception that some directorates initially found it difficult to understand their role in Safeguarding. The Board empathised that this was in part heightened by a context of considerable corporate change and modernisation across the Council, but also highlighted that Corporate Safeguarding needs to be fundamental to those wider changes. There had been a strong and committed response by the Chair and Chief Executive to address any gaps in

Directorate commitment to the Board and this resulted in better engagement. Communication was considered by the Board's members to be an important function, and activities during 2015/16 were structured to plan engagement at the level of elected members, directors and staff. Members of the Board believe that key to the success of the Board will be that when the planned training, monitoring and governance are in place all employees of the Council will understand their responsibility and what is required of them. The Chair expressed that at the end of the first year clear objectives and plans were being progressed. The Chair and Board members are more confident that there is now a good platform for ensuring the effective implementation of the improvement Action Plan.

Recommendations from the Board

The terms of reference require that the Board advise the Head of the Paid Service and recommend relevant action in relation to corporate safeguarding standards and policy. No recommendations were made during 2015/16, but work throughout the year built towards presenting recommendations on vetting and barring, training and performance early in 2016/17.

Future work programme

The 2016/17 work programme will focus on the following areas:

- Ongoing actions from 2015/16
- Implementation of proposals including:
 - DBS checks
 - Training
 - Performance monitoring
- Communications and Engagement

Action Plan

		ACTION	TARGET	LEAD OFFICER	RAG STATUS
1	1.1	Resolve any ongoing actions from 2015/16.	Sept 2016		
2		CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE			
	2.1	Agree the 2015/16 annual report, 2016/17 work programme and action plan.	June 2016	Director of Social Services	
	2.2	Finalise and gain authorisation of the draft Corporate Safeguarding Assurance Process.	July 2016	Director of Social Services / Operational Manager Improvement and Information	
	2.3	Evaluate 2016/17 safeguarding performance and report in the Director of Social Services 2016/17 annual report.	May 2017	Operational Managers Safeguarding	
	2.4	Produce an annual Corporate Safeguarding Report and arrange to present to relevant Scrutiny committees.	May 2017	Director of Social Services	

3		SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS			
	3.1	Engage any directorates not engaged.		Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance / Director of Social Services	
	3.2	Issue the Corporate Safeguarding Assurance Statement.		Operational Manager Improvement and Information	
	3.3	Engage with nominated Directorate Lead Safeguarding Officers.		Operational Managers Safeguarding / Social Services Workforce Development & Training Manager	
	3.4	Finalise plans for training.	Sept 2016	Social Services Workforce Development & Training Manager	
	3.5	Roll out the Corporate Safeguarding Training and Development programme for staff.	Sept 2016	Social Services Workforce Development & Training Manager	
	3.6	Roll out the Corporate Safeguarding Training and Development Programme for Members.	Sept 2016	Social Services Workforce Development & Training Manager	
	3.7	Finalise and publicise a Council Safeguarding Policy and Protocol for members and officers, identifying the Council's Lead Safeguarding Officers, key officers, roles and responsibilities.	March 2017	Director of Legal and Governance Services	
	3.8	Communications		Director of Legal and Governance Services (Head of Communications & External Relations)	
	3.9	Develop standards and policy in response to performance monitoring findings.	Ongoing	Director of Legal and Governance Services	
4		PERFORMANCE MONITORING			
	4.1	Verification that DBS checks are being carried out appropriately.	Sept 2016	Operational Manager HR People Partner	
	4.2	Finalise and roll out of the Directorate Engagement Safeguarding Information Return. Collect quarterly returns.	June 2016	Operational Manager Improvement and Information	
	4.3	Collect data to report against the new corporate safeguarding Indicators.	April 2017	Operational Manager Improvement and Information	
	4.4	Audit compliance with the new Directorate Engagement Safeguarding Information Return.	April 2017	Principal Auditor	
	4.5	Agree an audit programme.	Sept 2016	Principal Auditor	