

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 17 July 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report: 2024-2025
Purpose of Report:	To update Cabinet on the work that has been undertaken in relation to Corporate arrangements for Safeguarding across the Council.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member, Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This is an issue that affects all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
Executive Summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a corporate responsibility to ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for safeguarding children and adults who require specific Council services. • This Annual Report 2024-25 provides an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding activities taking place across the Local Authority. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults.
2. That Cabinet receives annual reports on work carried out to improve Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant Policies.
3. That this report is shared with Members by adding it to the Information Reporting facility for Scrutiny Committees on the Committee Hub.
4. That Cabinet no longer receives a 6 monthly interim report.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that Cabinet is aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.
2. To allow Cabinet to exercise effective oversight of this key area of corporate working and be assured of effective safeguarding taking place.
3. To ensure that all Members continue to have information regarding safeguarding activity in the Council easily available to them.
4. This is in recognition of the availability of the information reporting facility and the need to ensure that the work of Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees is streamlined.

1. Background

- 1.1 Attached at Appendix One is the annual report that brings together safeguarding activity undertaken by the Social Services, Learning and Skills, Corporate Resources and Environment and Housing. This provides a holistic representation of safeguarding activity across the Council. The report provides a composite of activity across the directorates.
- 1.2 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 was implemented in April 2016. This has brought about changes in particular relating to the introduction of a 'Duty to Report' which has meant a revision of the corporate safeguarding policy to bring staff's attention to this duty.
- 1.3 The 'Working Together to Safeguarding People Guidance' under Part 7 of the Act provides guidance on corporate safeguarding for the Council. Guidance on handling individual cases (Volume 5 and 6) to protect children and adults at risk was launched in 2017. The Guidance provides advice on what should happen if an individual has concerns about the well-being or welfare of a child or an adult at risk.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 A set of national safeguarding procedures, Wales Safeguarding Procedures were launched in November 2019. They detail the essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard children and adults who are at risk

of abuse and neglect. The procedures are designed to standardise safeguarding practice across all of Wales and between agencies. These procedures support Local Authorities in fulfilling their statutory roles and functions to adults and children at risk. They continue to be updated and enhanced through an all-Wales Safeguarding Procedures Board which is chaired by the Director of Social Services in the Vale of Glamorgan and supported by the Vale of Glamorgan's Safeguarding Lead.

- 2.2** As part of ensuring safer recruitment Human Resources have implemented an electronic transfer system for DBS checks. This will speed up the DBS checking process which forms part of the pre-employment checks. The system provides an electronic portal where applicants are able to apply for a DBS check online, allow checks to be approved and tracked by the Council, and the disclosure outcome will be available in the majority of cases within 24/48 hours.
- 2.3** The Vale of Glamorgan Council adopted the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Regional Strategy on 30th July 2018. Structures and accountability are in place to ensure that we are able to deliver positive outcomes against the overarching objectives that have been agreed.
- 2.4** A Corporate Safeguarding data dashboard has been developed for oversight and monitoring of key areas of safeguarding activity across the Local Authority. Data is provided in relation to compliance with mandatory safeguarding training; safe recruitment across the LA (including schools information); duty to report information; and safeguarding training for education and school governors.
- 2.5** During 2024/25 the Corporate Safeguarding Group and officers representing their directorates took account of recent internal audit action plans and followed up on a number of recommendations these being: update and refresh of corporate safeguarding policy; review of DBS arrangements; ensuring appropriate challenge and discussion is noted within corporate safeguarding group. A further review of these recommendations has been undertaken by Internal Audit with a reasonable assurance given.
- 2.6** This report recommends that the 6 monthly interim report to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees is discontinued. This is to reflect the changes in the Scrutiny Committee arrangements and the ability to add pertinent information at any time through the Information Reporting Facility. It is expected that any significant safeguarding developments would be added for Members' information utilising this facility, between the annual reporting requirement, should it be needed.

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

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

- 3.2** Integration – Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each other of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
- 3.3** Involvement – Ensuring voices of children and adult at risk are acknowledged and respected in all our interactions and service planning.
- 3.4** Collaboration – Cross Directorate ownership, accountability and understanding of our safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** There are no direct resource implications arising from the Corporate Safeguarding work. However, the increased awareness of safeguarding and the responsibility to respond to concerns of those who may not be eligible for our services has brought about significant pressures within social services teams, and consequently we need processes to ensure clarity for people raising concerns and who responds to these enquiries/notifications about individuals who are considered 'at risk' but are not known or eligible for our statutory services.
- 5.2** The other financial implication of note is the resource that will be required to implement some areas of the Corporate Safeguarding Work Plan which directorates will need to manage within their existing budgets.

