



NORTH WALES SAFEGUARDING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 – 2021

Introduction:



It gives us pleasure to jointly present the NWSB Annual Report.

This Annual Report outlines the progress we have made against the outcomes set in February 2020 as part of our joint Annual Strategic Plan. As we proceed to publication, we remain in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which has significantly impacted upon all public services during this reporting period. We are pleased to report that despite all the challenges faced by all partners of the NWSB as a Board we continued to prioritise safeguarding practice across the region.

The report will highlight the impact of the pandemic, and how we, as multi-agency partners, have overcome some of the challenges in the delivery of safeguarding services across the NWSB region. The report will include examples of good practice and show the commitment of the safeguarding workforce across North Wales. We cannot underestimate the commitment of the workforce to promote the safety and wellbeing of individuals across the region. As a board we would like to formally acknowledge the work undertaken during this pandemic period.

We continued to work on the strategic priorities that were identified but acknowledge that we still have further work to do, in particular around ensuring compliance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The work undertaken in recent years to strategically combine the business and work streams of the two Boards has continued and we now have an agenda that is richer with the different areas of practice in adult and children's services now starting to enrich each other with practitioners seeing the benefit of an all age approach to protecting children and adults at risk.

There will always be challenges in delivering such complex services across such a large regional area such as North Wales but this annual report clearly demonstrates good progress in demonstrating how the NWSB is impacting on outcomes for children, young people and adults in need of safeguarding.

As chairs of both the children and adults board we will continue to serve the residents and diverse communities of the North Wales region in leading and fulfilling the Board objectives as

stated in Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 to protect and prevent children and adults in the region from experiencing abuse and neglect and other kinds of harm.

Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the sad passing of two board officers during this period due to Covid-19. Mark Jones and Chris Pearson were both well-known across not only in the region but nationally in the field of Adult Safeguarding. Mark in particular was instrumental in the development of the Wales Safeguarding Adult Procedures.

In the words of the Chair of the National Safeguarding Procedures Project Board: “As you know Mark had a significant amount of input in to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. We often debated at length the detail of what went in them– I always felt this meant that we were getting the procedures right in the end and I think a huge part of that was down to Mark and his attention to detail and process. The procedures very much reflect his knowledge and expertise and I will very much miss his input in to them going forward. This is a significant loss to our safeguarding community.”

Jenny Williams

Chair North Wales Safeguarding Children’s Board

Neil Ayling

Chair North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board



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Objective of the Safeguarding Boards:

Serving the citizens and diverse communities of the North Wales region which encompasses six Local Authority areas does not come without significant challenges. The board and its members however continue to be proud of the strong ethos of collaboration and partnership working that has been established at a senior executive board and sub group level. We look forward to the year ahead and continuing to build upon the strong foundations established in the preceding four years to deliver against our objectives and our aspiration to achieve excellence in Safeguarding work, professional practice and the services we provide to our communities.

Protecting and preventing children and adults at risk from experiencing harm and promoting the wellbeing of the people of North Wales enabling them to achieve better outcomes remains central to the Board's work.

Areas have been identified for continuing improvement and will enable the Board and its members to fulfil their statutory responsibilities as outlined in Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 to protect and prevent children and adults at risk in the region from experiencing abuse and neglect and other kinds of harm.

1.0 About the North Wales Safeguarding Boards:

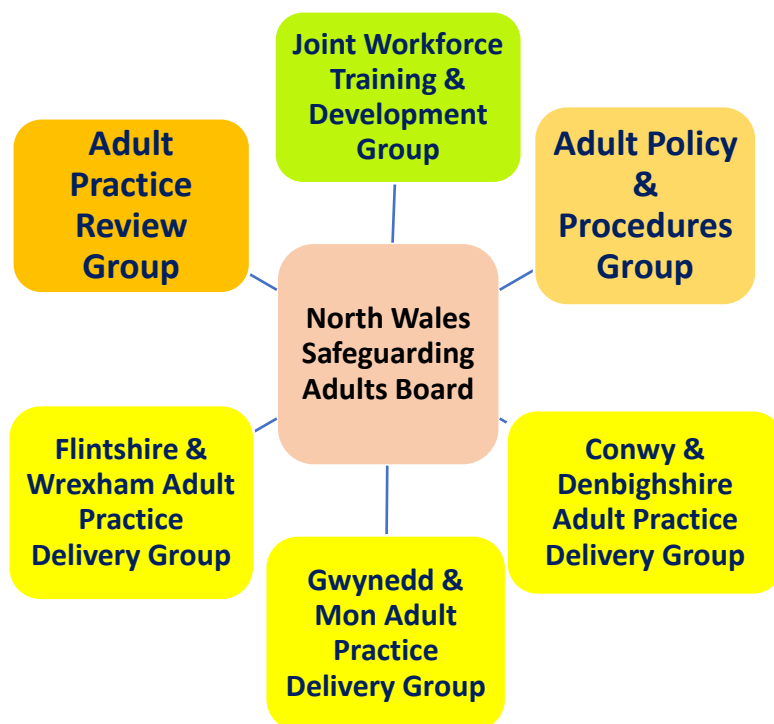
1.1 Structure & Membership:

The North Wales Safeguarding Boards currently meet four times per year and jointly twice a year, in addition there is also a joint Business Development Day held annually to set the priorities for the coming year and self-assess the progress of the Boards.

