

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
11 SEPTEMBER 2017

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 31 JULY 2017

**C46 CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17 (L)
(SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH, LEARNING
AND CULTURE, & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) -**

Cabinet was apprised on the work that had been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults who required specific Council services and to ensure that these arrangements were effective.

The Corporate Safeguarding Working Group was established in the authority to learn lessons from the 2011, CSSIW and Estyn joint report following their investigation into the way Pembrokeshire County Council was managing allegations of professional abuse and its arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in education. The group had been working through an action plan to improve safeguarding across the Council. It had developed and implemented the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and members had been offered training on this important policy.

Cabinet agreed a Safer Recruitment Policy for the Council and Schools (January 2013). The Policy had been in place since April 2013. It had been adopted by all Vale of Glamorgan schools and throughout the Council. Appendix 1 attached to the report clearly outlined the sustained improvements for safer recruitment policies across the Council, including education and clearly demonstrated that practice continued to improve.

This was a matter for Executive decision

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

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults be noted.
- (2) T H A T Cabinet continues to receive six-monthly reports on work carried out to improve corporate safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant policies.
- (3) T H A T the report be referred to the Scrutiny Committees (Social Care and Health), (Learning and Culture) and (Corporate Performance and Resources) for consideration.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To note the recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.
- (2) To allow Cabinet to exercise effective oversight of this key area of corporate working.
- (3) To respond to requests that each Scrutiny Committee was provided with update reports.

Attached as Appendix – Report to Cabinet – 31 July 2017

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 31 July, 2017

Report of the Leader

Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report 2016/17

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Cabinet members on the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults who require specific Council services and to ensure that these arrangements are effective.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults.
2. That Cabinet continues to receive six-monthly reports on work carried out to improve corporate safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant policies.
3. That the report is referred to the Social Care & Health, Learning and Culture and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure that Cabinet is aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.
2. To allow Cabinet to exercise effective oversight of this key area of corporate working.
3. To respond to requests that each Scrutiny Committee is provided with update reports.

Background

2. The Corporate Safeguarding Working Group was established in this authority to learn lessons from the 2011, CSSIW and Estyn joint report following their investigation into the way Pembrokeshire County Council was managing allegations of professional abuse and its arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in education.
3. The group has been working through an action plan to improve safeguarding across the Council. This year it has developed and implemented the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and members have been offered training on this important policy.

4. Cabinet agreed a Safer Recruitment Policy for the Council and Schools (January 2013). The Policy has been in place since April 2013. It has been adopted by all Vale of Glamorgan schools and throughout the Council. The attached Appendix clearly outlines the sustained improvements for safer recruitment policies across the Council, including education and clearly demonstrates that practice continues to improve.

Relevant Issues and Options

5. In the past, safeguarding activity by different parts of the Council has been reported separately to Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and Corporate Management Team. Attached at Appendix 1 is the annual report that brings together safeguarding activity undertaken by the Resources, Learning and Skills and Social Services Directorates. This provides a more holistic representation of safeguarding activity across the Council.
6. 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.
7. The new 'Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance' under Part 7 of the new Act is now published. Guidance on handling individual cases (volumes 5 and 6) to protect children and adults at risk was launched for public consultation by Welsh Government on 31st January 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. The consultation closed on 25th April 2017. Publication is due autumn 2017.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

8. 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 to those who may not be eligible for our services has brought about significant pressures within social services teams, and consequently we need to review processes to ensure clarity for people raising concerns and whom responds to these enquiries/notifications about individuals who are considered 'at risk', but are not known or eligible for our statutory services.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

9. There is no sustainability or climate change implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

10. The duties of the local authority to ensure that children are properly safeguarded and protected from harm are set out in legislation. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 imposes a duty on a local authority to make arrangements for ensuring that their education functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Section 28 of the Children Act 2004 imposes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the local authority should have effective quality assurance

systems in place to ensure that the necessary checks and balances are in place to safeguard and protect children.

11. The Wales Interim Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse is intended to guide the safeguarding work of all those concerned with the welfare of vulnerable adults. These Procedures are based on certain principles of the European convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act. The provision of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 provide a new statutory framework for the protection of adults at risk.
12. The Welsh Government Guidance, Safeguarding Children; Working together under the Children Act 2004 has been issued in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 provides the working basis for the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. The All Wales Child Protection Procedures reflect the values and principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the rights of the child. The Welsh Government developed these values and principles in Children and Young People: Rights to Action 2004, and adopted core aims and outcomes through which it is committed to work with all children and young people. The key outcome for improving the well-being of children includes the requirement that children live in a safe environment and be protected from abuse and harm. The All Wales Child Protection Procedures take account of various legislation, guidance, research and reports.
13. In relation to DBS arrangements, key elements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 have been implemented.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. 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).

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

15. 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.

Corporate/Service Objectives

16. The work of the Corporate Safeguarding Group assists the Council in meeting the following corporate objectives:

Well-being Outcome 4: An Active and Healthy Vale

Objective 8: Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living:

- develop and implement a corporate policy on safeguarding to provide a clear strategic direction and lines of accountability across the Council.

- work with partners through the Cardiff and Vale Local Safeguarding Children's Board to develop a Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy.

"We have a responsibility to safeguard our vulnerable residents and we will continue to work with partners to improve the wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents, their families and carers."

Policy Framework and Budget

17. This is a matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

18. This is an issue which affects all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

19. Social Care and Health, Learning and Culture, and Corporate Performance and Resources.

Background Papers

The All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008)

The All Wales Protection of Vulnerable Adults Interim Procedures (2013)

Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Contact Officer

Suzanne Clifton, Head of Resources Management and Safeguarding

Officers Consulted

Corporate Safeguarding Group

Responsible Officer:

Lance Carver, Director of Social Services

Appendix One

Corporate Safeguarding within the Vale of Glamorgan Council – Annual Report April 2016– March 2017.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to reflect on progress made over the past financial year in relation to safeguarding activity across the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The report outlines key activities on a corporate basis.

Section A outlines the safeguarding activity within Social Services.