Employment

- 5.3** The Safer Recruitment Policy legitimately excludes consideration for appointment of all applicants for posts within regulated activity whose criminal actions/convictions mean that they are deemed unsuitable or who are included within the barred list.
- 5.4** Any application for employment for those posts included within the definition of regulated activity by candidates who are included on the relevant barred list will be considered a criminal act and reported to the Police and relevant registration body (if appropriate).
- 5.5** In relation to DBS arrangements, key elements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 have been implemented.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.6** Legislation requires the Local Authority to make arrangements for ensuring the function to discharge their duties, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. The Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and codes of practice issued under the Act, makes it

clear that Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk of abuse and neglect is everyone's responsibility.

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

6. Background Papers

Link to CSG Annual Report 2024-25

Link to RSB Annual Plan for 2025-26 [Annual Plan for 2025-2026](#)

Link to RSB Development Day Report 2025 [Development Day report 2025](#)

Link to National Safeguarding Week Report 2024 [National Safeguarding Week report 2024](#)

Reports to Cabinet: 18th July, 2024; 7th September, 2023; 6th June, 2022; 7th June, 2021; 29th July, 2019.

Appendix One

Corporate Safeguarding Vale of Glamorgan Council

Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025



Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
Vale of Glamorgan Council

The purpose of this report is to reflect on safeguarding activity during 2024/25 across the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The report outlines key activities on a corporate basis for the following:

Section A: Social Services

Section B: Learning and Skills

Section C: Corporate Resources (Safer Recruitment)

Section D: Environment and Housing (Housing; Community Safety; Shared Regulatory Services)



Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Social Services

A. Safeguarding in Social Services

This section of the report brings together key safeguarding activity that has taken place across the three Divisions of the Social Services Directorate during the period **April 2024 – March 2025**.

The following activities will be addressed in turn:

- Child Protection (Conferences & Registration)
- Adult Safeguarding (Adults at Risk)
- Allegations against Professionals and Those in Positions of Trust – Section 5 Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Board (includes information in relation to Adult and Child Practice Reviews)

Children's Safeguarding & Review : Child Protection

Children's Safeguarding & Review: Child Protection Overview

Child Protection Conferences are multi-agency meetings involving children, their families, and professionals. These are convened when Section 47 enquiries (under the Children Act 1989) identify a child at ongoing risk of significant harm. These enquiries, led by social workers and informed by multi-agency input, assess the child's situation within their family context.

The **Resource Management and Safeguarding Division** independently chairs these conferences, ensuring objectivity and robust scrutiny. This independence supports effective risk management, amplifies children's voices, and promotes positive outcomes.

2024/25 Key Data

Strategy meetings held that progressed to Section 47 enquiries	356
Section 47 enquiries completed that progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference	135
Number of children who became subject to registration and child protection plan	123
Number of children who did not require child protection registration but have needs for care & support	14
Number of children on child protection register and subject to plan as of 31st March 2025	84
Average number of days children are subject to registration and child protection plan	288 days

Understanding Registration

A child is registered when they are deemed at continued risk of significant harm. Not all child protection conferences result in registration — some children may instead receive care and support services. Decisions are made during the conference, based on identified risks.

Categories of risk include:

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

Children may be registered under one or more categories.

Trends and Developments

There was a notable **decline in child protection registrations** from 125 (March 2024) to 84 (March 2025). This reduction is partly due to an increase in children becoming looked after, leading to deregistration. Long-term cases were reviewed, and where appropriate, children were deregistered and transitioned to suitable care and support.

Adult Safeguarding Report: Adults at Risk (2024–2025)

1. Introduction

Safeguarding adults is both **preventative** and **protective** under the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA)*. It extends beyond protection from abuse to promoting well-being, choice, and independence.

2. What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means:

- Ensuring **safe and effective care**
- **Preventing** abuse, neglect, and harm
- **Promoting well-being**, choice, and control
- **Preventing** deterioration in health and development

Safeguarding is a **shared responsibility** across agencies, but the SSWBA sets out specific legal duties for **Local Authorities**, **Health Services**, and **Police**.

3. Legal Duties and Procedures

- **Duty to Report:** All relevant partners must report an **adult at risk** to the Local Authority.
- **Duty to Enquire:** Where there is reasonable cause to suspect risk, the Local Authority must undertake a **Section 126 enquiry**.
 - Enquiries should be:
 - **Person-centred**
 - **Completed within 7 working days**
 - Focused on assessing risk and identifying appropriate support or protection plans

4. Safeguarding Activity Data (2019–2025)

Year	Reports Received
2019/20	619
2020/21	602
2021/22	816
2022/23	823
2023/24	825
2024/25	800

- **Trend:** Following a spike from 2020–2023, the number of reports has **stabilised** over the past three years.
- This reflects increased awareness due to the **SSWBA** and **Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2020)**.

