

## **POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMBINED SAFEGUARDING UNIT BRIEFING**

### **Context**

Prior to the establishment of a single Safeguarding and Independent Review function, operational safeguarding governance arrangements in Cardiff were separately located in each of three relevant directorates, similar to the arrangements in most other Welsh councils. Ahead of the changes implicit in the then Social Services and Well Being Bill, Cardiff resolved to combine these functions into a single unit.

### **The Safeguarding and Independent Review Service**

The unit was brought into being in November 2014 when the following three functions were relocated into a single service both in terms of line management and physical location (County Hall):

- **Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) Team** (previously in Health and Social Care Directorate). This is a specialist team which undertakes the direct investigation of referrals concerning vulnerable adults.
- **Education Safeguarding Team** – (previously in Education Directorate). Principal role is to support schools, governing bodies and relevant education services in the discharge of their responsibilities for safeguarding in education settings; in relation to premises licensed for entertainment; or in relation to children who are performers requiring chaperoning.
- **Children’s Services Safeguarding and Review Team** - Two principle functions:
  - Convening and chairing Child Protection Case Conferences
  - Convening and chairing statutory reviews of all Looked After Children at specified intervals.

The service is managed by an Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Independent Review, this being a post that was established specifically for the purpose and who reports to the Statutory Director of Social Services (currently the Director of Children’s Services).

The role of the unit is to ensure safe and effective council practice in relation to services for vulnerable adults and children in need. Inherent in that role is the provision of off-line quality assurance, independent challenge and advice to practitioners and managers who are supporting relevant individuals in the community.

The integration of Looked After Children’s reviewing functions within the unit is supported by the provision of 6 monthly reports to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee concerning the performance and effectiveness of looked after services.

### **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 & Overall Safeguarding Governance**

The merger of these 3 functions is highly consistent with the requirements of the new Act particularly in relation to the promotion of an integrated and qualitatively consistent approach to safeguarding across all ages. The Act has the effect of establishing adult safeguarding on the same statutory footing as children and seeks to unify operational and strategic governance at local, regional and national levels.

The integration of the education aspects of safeguarding operational governance is also highly consistent with this policy direction.

The statutory body for children’s safeguarding is the regional Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Local Safeguarding Children’s Board to which all local agencies are accountable and which was established in December 2013.

The statutory body for vulnerable adult safeguarding is the regional Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Adult Safeguarding Board to which all local agencies are accountable and which was established in March 2014.

A national Safeguarding Board is to be established as a consequence of the Act and this is likely to combine Adult and Children's safeguarding strategic governance.

### **Resource Considerations**

The merger of the three separate functions has enabled the H&SC and Education directorates to reduce the line management support required to oversee safeguarding practice and has therefore enabled efficiencies elsewhere. It would be a complex exercise to attempt disaggregation of this in cash terms since the duties and responsibilities were 'distributed' as opposed to being located in single posts.

**Tony Young**

**Director of Children's Services**

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