The Board's Practice Delivery Groups and the Policies and Procedures Group currently meet on a quarterly basis. The Practice Review Groups and the Joint Workforce and Training Group meet bi-monthly

Board Structures:

North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board:



North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board:

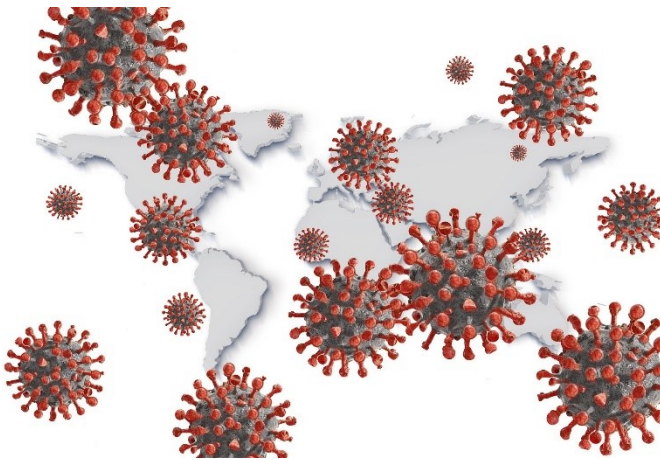


Board Membership:

North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board	North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board
<p>Chair: Neil Ayling Chief Officer – Social Services Flintshire County Council</p> <p>Vice Chair: Michelle Denwood -Associate Director Safeguarding – Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board</p> <p>Anglesey CC - Director of Social Services. Head of Adults Services</p> <p>Conwy CBC - Strategic Director of Social Care & Education. Head of Service for Children, Family and Safeguarding</p> <p>Denbighshire CC - Corporate Director Communities. Head of Community Support Services</p> <p>Flintshire CC – Chief Officer Social Services. Senior Manager Safeguarding & Commissioning</p> <p>Gwynedd CC – Corporate Director. Head of Adult Health and Wellbeing Services</p> <p>Wrexham CBC - Head of Adult Social Care</p> <p>BCUHB Director of Nursing Mental Health & Learning Disabilities</p> <p>BCUHB - Assistant Director of Nursing MHL D</p> <p>Probation Service – Designated Officer</p> <p>North Wales Police - Detective Superintendent/PVPU</p> <p>Public Health Wales – Designated Nurse National Safeguarding Team</p> <p>Care Forum Wales – Chief Executive</p> <p>Welsh Ambulance Service Trust – Head of Safeguarding</p> <p>North Wales Fire & Rescue Service - Business Education & Arson Reduction Team Manager</p> <p>HMP Berwyn – Head of Safety and Equality</p>	<p>Chair: Jenny Williams - Director of Social Care and Education - Conwy County Borough Council</p> <p>Vice Chair: Jason Devonport North Wales Police.</p> <p>Director of Social Services, Head of Children & Family Services – Anglesey Council</p> <p>Head of Children, Family & Safeguarding Services – Conwy County Borough Council</p> <p>Corporate Director Communities & Head of Education & Children's Services – Denbighshire County Council</p> <p>Chief Officer Social Services. Head of Children's Services- Flintshire County Council.</p> <p>Head of Children & Support Families and Corporate Director - Gwynedd Council.</p> <p>Service Manager Prevention & Support Youth Justice Service</p> <p>Head of Service - Wrexham Youth Justice Service</p> <p>Head of Corporate Safeguarding, Assistant Director Children's Services - Barnardo's</p> <p>Detective Superintendent PVPU - North Wales Police</p> <p>Associate Director Safeguarding & Named Doctor Children's safeguarding - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board</p> <p>Head of Children's Services – Wrexham County Borough Council</p> <p>Head of Local Delivery Unit – Probation Service</p> <p>Designated Nurse National Safeguarding Team – Public Health Wales</p> <p>Service Manager for North Wales (Children services) - NSPCC</p> <p>Safeguarding Specialist Quality, Safety & Patient Experience Directorate - Welsh Ambulance Service Trust</p>

2.0 Action the Safeguarding Boards have taken to achieve particular outcomes.

During April 2020, the Welsh Government issued revised guidance around their expectations regarding the role and functions of the Safeguarding Boards during the Covid-19 pandemic.



The focus for Safeguarding Boards as set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Regulations and statutory guidance is:

- the protection of children and adults who have needs for care and support and are experiencing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm and
- the prevention of children and adults from becoming at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.

The expectation remained that these two objectives should continue to inform the priorities of Safeguarding Boards during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, Welsh Government acknowledged that the ways in which these objectives are met may need to look different while COVID-19 arrangements are in place.