5. Enquiries and Outcomes (2024–2025)

- **Total Reports Received:** 800
- **Reports Proceeding to Enquiry:** 217
 - **% Enquiries Completed in 7 Days:** 96%

Insight: Fewer cases are progressing to formal enquiry, due to effective **screening** and signposting to **more suitable interventions**, ensuring timely and proportionate responses for those in real need.

6. Conclusion

The Adult Safeguarding Team continues to respond effectively to adults at risk. The stabilisation in reporting volumes, combined with high performance in timely enquiries, reflects:

- Strong application of safeguarding duties
- Effective multi-agency collaboration
- A mature safeguarding system that balances risk, rights, and proportionate responses

Section 5: Safeguarding Allegations Against Professionals / Positions of Trust

In early 2020, the **Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019)** were implemented, introducing a unified approach to managing safeguarding allegations against practitioners and those in positions of trust working with **children and adults at risk**. This combined approach, known as **Section 5**, has been adopted by both adult and children safeguarding teams in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The **LADO** is responsible for managing allegations against individuals whose work or volunteering brings them into contact with vulnerable groups. In the Vale of Glamorgan, this role is fulfilled by the **Operational Manager for Safeguarding**, with some responsibilities delegated to the **Children's and Adult Safeguarding Team Managers**.

Scope of Section 5 Procedures

Section 5 procedures apply to a broad range of concerns, including but not limited to:

- Harm or potential harm to a child or adult at risk.
- Criminal offences involving or impacting vulnerable individuals.
- Behaviour indicating unsuitability to work with children or adults at risk.

These procedures are triggered regardless of whether the incident occurred in a professional or personal context.

Case Management and Multi-Agency Coordination

When an allegation is made, the LADO or delegated officer:

- Coordinates **multi-agency strategy discussions and meetings**.
- Monitors the progress of any associated **criminal or internal investigations**.
- Ensures **risk management** and **support plans** are in place for those who have had allegations/concerns made against them and the cohort the individual comes into contact with by virtue of
- Maintains a **comprehensive record** of the allegation and its outcome.

Referral Data: April 2024 – March 2025

- **Total referrals received:** 135
 - **Children-related:** 53
 - **Adults at risk-related:** 82

Adults at Risk

- **52 of 82 referrals** progressed to strategy discussions.
- Most practitioners referred worked in **Health and Social Care**.
- **Top referring agencies:** Police, followed by Health.

Children

- **32 of 53 referrals** progressed to strategy discussions.
- Most professionals worked in **Education**, followed by Social Care.
- **Top referring agencies:** Police, Education, and the Local Authority.

Nature of Concerns

Referrals that did not progress typically involved conduct issues manageable through internal employment procedures. A small number of referrals involved individuals not directly working with vulnerable groups.

Concerns related to individuals' private lives included:

- **Domestic abuse**
- **Driving offences** (e.g., drink/drug driving)
- **Drug offences**
- **Data protection breaches**
- **Physical and sexual assaults**
- **Historical abuse allegations**
- **Involvement with children's services** (e.g., child on the Child Protection Register)

Strategy Meetings and Discussions

- **84 strategy discussions** held.
- **112 strategy meetings** conducted (initial, further, and outcome meetings).

Support for Practitioners

Efforts are ongoing to ensure that individuals facing allegations:

- Receive appropriate **support and information**.
- Are informed of **processes and outcomes**.

Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Board

The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Boards ensure that effective arrangements are in place to protect children within the region who are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The Board also ensures appropriate arrangements are in place to protect adults within its area who have needs for care and support (whether or not a local authority is meeting any of those needs) and are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect. The Board aims to prevent those adults within its area, from becoming at risk of abuse and neglect.

To achieve these aims the Boards:

- Promote the development of strategies to prevent risk effectively.
- Ensure that agencies are able to challenge themselves and partners in delivering their individual and shared accountability for safeguarding effectively.
- Ensure that the voice of the person is heard and recognised in its deliberations.

- Promote a culture of critical analysis and review to ensure that lessons are learned when people suffer harm because of gaps in policy, systems or practice.

The Director of Social Services, Vale of Glamorgan is the co-chair of the Regional Safeguarding Board. Officers from across the Vale of Glamorgan are represented at the Regional Safeguarding Boards and continue to provide consistent participation and engagement across all areas of work. This ensures there is a shared ownership, accountability and understanding of safeguarding priorities across the region.

The [Cardiff & Vale Safeguarding Board Regional Plan 2025-26](#) sets out the key priorities for the Board during the 2022/23 financial year.

Practice Reviews

Multi-agency practice reviews are undertaken where circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of a child or adult at risk is known or suspected.