Section B outlines the activity in relation to Learning and Skills and

Section C outlines the response for the Resources Directorate.

Section D Outlines the Corporate Safeguarding Policy

A. Safeguarding in Social Services

1. This section of the update brings together the safeguarding activity that has taken place across the three Divisions of the Social Services Directorate during the period **April 2016 to March 2017**.
2. The following activities will be addressed in turn:
 - Child protection registration
 - Allegations against professionals (Part IV, All Wales Child Protection Procedures)
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Protection of Adults at Risk (formally POVA)
 - Audit
 - Consultation
 - Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Regional Board
 - Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Adults Regional Board.

Child Protection

3. The statutory safeguarding responsibilities which the Social Services Directorate performs on behalf of the Council continue to be fulfilled to a high standard. This is yearly evidenced within our performance indicators for the year 2016/17, and has built on the previous year's results.
4. All referrals to Children and Young People Services are received by the Intake and Family Support Team. A decision on their appropriateness, priority and subsequent management should be made within 24 hours. The third and fourth quarter performance in respect of this screening process was above target at 99.49%.consistent with the first two quarters, with the annual performance at 99.73%
5. As shown in the table below, for the period April 2016 - March 2017, 1103 referrals were received by the Division. Of these, 218 progressed to a strategy meeting and/or an investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Activity	April 2016 - Sept 2016	October 2016 – March 2017
Number of referrals received	516	587
Number of referrals that progressed to a strategy discussion/section 47 investigation	97	121
Number referred for a child protection conference	57	82
Number of conferences held within timescale	57	82

6. The overall number of child protection conferences held between April 2016 and March 2017 was 139; 100% were held within the statutory timescale. For initial conferences, this is within fifteen days of the last strategy discussion or meeting; for review conferences, it is within three months of the initial conference and thereafter at no more than six monthly intervals. There has been a marked increase in child protection conference activity for the last two quarters in the year

Allegations against 'professionals'

7. Part 4 of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures provides the framework of actions to be taken when there are child protection concerns in specific circumstances. For the year April 1st 2016 - March 31st 2017, there were a total of 37 new referrals which met the threshold for consideration under Section 4.3 which concerns allegations of the abuse of children by professionals/staff members.

The source of these 37 referrals is detailed in the table below.

Foster Carers	Education (school age children)	Voluntary Youth Services	Residential worker	Private Care sector	Police	Other
In-house 4	Teachers 11	3	7	1	2	1
IFA 3	LSA 3					
	Other 2					

8. For year end, as at 31st March 2017, 33 have been concluded and 4 on-going. The outcome of the 33 cases concluded, are detailed in the table below. None of the new cases for the year involved criminal charges. There will be cases that have more than one outcome e.g. HR processes with employer and referred to professional/regulatory body. Confirmation of final sanctions for those allegations found to be substantiated are awaited from the relevant organisation/Professional Regulator.

Dismissal, de-registration, loss of licence (notified to DBS and /or professional/regulatory body)	Retracted - no further action	Referred back to fostering panel	HR processes with employer	Cautioned by Police	No Further Action by the Police – no further information/not enough evidence
0	2	4	11	0	16

Child Sexual Exploitation

9. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a key priority area for the Cardiff and Vale LSCB this year. It has established a specific sub-group, led by the South Wales Police and including representatives from the NHS, probation and social services to address operational issues. The Board will also take a keen interest in the pan-Wales group established by the Children's Commissioner, which has brought together representatives from across Wales to look at issues requiring national policy and leadership. The Director of Social Services for the Vale of Glamorgan has been a member of this group. National developments continue under the new Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse launched by the UK Home Office and led by Barnardo's. The Centre will become the authoritative

source of research and knowledge on tackling child sexual abuse and exploitation.

10. At a local level, we comply fully with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures in addressing cases of suspected child sexual exploitation. In this context a Vale of Glamorgan Child Sexual Exploitation Policy has been developed and implemented. Where children/young people are considered to be at risk of child sexual exploitation, an assessment of risk using the SERAF (Barnardo's) tool is undertaken. Scores of 11+, which are indicative of 'significant risk', are referred automatically to the Directorate's Principal Officer in Protection and Policy. She convenes and chairs a multi-agency strategy meeting under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.
11. To ensure that we are giving due consideration to children or young people about whom there are concerns but where there is not a 'significant risk' score on SERAF, we have additional arrangements in place. This asks any agency or professional body referring a case to consider whether there are concerns about child sexual exploitation. If this is the case, the ensuing assessment will consider these issues and the case will be referred to the Principal Officer in Protection and Policy, who will consider the level of intervention required. This might range from the provision of support services to proceeding with a strategy meeting involving relevant professionals. In addition, the new process allows us to capture more effectively data about the number of children where there are sexual exploitation concerns.
12. There have been 19 initial CSE strategy meetings and subsequent review CSE meetings held between April 2016 and March 31st 2017 relating to 31 young people in total. The response to each young person included: consideration by South Wales Police of any criminal matters; assessment; consideration of the need to use child protection procedures; and support to be provided by social services and voluntary organisations as children in need. Where on-going concerns were identified, review strategy meetings took place for each young person. Most alleged victims are aged 13-17 and they share common characteristics such as alcohol/drug use, family breakdown, poor attendance at school, low self-esteem, self-harm/suicidal thoughts and inappropriate use of the internet and mobile phones. Suspects are usually male and aged 19-40.
13. In the Vale of Glamorgan there is an established Multi-Agency Taskforce Group, and dedicated CSE/Missing South Wales Police team including a Barnardo's advocate working alongside police officers. Health Safeguarding officers, (ensuring links with the Sexual Abuse Referral Centre and Looked After Children), Vale of Glamorgan Education, Youth Service, Youth Offending, Children's Social Work and relevant Licencing and Probation staff also attend the Taskforce Group meetings. This arrangement has established regular information-sharing within the Vale of Glamorgan every other month and with Bridgend on a monthly basis because of the higher numbers of children identified. The Principal Officer Protection and Policy, now chairs this group.
14. On the evidence currently available, most children who have been the subject of CSE strategy meetings to date have not been victims of organised abuse.

15. CSE is an area where significant developments are happening at pace. The Police have developed a sophisticated data base/problem profile which pinpoints links between children at risk and suspected perpetrators of abuse across the Force area. Added to this, the Welsh Government instructed all local authorities to undertake a 3 month CSE data gathering exercise to evaluate the CSE occurrence in Wales (December 2015 – March 2016) and this information has been adapted to link in with the Police data, thus ensuring consistency across the sector. This data exercise has continued into the current period led by the LSCB Business Officer. This real-time intelligence will allow all agencies to target work to protect potential victims, to investigate criminal acts and to disrupt the activity of perpetrators. Early information from the system indicates that the problems in adjoining local authority areas occur on a wider-scale and that, outside the Vale, there is some association with specific geographical locations or groups.
16. The Cardiff and Vale Regional LSCB has completed a new CSE strategy which will help to consolidate emerging best practice. One of the challenges for professionals working with children and young people who are most vulnerable is helping them to acknowledge that they are or risk being exploited. A programme has been delivered to children in schools to raise awareness, especially regarding online abuse which involves their peers. For Vale of Glamorgan Children's Services staff, a bespoke morning workshop was run in August 2016, with attendance from a dedicated specialist CSE Police Officer. This included a presentation from the Education Safeguarding Officer on CSE, with a focus around the use of the SERAF tool. This event was very well attended, with feedback evidencing effective and valuable learning raising awareness around CSE and Trafficking.

Protection of Adults at Risk (formally Protection of Vulnerable Adults)

17. New Safeguarding duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act now apply to adult protection, as safeguarding is preventative as well as protective. Safeguarding is wider than the essential focus on those most at risk or needing protection from abuse, neglect and harm. Safeguarding now includes ensuring the provision of safe and effective care; protecting from abuse, neglect and harm; optimising well-being, voice, choice and control, and preventing impairment of health and development.
18. Safeguarding is everyone's business. However, the Act sets out particular duties for Local Authorities and relevant partner agencies e.g. health and Police, working with adults. There is a new duty to report an adult at risk for all relevant partners for the Local Authority. There is a new duty for a Local Authority to make enquiries if it has reasonable cause to suspect that a person within its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) is an adult at risk.

19. Adult protection data is prepared for the Safeguarding Adults Board on a quarterly basis. The total number of adult protection referrals during 2016-17 was 318; an average of 27 per month. As shown in the table below, there has been a significant increase. We are mindful of the potential for an increase in referrals of adult safeguarding concerns as a result of the legislative changes and we have reviewed our team structure and processes to ensure the best possible response. Referrals for 2016-17 are consistent with 2015-16 (see table below) The referral rates include all cases and, those that remain open at the end of the financial year, and therefore, will not always concur with National Welsh Government PI figures seen in other data within the document.

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
235	300	357	323	318 At Q4

Source of referrals

Referrals are received via Contact One Vale (C1V) in close liaison with the central adult protection (formally POVA) team and Case Management teams regarding relevant involvements as appropriate with adult protection procedures. The majority of referrals are received from service providers, residential/nursing homes. The secondary sources are Hospitals and Police referrals.

Gender distribution of referrals

20. The 2011 Census indicates that there were 61,522 (48.7%) males and 48,140 (51.3%) females in the Vale of Glamorgan. The gender distribution of adult protection referrals is shown in the table below.

	Male	Female
Q1	38%	62%
Q2	30%	70%
Q3	39%	61%
Q4	34%	66%
Average	35%	65%

Age distribution of referrals

	18-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Q1	30%	10%	23%	37%
Q2	45%	11%	24%	20%
Q3	28%	16%	23%	33%
Q4	37%	13%	20%	30%
Average	35%	12%	23%	30%

21. There is a disproportionate number of referrals compared to the Vale of Glamorgan population size. This is most evident in the 85+ age range, where on average 3% of the adult population account for 30% of referrals, and in the 75-84 age range, where 7% of the population account for 23% of referrals.

Ethnicity of subject referred

22. The 2011 Census indicates that 4.4% of the population in the Vale of Glamorgan identify as being from a non-white background. Less than 3% of referrals are recorded as relating to adults from a non-white background.

Category of vulnerability

23. The following table shows the most prevalent category of vulnerability for those referrals closed during 2015-16.

	Physical/sensory disability	Dementia	Learning disability	Mental health	Substance misuse	Other
2015-16	68%	12%	13%	6%	0%	1%
2014-15	57%	13%	18%	7%	1%	4%
2013-14	67%	8%	4%	13%	0%	8%

24. Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from a comparison of this data. The number of cases recorded as closed (from which this data is drawn) increased by 300% from 2013-14 to 2014-15 because of improvements in recording processes. For 2016/17 Q4, data is awaiting conclusion of current investigations for accuracy. The trend is likely to continue as previous years.

Place where abuse occurred

25. Care Homes (Residential & Nursing) generate most allegations of abuse, followed by Own home in the community. In addition to the safeguards arising from use of adult protection (formally POVA) processes, problematic practice in care/nursing homes is robustly addressed through provider performance processes conducted by the safeguarding team and the contracts team.

Types of abuse

	Physical	Sexual	Emotional/psychological	Financial	Neglect
2016-17	28%	8%	14%	29%	21%
2015-16	27%	9%	18%	26%	20%
2014-15	22%	9%	11%	27%	30%

Status of Allegation (Outcomes)

Outcome	%
Admitted	8.75%
Disproved	12.5%
Inconclusive	32.5%
Inconclusive, likely on balance of probability	11.25%
Inconclusive, unlikely on balance of probability	6.25%
Proved or upheld	22.5%
Allegation withdrawn	6.25%

Comment;

The status of findings from allegations are often the element of safeguarding that poses most frustration and/or distress for victims and their families. An inconclusive finding, for example, does not suggest the abuse incident did not occur, but merely that any formal evidence or probability can be drawn from the case to provide a proved outcome. Communication and engagement with the victim and/or their family is crucial at this stage to ensure that the victim is believed, and to reassure them that any future information which may come to light can result in the matter being reconsidered if appropriate.