In November 2024 saw the implementation of new safeguarding reviewing arrangements, referred to as the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) process. The SUSR incorporates all reviews in Wales. The criteria for conducting an SUSR needs to meet one of the following:

- Adult or Child Practice Review
- Domestic Homicide Review
- Mental Health Homicide Review
- Offensive Weapons Homicide Review

The overall purpose of safeguarding reviews is to promote a positive culture of multi-agency learning and reviewing in local areas, for which Regional Boards and partner agencies hold responsibility. To achieve this, it sets in place a foundation for learning together by professionals from different agencies and, in those circumstances where a more formal review is required when there are serious incidents resulting from abuse or neglect..

During 2024/25 there were no published Adult/Child Practice Reviews in relation to incidents within or in respect of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.



Dysgu a Sgiliau Learning and Skills

B. Safeguarding in Learning and Skills

Safeguarding activity in the Learning and Skills Directorate continues to evolve and progress in line with requirements of national, regional and local developments in legislation, guidance and policy. There are two Safeguarding Officers in post who continue to develop and make progress in new and innovative ways to educate, support and offer guidance across the Directorate.

The Directorate Management Team (DMT) consistently monitors operational safeguarding practice across the Directorate, this includes a standing safeguarding agenda item at monthly DMT meetings that has a particular focus on safer recruitment, safeguarding training and allegations against employees and volunteers.

Since April 2024 the compliance rate for adherence to the Safer Recruitment policy has been between 92% and 100% within schools and the Learning & Skills Directorate. Breaches featuring in September, October, March and May, totalling 4 individuals that were promptly recognised, immediately addressed and support put in place for the schools in question.

For the academic year to date there have been 15 referrals made under Section 5 Wales Safeguarding Procedures (allegations of professional concern). These have been made against teachers, supply teachers, LSAs, school staff and transport drivers with one against a member of staff at a training provider. There are a number of additional cases we have requested consultation from the DOS for decision making prior to referral being made.

Directorate Safeguarding Policies, guidance and standard forms are available to support safeguarding practice for all employees and volunteers in the Directorate, Schools, Youth Service, Libraries and Adult Community Learning for consistency in practice across the Directorate. These are regularly disseminated to all staff.

All Vale schools have in place a current Model Safeguarding Policy provided by the Directorate that is consistent with Welsh Government guidance, this Policy was revised in March 2025.

February 2024 saw the publication of the reviewed Vale of Glamorgan Trans Inclusion Schools toolkit, a guide to supporting transgender and gender variant children and young people in school. The Safeguarding Officers are currently in the process of thoroughly reviewing the Transgender Toolkit, in light of the implications of the recent UK Supreme Court ruling. As we consider the practical implications of this judgment, we are also awaiting further guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We will ensure that any necessary adjustments to the Transgender Toolkit and practices are made in accordance with this guidance to maintain compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and to uphold our commitment to equality and non-discrimination.

Following the publication in 2024 of the Welsh Government Peer-on-peer sexual harassment in education settings: action plan to prevent and respond to peer-on-peer sexual harassment in education settings, the Directorate is ensuring that the recommendations outlined at Local Authority level and school level are implemented. Work continues in this area to ensure all staff within the directorate have access to information advice and guidance to ensure education settings are able to continue the adoption of a whole-system approach to create safe learning environments for all.

Mandatory annual safeguarding training is delivered consistently across the Directorate to standards set by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board (RSB) and all employees and volunteers are expected to comply with statutory and local guidance in relation to safeguarding children and adults. An iDev Level 1 safeguarding package continues to be rolled out to all school and Directorate staff. This ensures a consistent and standardised approach to safeguarding training is maintained. This was reviewed in May 2025 to ensure compliance with Group A Safeguarding training as mapped against the Social Care Wales framework.

Level Two training for Dedicated Safeguarding Person (DSPs) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person (DDSPs) is delivered on-line every half term to maximise the opportunities for attendance. All School & Directorate-based staff, including DSPs now have access to iDev accounts that will facilitate much easier maintenance of safeguarding training and the ability to monitor in real time training compliance rates of all staff. This training was reviewed in September 2024 and complies with Group B training, as set out by Social Care Wales framework, the content and slide deck are due to be reviewed once again in August 2025 and adapted in response to participant feedback and include new and emerging trends in the Vale of Glamorgan.

National guidance prescribes that safeguarding training for education staff at all levels should take place on a 3 yearly basis. In the Vale of Glamorgan, we consider the importance of this training with regular updates will be carried out on an annual basis, to try to ensure the highest levels of competency and confidence in our front-line staff.