Audit

26. The Children and Young People Services Division, Adult Services Division and the former Business Management and Innovation Division have in place an audit framework and monitoring arrangements, carried out at quarterly intervals, to ensure that robust information is available about their safeguarding work and other areas of service. Auditors meet six weeks prior to the date of the audit, and the subject area is agreed.
27. An adult protection (formally POVA) audit was carried out during the year to explore the adult protection process and evaluate the cases closed up to October 2016. The outcomes of the audit are reassuring and evidence good levels of communication and involvement with the family of the adult at risk; evidence of good levels of communication with relevant partner agencies, and importantly, evidence of appropriate and immediate safeguarding action and reduction of risks in those relevant cases audited. Actions linked to findings around incomplete referral data (VA1) have now been addressed and will be kept under review and monitored by the Operational Manager for Safeguarding.
28. Audit activity in the first two quarters of the year relating to child protection included an audit of child protection visiting patterns. Recommendations from this included changes to be made to the procedures for recording on the electronic system. A policy and procedure is also to be developed to clarify the national All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 requirements for visits. This will reiterate expectations of social workers. Supervision of social workers will also encompass the monitoring of compliance with the recording of visits. In addition, performance management reports will encompass monitoring of child protection visits.

A re-audit of compliance with Statutory Visits and Recording Policy was carried out in November. There was some good practice evident, for example regular visiting patterns, and clear and comprehensive case notes that were entered onto the system in good time. Concerns had been noted where appropriate. Actions were recommended; based on statutory visits reminding social workers of the importance of timeliness in recording such visits as soon as possible after being carried out.

Consultation

29. The process for consultation with service users and professionals is well established within Social Services. The implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 has involved a considerable focus upon qualitative surveys which have been administered during September to November, 2016. To prepare for this piece of work the usual process for themed consultation was superseded by the requirements of the Act, however some valuable information has been obtained from the qualitative exercise which the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer has incorporated into the consultation programme for individual service area development.

30. The questions for the exercise were determined by the Welsh Government and in relation to safeguarding, included the question *“Do you feel safe?”*

For example, “Do you feel cared for and safe from anyone who can hurt you or treat you badly, both inside and outside your home?” This question was included in the adults, carers and children’s and young people’s questionnaires. For children and young people, 80% said they feel safe, and nearly all of the remainder said “sometimes”.

For Adults, most people said they felt safe (77%), 16% said they “sometimes” felt safe, and the remainder said “no”. Where people said they did not feel safe, this was mainly due to mobility issues and vulnerability to falls. Of the carers who responded, 80% felt safe and nearly all of the remainder said they “sometimes” felt safe. A small percentage (5%) said “no”.

31. Priorities are identified by senior management and may be led by recent inspection findings or service developments. Adult Protection (formally POVA) consultation is carried out throughout the year, where service users who are aware of their referral, and have capacity are interviewed regarding their views about the adult protection process. This exercise has been completed, with eight interviews carried out in total. Feedback was generally positive, particularly in terms of being kept involved throughout the adult protection process. However, people did not tend to know who to speak to at the start. More information about the process would have been appreciated by most people especially in the early stages.

32. The consultation concluded that people did feel involved by professionals, and that they were kept updated about progress throughout involvements. Most felt believed, taken seriously and supported throughout the process, particularly by their social workers. Appropriate use of advocacy was evidenced in cases.

Moreover, nearly all felt safer as a result of their experience. Findings showed that despite some people feeling uncomfortable about the circumstances surrounding the adult protection process, they felt reassured by professionals, as the process progressed.

33. Further consultation with service users is planned to take place during 2017/18 focusing on the experience/effectiveness of advocacy in adult safeguarding.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

34. The domestic violence MARAC is a meeting where agencies talk about the risk of future harm to people experiencing domestic abuse and if necessary their children, and draw up an action plan to help manage that risk.
35. In the Vale of Glamorgan, an effective and embedded fortnightly MARAC Meeting takes place, chaired by the South Wales Police Detective Inspector for Public Protection, with relevant agency staff in attendance including Social Services staff. An agenda and accompanying cases of concern list is circulated prior to the meeting, to enable agencies to source and bring any relevant information, to assist in risk assessing and action planning.
36. A newly appointed Domestic and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator has been tasked to evaluate any emerging themes from the MARAC process, which will be reported on in 2017/18.

Update on the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Board

37. Chaired by the Vale Director of Social Services, the regional Board is in a very busy consolidation and delivery phase. There has been a small Business Unit in place to work with partner agencies to develop sub-group activity and meaningful performance information. There are now confirmed on-track plans approaching realisation and successful completion to recruit additional officer resource to develop a joint Children and Adult Board Business Unit by **May 2017**, so that consistency across both Boards can be assured.
38. The Board has a programme of audit which examines the effectiveness of all agencies working together under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. The Audit Sub-Group has undertaken an audit of cases of children whose names were removed from the child protection register but re-registered within a 12 month period. Recommendations have been made to the Board and an action plan has been developed. Implementation will be monitored via the business planning group. The Board is currently developing an annual report and a work plan.
39. Final New Guidance has now been issued on line by Welsh Government for Child Practice Reviews and similarly for Adult Protection Reviews.
40. The new **Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance** under the new Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has now been published. On 31st January 2017, Welsh Government launched a consultation on volumes 5 and 6 of the Working Together to Safeguard People Handling Individual Cases

to Protect Adults at Risk, and similarly for Children at Risk statutory guidance. The consultation looks at the guidance to help Local Authorities and their partners implement Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. 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. This consultation closed on 25th April 2017. Further publication is awaited.

41. Meanwhile, the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Boards have successfully secured the bid from Welsh Government to produce the revised National procedures for adult and child protection, linked to the above guidance. A regional Project group is now established and initial scoping activity initiated.

Update on the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Adults Regional Board

42. Chaired by the Director of Social Services, Cardiff Council on behalf of the region, the regional Board is in a very busy period of development. Three workshops have been held, led by an external facilitator, Jan Horwath, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield, to develop the necessary arrangements to identify the themes, actions and sub-groups needed to take forward the work of the Board. This is a key requirement of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, achieved in advance of the legislation coming into effect.
43. Upon analysis of the outcomes of the three workshops facilitated by Professor Horwath it was agreed that the two main priorities for the Board for 2016-17 to 2019-20 (3 year business plan) would be Domiciliary Care and Nursing Homes and Dementia. There is now a combined 3 year Action Plan under the Boards Governance and Strategic Priorities 2017-20 for these key areas.
44. The rise in Adult Protection (formally POVA) referral rates is indicative of increases nationally. This is due to a number of reasons including an increase in awareness resulting in more people reporting, concern that austerity measures may have resulted in deterioration in the quality of care provision, and improved data gathering and reporting of local performance information.
45. To date, under the new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, there have been no clear examples that the new arrangements have picked up matters that would not have been apparent previously. The process, however, has ensured that some professionals, as a result of the Duty to Report regulation, who would previously have dealt with some situations differently, are now bringing cases to the attention of the existing adult protection (POVA) team. This trend is expected to continue.
46. It is also envisaged in aiming for ensuring consistency across Safeguarding that the Part 4 arrangements for adults working with children under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures could be adopted similarly in adult services thus ensuring a consistent approach across all vulnerable groups.
47. In the Vale of Glamorgan, arrangements have been established with C1V to ensure that adult safeguarding referrals are managed under a single point of access process. This ensures that all referrals are progressed appropriately,

and diverted to the right service at the right time. The ultimate aim is that such arrangements will lead to a reduction in the inappropriate referrals that have previously come through to the POVA team, and as such will allow the team to prioritise their work accordingly.

48. A new requirement being introduced by Health in community settings regarding health acquired Grade3/4 pressure damage, is likely to increase workload, as these cases will go to strategy discussion under current adult protection (formally POVA) procedures, and the Duty to Report regulation. The Board will closely monitor the impact and effectiveness of this process.
49. During the last year 2016-17, the Board has also been instrumental in responding on behalf of Cardiff and the Vale to the Operation Jasmine Review undertaken by Dr Margaret Flynn. This led to the development of a joint agency action plan that identified key tasks required to improve Residential and Nursing Home care provision across both councils. The proposal for next year, 2017-18, is that this plan and remaining actions is combined with the 3 year Governance and Strategic Plan subject to the main Board's approval.

Adult Protection and Support Orders

50. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 contains a new order that can be obtained from the Magistrates Court. The Order allows for a private conversation with a suspected adult at risk; to find out if that suspected adult at risk is free to make their own decisions and to assess whether they are an adult at risk.
51. The order allows an authorised officer to enter most premises, including registered settings and people's homes so that conversation can be had. Other people living in that home can also be asked to leave in order to make sure that the conversation is private. It is expected that such an order will only be obtained in exceptional circumstances.
52. It has not been necessary to apply for any Adult Protection and Support Orders to date in the Vale of Glamorgan.

B. Safeguarding in Learning and Skills

1. Safeguarding activity in the Learning and Skills Directorate continues to evolve in response to continuous review and the requirements of national, regional and local developments in legislation, guidance and policy.
2. The Directorate Senior Management Team routinely monitors operational safeguarding practice across the Directorate. Safeguarding training is delivered consistently across the Directorate to standards set by the Local Safeguarding Boards and all employees and volunteers are expected to comply with statutory and local guidance in relation to safeguarding children and adults.
3. Directorate safeguarding policies and procedures remain under review and subject to regular update in response to national developments in legislation and statutory guidance.. Policies, guidance and standard forms are available to support safeguarding practice for all employees and volunteers in the Directorate, Schools, Youth Service, Libraries and Adult Community Learning (ACL) for consistency in practice across the Directorate. The adoption, implementation and review of the Model Safeguarding Policy for schools is monitored to track compliance.
4. Training for all Directorate staff is monitored and attendance data recorded to enable instant review of all safeguarding training received by staff throughout the Directorate, including in every school. There is an established expectation that the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection (DSP), Deputy DSP, and Designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG) for every school attends annual Level Two Safeguarding Training appropriate for their role, based on course content and learning outcomes set by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan LSCB. Level Two training for DSPs and DDSPs is delivered twice each term. DSPs and DDSPs are expected also to attend multi-agency Level Three Safeguarding Training to develop their knowledge and understanding of partnership working to safeguard children, although the availability of this training continues to be severely restricted by a significant reduction in the LSCB training programme since 2014. School DSP/DDSPs are trained to deliver Level One training to all school-based staff, including caretakers and kitchen staff. This system of cascade training is the only effective model to operate within existing resources. Available data indicates that school-based and other directorate staff attend training as required and appears to reinforce the effective operation of safeguarding systems and processes. .
5. The established DSP/DDSP role continues to operate effectively across the Directorate, with appropriate annual training made available as required. Available evidence indicates that the confidence of officers operating in these roles is developing appropriately, with improved quality of referrals to Children's Services and effective participation in multi-agency safeguarding meetings. Annual Level One Safeguarding training for all Directorate staff is delivered on a cascade model, with the assistance of training officers in ACL, who have been trained to deliver Level One Safeguarding Training identical to that available to school-based staff. Level Two Safeguarding Training for Safeguarding and other relevant staff in the Directorate, Youth Service, Libraries and ACL is delivered on several occasions every academic term, to maximise the opportunities for attendance. Termly Level One and Two

Safeguarding training is available for Directorate staff and anyone unable to attend within their own service area. In addition to Level One or Two Safeguarding training, a termly programme of specialist Safeguarding training on relevant subjects has been established, including content relating to LSCB annual priorities and national themes. This programme is available to all Directorate staff, including school-based colleagues. Current training priorities for the Learning and Skills Directorate include Prevent, Child Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery and Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence.