School-based DSPs, 49 of the 54 are in compliance

School based DDSPs, 62 of the 73 are in compliance

Directorate based DSPs, 20 out of 21 are in compliance.

Directorate based DDSPs, all 9 are in compliance.

All staff who are currently non-compliant, are either off work on long-term sickness or they are booked to attend the final training session on 03/07/2025.

DSPs, DDSPs, Designated Safeguarding Governors (DSGs) and other staff have access to a bespoke programme of subject-specific safeguarding training delivered termly, with content developed in response to national, regional and local priorities. Current training priorities for the Learning and Skills Directorate include, Radicalisation and Extremism, Sexually Harmful Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and LGBTQ+ discrimination. Regular briefings or training opportunities are shared with all staff to offer further support in these areas.

Schools continue to develop a recognised Safeguarding Team that includes DSP, DDSP and DSG. Schools are encouraged to include their Designated Safeguarding Governor in development of the Safeguarding Self Evaluation Report (SER), this document shared with Safeguarding Officers to offer support and guidance in this area. In addition, the review of policies and compliance with training, along with safer recruitment and in monitoring the general effectiveness of safeguarding practice within the school. Using this approach is strengthening support across the school or area to ensure a robust network.

The Directorate Safeguarding Officers in partnership with the Governor Support Unit, offer termly bespoke training for those in the Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG) role. All training is evaluated and reviewed to facilitate regular development and ensure that safeguarding training is fit for purpose and meets need. This training is due to be revised and mapped against current standard to ensure it complies with the Social Care Wales Framework, this is due August 2025.

At this time 47 out of our 53 DSGs have received this training with the remaining 6 due to attend in training on 07/07/2025.

All other governors are directed to and access HWB e-learning safeguarding modules, compliance is monitored by schools and all governors are encouraged to take part in Safeguarding training.

The Directorate continues to demonstrate regulatory compliance in relation to licensing children in employment and entertainment, including the licensing of chaperones. The Inclusion Manager and dedicated CIEE licensing and data Officer are liaising closely with colleagues in neighbouring LAs to ensure greater parity of approach for this area and have revised processes accordingly. There have been several amendments to the overall process in respect of new candidates checks, revoking of licences and licence suspension should concerns be raised.

The Safeguarding Officers and other Senior Officers continue to represent the Directorate at the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan RSB and on all RSB sub-groups, thereby strengthening working relationships with partner agencies.

The Safeguarding Officers also contribute to the Wales Safeguarding in Education Group and to national and regional multi-agency groups in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery / Human Trafficking, Children in Employment and Entertainment and Elective Home Education.

The Safeguarding Officers also participates in local multi-agency activity such as the Cohesion and Engagement Steering Group, VAWDASV Steering Group and Regional Channel Panel. More recently developing the subgroup for Education based upon the Local Authorities response to the Serious Violence duty.

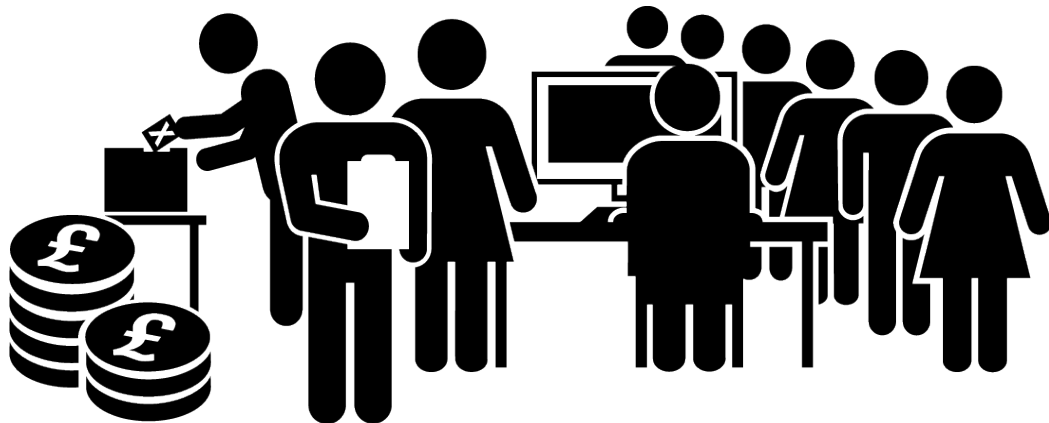
The Safeguarding Officers continue to participate in national groups working on revised editions of key All-Wales safeguarding and child protection guidance documents. Participation in national and local groups ensures that the Directorate has access to up-to-date safeguarding information and is able to influence the development of national and local strategies and guidance.