6. In partnership with the Governor Support Unit, termly safeguarding training is provided for all governors, including those in the DSG role. The development of twilight training for governors delivered in schools and available to governors of local clusters to promote accessibility remains popular and attendance rates have improved. Other training for Governors, Youth Service and other specific groups is delivered at times and venues to promote accessibility, including in the evening and on weekends. A new programme of safeguarding training and advice has been developed to support the introduction of Community Libraries. All training is evaluated and reviewed to facilitate regular development and ensure that safeguarding training is fit for purpose and meets Directorate need. Training for Governors in particular continues to be evaluated positively.
7. The twice-termly DSP Forum continues to offer an opportunity for all Directorate staff with a specific Safeguarding role to share information and receive briefings on relevant subjects. The Forum is repeated each term, to allow schools to release the DSP and DDSP to attend without both being absent from the school on the same date. The Forums are well-attended and participant evaluation forms indicate that the Forum is valued by safeguarding colleagues. The continuing objective is to develop the knowledge and confidence of DSPs, DDSPs and DSGs in their specific safeguarding roles. The participation of local independent educational establishments in the DSP Forum to ensure consistency in safeguarding practice across Vale educational provision has been acknowledged by Welsh Government as good practice.
8. Schools continue to develop a recognised Safeguarding Team that includes DSP, DDSP and DSG. Schools are encouraged to identify and promote membership of this team for all staff so that all employees and volunteers are clear about the mechanism for reporting safeguarding concerns, including the process for escalating safeguarding concerns outside the school where necessary. Schools are encouraged to include their Designated Safeguarding Governor in development of the Safeguarding Self Evaluation Report (SER), review of policies and compliance with training expectations and in monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding practice within the school.
9. Schools are encouraged and supported to develop a Safeguarding Self-Evaluation Report (SER) as an essential tool for monitoring safeguarding compliance and to review the SER termly to ensure that up-to-date information is available on all aspects of the school's safeguarding practice. Support is available to schools in the development and review of the Safeguarding SER, particularly in advance of Estyn inspection visits. Adoption and review of the SER is monitored termly. All schools recently inspected by Estyn have been

successful in relation to consideration of safeguarding practice, including the quality of SERs and the effectiveness of procedures to safeguard children.

10. A Safeguarding Audit based on minimum expectations of safeguarding practice is in use across the Directorate for completion on a regular basis, particularly in schools. The audit informs the monitoring of policy and training compliance and assists schools in developing an effective Safeguarding SER. Data provided by the audit informs an understanding of the effectiveness of safeguarding and well-being in schools and elsewhere within the Directorate and enables officers to identify areas of good practice as well as areas for development in safeguarding practice.
11. The Directorate continues to emphasise the need for regulatory compliance in relation to licensing children in employment and entertainment, including the licensing of chaperones. The Directorate has made significant changes to licensing practice since the introduction of the Children (Performances and Activities) (Wales) Regulations 2015 to ensure that the process for scrutinising licence applications is as robust as practicable. The Directorate continues to participate in national discussions to achieve consistency in licensing practice across local authorities in Wales.
12. The Directorate is engaged in work to support school Governing Bodies and headteachers in the development of effective relationships with organisations providing out-of-school activities on school premises, such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, sports and music clubs, etc., with the intention of encouraging compliance with nationally recognised best practice and registration with CSSIW wherever possible. This activity represents the Directorate's commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children in all settings, inclusive of services that extend beyond the school day.
13. A safeguarding website remains under development in partnership with Central South Consortium, to provide all Directorate staff with easy access to all relevant safeguarding materials, including national guidance, local policies and training materials. Using an existing Welsh Government web platform, the website will allow access to safeguarding material by schools and Directorate staff but also to children and their families. This development is particularly important because of the significant role of families in supporting online safety for children, including in the context of child sexual exploitation.
14. The Safeguarding Officer and senior officers continue to represent the Directorate at the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan LSCB and on relevant LSCB sub-groups, thereby strengthening working relationships with partner agencies. The Directorate is recognised as making a valuable contribution to the work of the LSCB and for consistent attendance at meetings. Directorate officers also participate actively in the Corporate Safeguarding Group. The Safeguarding Officer also contributes to national and regional multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Forums, Wales Safeguarding in Education Group, Wales Children in Employment and Entertainment Group and Wales Elective Home Education Group. The Safeguarding Officer also participates in local multi-agency activity such as the Cohesion and Engagement Steering Group, VAWDA Steering Group and Channel Panel. Participation in local and national 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.

15. The Vale of Glamorgan Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) continues to develop and refine its processes and the participation of the Safeguarding Officer enables appropriate information-sharing with schools to develop robust support for children experiencing the effects of domestic abuse. Schools recognise the importance and value of MARAC, responding promptly and appropriately to requests for information. The standard form developed by the Safeguarding Officer in 2015 to facilitate provision of relevant information focusing specifically on perceived risks to a child is recognised as helpful to the MARAC process and has been further refined in 2016.
16. Vale schools continue to engage with Hafan Cymru, commissioned by the Welsh Government to deliver an educational programme called Spectrum in schools across Wales. The Spectrum project delivers Healthy Relationship lessons in response to the introduction of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. All Vale schools are encouraged to integrate the Spectrum programme into the school curriculum from September 2015. Atal Y Fro continues to support Vale schools, including by the provision of high quality individual work with specific children affected by domestic violence. Regrettably, the ability of Atal Y Fro to deliver healthy relationships and awareness training in schools has been significantly curtailed by resource and funding issues. This loss has been acknowledged by schools.
17. The Directorate continues to develop specific relationships with statutory and third sector partner agencies in the interests of maximising available resources to support effective safeguarding practice. Recent partnership working with Public Health Wales, Hafan Cymru and Atal Y Fro enabled the provision of a large-scale training event in April 2017 to support awareness of the Adverse Childhood Experiences model of intervention.
18. The Directorate continues to prioritise the management of allegations of abuse against teachers and other members of staff in accordance with Part IV of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. A database is maintained to monitor progress of professional abuse cases which meet the threshold for consideration. The database is updated with all new cases to inform the Directorate Senior Management Team. A training course to support schools in managing allegations of abuse against staff is available. A leaflet developed in partnership with Human Resources to provide advice and support for teachers and other staff being investigated in relation to an allegation has been recognised as good practice by trade unions.
19. The Safeguarding Officer continues to liaise closely with colleagues from the Education Welfare Service, Behavioural Support Team and EHE Coordinator in relation to safeguarding concerns arising from attendance, physical intervention and Elective Home Education issues respectively. The Directorate continues to monitor the effectiveness of the Team Teach Physical Intervention model and training remains available for all schools to improve the ability of school staff to use de-escalation techniques to manage challenging behaviour. Work continues to evaluate the safeguarding implications for children subject to fixed-term or permanent exclusions. The Safeguarding Officer also liaises with

senior officers with responsibility for wellbeing and nurture, to ensure that all activity relating to child welfare is linked and supported.

20. The Safeguarding Officer continues to enjoy effective working relationships with other agencies. In particular, work with the Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People Services (CYPS) continues to flourish, with open communication and appropriate information-sharing becoming established practice. Appropriate Directorate participation in Strategy Meetings, Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups is valued by the LSCB and CYPS Division and schools continue to build effective relationships with social workers. The Safeguarding Officer meets termly with colleagues from CYPS to review safeguarding practice, share information and refine working practices. The Safeguarding Officer also participates in multi-agency interface meetings with colleagues from CYPS, the police and health to maintain open communication, address practice issues and refine collaborative working practices. This forum also enables the Directorate to participate in discussion about the development of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs in neighbouring LAs. The Safeguarding Officer participates in the multi-agency CSE Professional Interest Group, Vale CSE Taskforce and LSCB CSE Strategic Group to develop effective practice to safeguard children at risk of CSE and share intelligence with other agencies.
21. The Safeguarding Officer continues to participate in corporate activity to enhance safeguarding practice across the Council. A recent development recommended by the Safeguarding Officer was the addition of DBS information on revised Council staff ID cards, to inform visitor risk assessments undertaken by schools and other bases. The Safeguarding Officer continues to work with colleagues from Civil Protection and the Welsh Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit (WECTU) to develop enhanced building security procedures for schools and other Directorate bases in response to increased terrorism threat levels and other security risks. The Directorate currently is working with schools to develop enhanced safety measures for off-site school activities, particularly involving visits to London or other major cities.
22. The Safeguarding Officer continues to champion changes to practice, including a planned move from paper to electronic safeguarding records within the Directorate and in schools, for improved security and to allow robust interrogation of data. The development of a robust and consistent approach to safeguarding across all parts of the Directorate remains a priority.

C. Managing Director and Resources Directorate

The Managing Director and Resources Directorate report outlines ongoing progress in relation to compliance with the Council's Safer Recruitment Policy.

Outcome of the latest Safer Recruitment Policy HR Audit

1. All schools within the remit of the Vale of Glamorgan Council have adopted the recommended Safer Recruitment Policy. The Policy also applies corporately in all relevant Services within the policy definitions.
2. Regular audits continue to be carried out by Human Resources of new appointments as shown in appendix 1.

Schools

3. It is encouraging to note that compliance rates continue to improve. Compliance with the policy for this reporting period was on average 94%, compared to 76% from the same reporting period last year. This represents an increase of 18% when compared with the previous year (2015/16). A full breakdown of figures can be found in appendix 1.
4. In addition it is encouraging to note that for the month of September (which represents the highest recruitment activity within the school academic year) there was an improvement in compliance compared to September 2015. In September 2015 compliance was at 87% whereas in September 2016 this increased to 96%.
5. Conversely however members will note that in May 2016 compliance rates reduced to 50%. This can be attributed to the low number of posts recruited to during this month (4) and the comparison of non-compliance which presents a disproportionately inflated outcome.
6. The 6% non-compliance rate in Schools during the period April 2016 to March 2017 represents 11 employees engaged in 7 Primary School within the Vale of Glamorgan. The current escalation process requires a discussion with the Head Teacher regarding non-compliance followed up by letter from the Director of Learning and Skills.

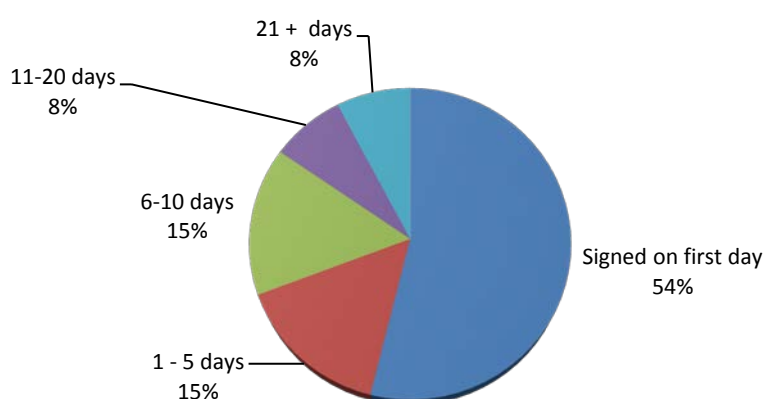
Corporate

7. Compliance rates for Corporate Services remain high at 97%. However this is a reduction in compliance of 2% when compared to the same reporting period last year (2015/2016). This equates to 2 appointments which were out of compliance in comparison to 1 in the previous reporting period.

Return of Risk Assessments (Schools and Corporate Services)

8. The current policy provides the option of submitting the Risk Assessment form which since January 2016 can be administered in either hard or electronic format.
9. The majority of Risk Assessments continue to be submitted via email by both Corporate Services and Schools. This process provides an efficient method of submitting the risk assessment form, whilst providing greater accountability and removes any costs/delays with postage.
10. Currently all Schools, have access to the Council's StaffNet and/or a Vale of Glamorgan email address to allow them to submit the Risk Assessment form electronically.
11. As part of the audit, Human Resources also monitor the return of risk assessments for both Schools and Corporate services. Over the 12 month reporting period of April 2016 to March 2017, 13 new starters commenced employment without all the required checks in place or a signed risk assessment as allowed for by the policy. This is a decrease of 37 appointments in comparison to the same 12 month period last year.
12. Out of the above 11 non-compliant Safer Recruitment appointments, 5 outstanding risk assessments forms were signed on the first day of employment (54%). This represents an increase of 19% of outstanding forms completed on the first day in comparison to the same reporting period last year

Number of days on or post the employee's start date when the risk assessment or all documentation was received (Schools and Corporate)
April 2016 to March 2017



13. For Schools, where a signed Risk Assessment has been carried out but not completed prior to the employee's start date, a letter is sent to the Head Teacher from the Director of Learning and Skills. The letter is also sent to the Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor to highlight the policy requirements.