The Safeguarding Officers deliver training to staff as part of the national roll-out programme of Ask and Act for VAWDASV for Group 2 and Group 3 Champions. Completing training to ensure Safeguarding Officers are equipped with the skills to deliver further levels of training in this area via Women's Aid. The development of training materials and an annual delivery plan has been established for the academic year 2025-26 to incorporate a combined approach from the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff.

The Vale of Glamorgan domestic abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) continues to develop and refine its processes and the participation of a Safeguarding Officer to represent the Directorate enables appropriate information-sharing to develop robust support for children experiencing domestic abuse. Schools respond promptly and appropriately to requests for information and are implementing strategies to support individual pupils following MARAC feedback.

The Directorate and Vale schools continue to receive Police Protection Notifications (PPNs) from South Wales Police, which significantly enhances the knowledge of the child's lived experience in relation to domestic, missing person and incidents of serious violence and allow the development of appropriate support for the relevant child.

The Safeguarding Officers also liaise with Senior Officers with responsibility for wellbeing and nurture, to ensure that all activity relating to child welfare is linked and supported. Following a skills audit in 2024 and subsequent publication from ETS there was a clear identification around low confidence in Youth Work across Wales. A pilot of Safeguarding Surgeries has been carried out with the Vale Youth Service and Wellbeing Team to further enhance staff confidence around Safeguarding in the Vale. The Directorate continues to review the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies and recognises the impact of unresolved bullying on wellbeing outcomes for children. A revised Anti Bullying Policy is in the development stages, consultation with young people from across the Vale of Glamorgan is taking place to help shape the policy. The revised version is due in September 2025.



Adnoddau Corfforaethol Corporate Resources

C. Corporate Resources Directorate – Safe Recruitment

The Corporate Resources Directorate report outlines ongoing progress in relation to compliance with the Council's Safer Recruitment Policy for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

Overall Compliance – April 2024 to March 2025 (Schools and Corporate Services)

1. Compliance with the policy for April 2024 to March 2025 for all appointments was 99% (7 breaches), which remains the same, 99% (7 breaches) from the same reporting period last year (April 2023 to March 2024). A full breakdown of figures can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Compliance Rates for Corporate and Schools New Starters

Month	Number of new starters under Safer Recruitment	Number of employees with all documentation or RA in place	April 2024 to March 2025	April 2023 to March 2024
April	24	24	100%	100%
May	11	11	100%	96%
June	14	14	100%	98%
July	10	10	100%	100%
Aug	5	5	100%	100%
Sept	197	196	99%	100%
Oct	21	20	95%	97%
Nov	36	36	100%	94%
Dec	23	23	100%	100%
Jan	61	60	98%	100%
Feb	21	19	90%	100%
Mar	45	43	96%	100%
Total	468	461	99%	99%

Schools

1. Compliance with the policy for April 2024 to March 2025 for school appointments was 99%, which is a slight improvement as the same reporting period last year (98%).
2. Members will note that for the month of September 2024 (which represents the highest recruitment activity within the school academic year), compliance was 99% which is slightly lower than the reporting period last year September 2023 (100%). The number of new starters increased slightly from 181 in September 2023 in comparison to 196 in 2024.

3. The current escalation process requires a discussion with the Head Teacher regarding non-compliance and monitoring of repeated non-compliance by particular schools throughout the year.
4. A full breakdown of compliance rates for schools and actual figures can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Compliance Rates for Schools New Starters

Month	Number of new starters under Safer Recruitment	Number of employees with all documentation or RA in place	April 2024 to March 2025	April 2023 to March 2024
April	22	22	100%	95%
May	7	7	100%	100%
June	11	11	100%	92%
July	9	9	100%	92%
Aug	1	1	100%	100%
Sept	196	195	99%	100%
Oct	13	12	92%	100%
Nov	20	20	100%	94%
Dec	17	17	100%	100%
Jan	40	40	100%	94%
Feb	6	6	100%	100%
Mar	25	25	100%	100%
Total	367	365	99%	98%

Corporate

5. The compliance rate for Corporate Services for April 2024 to March 2025 was 95%, which is lower than the reporting period last year (100%).
6. A full breakdown of compliance rates and actual figures can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Compliance Rates for Corporate New Starters

Month	Number of new starters under Safer Recruitment	Number of employees with all documentation or RA in place	April 2024 to March 2025	April 2023 to March 2024
April	2	2	100%	100%
May	4	4	100%	100%
June	3	3	100%	100%
July	1	1	100%	100%
Aug	4	4	100%	100%
Sept	1	1	100%	100%
Oct	8	8	100%	100%
Nov	16	16	100%	100%
Dec	6	6	100%	100%
Jan	21	20	95%	100%
Feb	15	13	87%	100%
Mar	20	18	90%	100%
Total	101	96	95%	100%

Return of Risk Assessments (Schools and Corporate Services)

7. Human Resources continue to monitor the return of risk assessments for both Schools and Corporate services. Over the reporting period of April 2024 to March 2025, 7 new starters commenced employment without all the required checks in place or a signed risk assessment as allowed for by the policy.

On-going measures

8. The e-learning facility is available to all Vale of Glamorgan Council employees within corporate Directorates who have access to the Council's StaffNet through the new iDev system. Currently all Schools have access to the Council's StaffNet to enable access the Safer Recruitment and DBS policy and supporting documentation.
9. The Safer Recruitment escalation process requires Human Resources to identify and monitor outstanding documentation at the 8th, 10th and 12th calendar week following the employee taking up employment. Discussions are then held with the Head Teacher who in turn meets with the member of staff and confirms the outcome with Human Resources. The Directorate Safeguarding Officer for Learning and Skills is also informed at the 8th week. Human Resources continue to monitor weekly and also inform the Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor if the documentation remains outstanding at the 10th week and 12th week. At the time of reporting there are no schools' appointments and one corporate appointment at the 8th / 10th / 12th week.
10. DBS Checks are undertaken through the e-Bulk system introduced in 2019 and this increases the speed of pre-employment checks. The disclosure outcome will be available in the majority of cases within 24/48 hours.
11. Communication with relevant Head Teachers where issues are identified remains in place as well as when necessary, including the subject on the agenda for Head Teacher meetings, Head Teacher Steering group meetings and Designated Senior Person for child protection DSP Forum meetings attended by school safeguarding leads.
12. HR continue to look at ways to ensure applicants and Head Teachers are made aware of outstanding checks – a regular message will continue be sent to both parties to ensure all checks are in place.
13. In addition, compliance of the policy is discussed at each corporate safeguarding group meeting to continually review the effectiveness of the policy.

14. With the roll out of the Oracle Fusion system, data relating to safer recruitment will be stored electronically which will make reporting and monitoring more effective, together with sending out automatic reminders as required.

Conclusion

15. Compliance with the Safer Recruitment Policy remains slightly less than the expected 100% compliance, however, with only 7 breaches, this remains consistent with last year's figures and is a significant improvement on previous year's compliance.
16. The measures outlined in this report will need to continue to be applied to support this.
17. Compliance in corporate services remains high and this will need to remain closely monitored going forward to ensure this trend continues.



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D. ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING (includes Housing; Safer Vale; VAWDASV; Shared Regulatory Services)

HOUSING

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

All Housing staff receive regular training in Safeguarding and related themes.

Staff from Housing are represented on the Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Board and the Local Safeguarding Operational Group as well as several subgroups looking at issues around Exploitation and Child and Adult Practise Reviews, and Policies, Procedures and Practice. Members of the Housing team have now been trained to be able to undertake Child and Adult Practise Reviews, acting as the Chair or Reviewer and have since been allocated Reviews to conduct on behalf of the Board.

Members of the Housing Teams regularly attend multi agency meetings in regard to people identified as particularly vulnerable and work alongside social services colleagues to identify suitable accommodation options.

Front line staff have continued to promote Safeguarding and have attended awareness raising sessions related to Child and Adult Practise reviews during the last 12 months.

In addition, Safeguarding remains a fixed agenda item on all team meeting agenda's which allows for general discussions to take place about a range of related issues, including referral mechanisms, warning signs, shared learning and things to look out for when undertaking day to day work.

Front line staff have also worked closely with partners to tackle domestic abuse. This has included a nominated representative attending the MARAC meetings and sharing updates on behalf of colleagues in the Housing Management, Rents and Homelessness Teams and where appropriate support providers are also contacted to attend and to update about victims or perpetrators. Training has ensured staff remain able to identify concerns and work with partners to minimise risks and protect victims. Members of the Housing Team also attend the quarterly DAARC meetings, dealing with people who are classed as standard and medium risk of domestic abuse.

The Housing Support Grant funds a range of activities related to domestic abuse and vulnerable families, including 12 units of refuge accommodation, floating support for victims of domestic abuse, target hardening and accommodation and support for vulnerable families.

The need to identify and target support towards vulnerable people is being developed further by a new Tenant Profiling project. This 'intelligence led' approach has been designed to gather detailed personal information about tenants with a view to focussing interventions towards and maintaining close contact with those households most likely to be experiencing difficulties.

As the Resettlement Schemes have expanded, a need for training on honour-based violence and forced marriage has been identified. Welsh Government have agreed to arrange the necessary training for the Resettlement Teams, but this training will also be rolled out to staff within the Housing Solutions Service to ensure a wider understanding.