On-going measures

14. A number of measures are in place to support compliance with the policy. This includes on-going training on safer recruitment and the on-going application of the escalation process in schools (explained in further detail in paragraphs 22).
15. During the period of April 2016 to March 2017, 3 new Head Teachers were appointed to schools within the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
16. At a recent Vale Head Teacher Induction Programme, training on the Safer Recruitment policy including the terms of the Risk Assessment form and Head Teacher responsibilities were discussed. All 3 new Head Teachers attended this Induction Programme.
17. As a result training on the Safer Recruitment policy has been provided to all Head Teachers within the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
18. In addition work has been on-going to develop a new e-learning facility to provide training on the policy. In February 2017 a new e-learning facility was placed on the Council's StaffNet to deliver this.
19. The e-learning facility is available to all Vale of Glamorgan Council employees who have access to the Council's StaffNet.
20. Currently all Schools (excluding Stanwell), have access to the Council's StaffNet to enable access the e-learning facility.
21. To date, Safer Recruitment training for Schools has been focused on Head Teachers and School Administrators. Where it has been deemed necessary by the Head Teacher, this has been extended to include other employees who are involved in the recruitment process including Business Managers and Deputy Head Teachers. The introduction of the e-learning facility will allow training to be accessible to all school based staff (excluding those employed directly by Stanwell Comprehensive School – see point 20)
22. An escalation process is in place to support Head Teachers in achieving compliance with the policy. The process incorporates TransAct providing weekly updates to the relevant school and the relevant HR Business Partner in relation to pre-employment safeguarding documentation. The updates provide information regarding both received and outstanding documents along with any corresponding urgent actions required. The process also records confirmation of whether a risk assessment has been obtained or where it remains outstanding (risk assessments are not required in cases where the receipt of all documentation has been received by the school and deemed satisfactory for the appointment to proceed).

23. In circumstances where employment has started and any of the required checks are outstanding without a risk assessment in place, the relevant HR Business Partner contacts the Head Teacher to provide advice on policy and the need for the risk assessment form to be completed along with any necessary actions to be implemented as a matter of urgency. Should the risk assessment form remain outstanding two working days following the initial discussion, the Director of Learning and Skills will write to the Head Teacher requesting urgent action, with a copy sent to the Chair of Governors and to the school's Safeguarding Governor.
24. All outstanding risk assessment forms have been completed within 2 days of the initial discussions between the Head Teacher and the HR Business Partner.
25. The escalation process also 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 employees at the 8th week of the escalation process or above.
26. Communication with Head Teachers is also on-going, for example when necessary including the item 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 .
27. In addition, compliance of the policy is discussed at each corporate safeguarding group meeting to continually review the effectiveness of the policy.

Developments since the last report

28. The current escalation process was introduced initially to both strengthen compliance of the policy in schools and provide support to Head Teachers in monitoring the return of the necessary checks in line with the required timescales.
29. The Council is committed to ensuring that Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. As a result work is on-going to develop the escalation process to include communication to employees at an early stage to remind them of their obligations under the policy. This will ensure a balance of responsibility for both recruiting managers and employees in the Safeguarding of children and service users who require support or who are particularly vulnerable.
30. The escalation process currently applies solely to schools. Although compliance with the policy is high within Corporate Services, it is essential that the Council takes a vigilant approach to monitoring any outstanding checks

where the post falls within the remit of the Safer Recruitment Policy. The process is currently being adapted with the intention of implementing within Corporate Services.

Conclusion

31. Compliance with the Safer Recruitment Policy for Schools is continuing to improve, however, remains less than the expected 100% compliance on a consistent basis. The measures outlined in this report will need to continue to be applied to support this.
32. Compliance in corporate services remains high, although this will need to be closely monitored given the slight decrease in compliance since the same reporting period last year. The introduction of the escalation process into corporate services will support this approach.

D Corporate Safeguarding Policy

1. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been ratified and implemented across the Council. The policy has been promoted through the use of StaffNet and Core Brief to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in regards to individuals considered to be 'at risk'.
2. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 has broadened the definition of the former Protection of Vulnerable Adult terminology. This is replaced by the phrase of 'adults at risk'. This means that there will be adults at risk who require safeguarding and protecting, but are not considered to meet 'threshold' in relation to our former Protection of Vulnerable Adults procedures.
3. The corporate safeguarding policy and accompanying leaflets advise staff of their responsibilities within the legislation and provide them with direction as to how to make referrals and enquiries to ensure that such individuals come to our attention and we are able to support in the most appropriate way.
4. The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Group continue to meet and are working through an action plan to ensure that tasks retain momentum and progress is tracked at the quarterly meetings. There is good representation of Directorate's within the membership of the Group and the support for the action plan is satisfactory.
5. The Corporate Safeguarding Group is now considering mechanisms to monitor compliance of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy for all relevant staff, contractors and volunteers. This is a key area also identified in the annual audit completed in quarter 4 of the year. The objectives of the audit were to undertake an assessment of the Council's overall operating model for safeguarding to evaluate the Council's safeguarding performance. The review included the safeguarding arrangements in place for vulnerable adults as well as children.
6. The Scope of the review included: the Corporate Safeguarding Group, Governance Arrangements, Departmental Training & Awareness and Departmental Processes & Procedures.
7. The Audit review concluded which a satisfactory rating of Reasonable Assurance for the Councils overall safeguarding performance and an appropriate Management Implementation Plan is in place which the Corporate Safeguarding Group will carry forward, implement and monitor.