Housing Services staff record all MARF and Adult Safeguarding referrals on a spreadsheet. During 2024-2025, the Housing team submitted the following number of MARF's and Adult Safeguarding referrals:

Service Area	No. of MARFs	No. of Adult Safeguarding Referrals
Housing Solutions	4	5
Supporting People	0	0
Housing Strategy	0	0
Customer Liaison Team	0	0
Accommodation Solutions Team	0	0
Resettlement	0	1
Housing Management and Rents	7	2

When a MARF or Adult Safeguarding referral is submitted by Housing staff a response should be received to advise what action, if any, is being taken by Children's or Adult Services. If after 48 hours this information is not received it is chased up by a phone call. If any concerns the staff member will escalate to their manager who should contact a Senior Officer in Social Services to discuss the case and voice any concerns.

In light of sustained housing pressures, the use of temporary accommodation has remained high over the last twelve months and includes the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Whilst this has been occupied predominantly by single people, there were a growing number of families with dependent children placed at hotels during 2023-2024. However, during 2024-2025, 90 units of self-contained temporary accommodation were developed on what was previously the Eagleswell site, with hotels now only being used for families who present, requiring emergency accommodation outside of normal working hours.

Considering the risks identified a risk assessment has been completed and a range of mitigations are in place to assist those placed in hotel accommodation. The Housing Solutions & Supporting People Team introduced the following processes in respect of safeguarding:

- The Housing Solutions Team has made regular welfare calls to hotel residents by telephone and are in frequent contact with the B&B providers. Housing Solutions staff also visit the hotels.
- All individuals placed in temporary accommodation and B&B hotels during this period are referred for floating support via the telephone to Pobol's One Stop Shop Service who are specialist support providers commissioned by the Council. All received daily phone calls initially, reducing to every other day or twice weekly depending on the needs of the person.
- Weekly drop ins are provided by Pobol at the Eagleswell site, alongside weekly drop ins by the Vale of Glamorgan's Resettlement Team. Members of the Housing Solutions Team and Resettlement Team also attend the site regularly to check on the welfare of clients and ensure the site is well maintained etc.
- Due to the change in the type of accommodation provided, with self-contained units being used for families, the Housing Solutions Team have changed the approach to submitting MARFS for all children placed into temporary accommodation, and now only submit them where a potential need is identified.

Safeguarding activity within Community Safety (Housing and Building Services) Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

There was a total of 189 MARAC cases (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) which are cases presented to a multi-agency meeting to discuss safeguarding issues for victims of domestic abuse that have been assessed as high risk during 2024/2025. During the year a review of the MARAC process and the twice weekly discussions took place across Cardiff and the Vale. This resulted in MARAC meetings increasing from fortnightly meetings to weekly meetings and the removal of twice weekly review meetings. These discussions are multi-agency discussions that aim to improve safeguarding measures by offering support at an earlier opportunity.

During 2023/2024 the DAARC service received 626 Public Protection Notices (PPNs) shared from South Wales Police. A total of 192 victims agreed to receive support from the specialist commissioned provider, Vale Domestic Abuse Services to get the support they need.

The Supporting People team and Welsh Government provide funding to Community Safety to provide Target Hardening equipment for victims of domestic abuse. This service is tailored to the needs and risk of the victim, for example CCTV, intruder alarm, door locks and lighting is offered in order to make the victim feel safer and enable them to remain living in their own home. During 2024/2025, 69 victims received target hardening which was an increase from the previous year.

The Local Authority are in the process of implementing the National Training Framework and in 2024/2025, 942 staff members were trained to group 1 of the NTF. 1786 staff members have been reached through group 2 Ask and Act awareness training.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

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

The Community Safety Team within the Council co-ordinate the multi-agency Problem Solving Group (PSG) which meets monthly to discuss incidents of ASB to ensure that early identification and intervention can be offered to perpetrators and to put in place safeguarding measures for victims of ASB.

Within the Vale there is a 4-stage approach to managing ASB which provides the opportunity to identify wider needs and support requirements and aims to stop the behaviour turning into criminal activity. For young people the 4-stage approach is the same, however a restorative approach is adopted to maximize the opportunity of

stopping any further incidents and to identify preventative support that can be offered via the Youth Justice and Early Support Services Team.

During 2024/2025 there were a total of 1862 incidents reported to the Community Safety Team of which 1446 referrals were processed.

Channel Panel (Prevent)

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

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

There is a regional Cardiff and Vale multi-agency Channel Panel that meet to discuss the referrals and to ensure that the appropriate action is taken. There were 3 referrals to Channel in 2024/2025 for the Vale. Plans are in place for the creation of a PREVENT Partnership Board to oversee the Prevent Delivery Plan for the Vale. This will include a training matrix to ensure that all professionals understand the parameters and pathways for referring into the Channel Panel.