The following are the main points covered in the guidance together with an update in relation to the North Wales Safeguarding Boards:

- a) Wales Safeguarding Procedures continue to be implemented but acknowledge that there will need to be flexibility on the application of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures during the COVID-19 outbreak.



Response: Procedures have been implemented. The NWSB continued to provide training in particular to education and care homes during the first lockdown period. We were very aware that we had not completed all of the workshops that we had commissioned for staff due to be completed March 2020. So virtual workshops were held in throughout July till September 2020.

- b) Safeguarding Boards, working with relevant safeguarding partners should identify any regional issues that call for the development of regional policies or procedures to promote the protection of children and adults while COVID-19 arrangements are in place.

Policies and Procedures



Response: P & P groups are continuing to meet virtually. During this period, we also developed the additional guidance documents required to support the implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

- c) Safeguarding Boards should remind relevant safeguarding partners of the need to share **with them any emerging issues resulting from current arrangements that are creating new safeguarding issues.**

Response: NWSB and sub groups are meeting virtually and practice issues were highlighted

- d) Safeguarding Boards to raise with relevant partners and bodies any issues particularly impacting on the efficacy of safeguarding arrangements in the region and to support them finding solutions wherever possible.

Response: Virtual meetings taking place between WG and safeguarding boards during this period. Meetings took place on a monthly basis.

- e) APR/CPR - Safeguarding Boards to remind partners of the importance of referring cases for review, there will be important learning from cases that meet the criteria during this unprecedented period.

Response: Safeguarding Board sub groups such as the APR/CPR group are meeting virtually. We have seen an impact of shortage of reviewers as agencies have to focus on day to day operational issues. This will be a pressure point over the coming months.

Practice Reviews



- f) To undertake audits, reviews and investigations as are required in pursuance of its objectives - Welsh Government is aware that there will be considerable barriers to fulfilling this function while COVID-19 arrangements are in place. However, WG expect the Safeguarding Boards to monitor and maintain a log of any relevant incidents while COVID- 19 arrangements are in place.

Response: NWSB have not been able to multi- agency audits during this time as access to work offices has been limited and not all authorities are working to the same IT system. This impacted the work that was due to take place during 20-21

- g) To monitor the extent to which any recommendations made are being or have been met; The Welsh Government acknowledged that this function will be difficult for Safeguarding Boards to prioritise or implement while COVID-19 arrangements are in place.

Response: Virtual meetings have supported the NWSB to meet its functions.

- h) The Welsh Government expects Safeguarding Boards to keep in review the ways in which the function of the Board, relevant partners and bodies acts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 arrangements so that children and adults are safeguarded.

Response: During first lockdown, agenda items focused on performance

indicators and the impact of Covid.

- i) Expectation that the Safeguarding Boards disseminate information about best practice and learning related to responses to safeguarding issues and ways to mitigate the impact of current pressures to promote the protection of children and adults. Safeguarding Boards will also be key to identifying and working with partners to respond to matters arising as a result of COVID-19.

Response: Information was shared nationally during this period. In particular, Welsh Government guidance was shared and also guidance from the Centre of Expertise Child Sexual Abuse.

- j) Welsh Government recognised that it will not be practical to facilitate research during the period of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Response: No research has been undertaken by the NWSB but as highlighted we did share national research.

- k) Training - Safeguarding Boards identify and promote any appropriate online safeguarding learning that might usefully be promoted at this time, in particular for volunteers and those returning to or entering the workforce for the first time to support pressures brought about by self-isolation and illness.



Response: Training has been delivered virtually during this period, also NWSB developed the Adults Safeguarding Videos. The videos have been shared with Social Care Wales so that all officers across Wales have been able to access this work package. North Wales Safeguarding

Board delivered TRIM Training to multi-agency partners

- l) To arrange and facilitate an annual programme of multi-agency professional forums. For practical reasons it may not be possible to fulfil this function until after COVID-19 arrangements are lifted.

Response: This is an area of practice that has been impacted since March 2020.

3.0 The extent to which the Safeguarding Board has implemented its most recent Annual Plan.

From the Board's Business development day and also to reflect the National Agenda in Wales, we were able to identify two priority areas for the Children's and Adults Board

1. To promote awareness and compliance around the New Wales Safeguarding Adult Procedures (NWSAB)
2. To promote awareness and compliance around the New Wales Safeguarding Children Procedures (NWSCB)

The rationale for the choice of these two priority areas is that we need to further promote awareness of the New All Wales Safeguarding procedures but as a region demonstrate over

the next twelve months that we have embedded the procedures into practice. In addition, we have improvement areas to continue to work on:

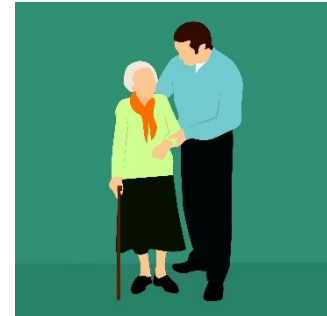
- Strong Leadership & Evidenced Compliance
- Increased Knowledge & Continuous Learning

The following is an update on the progress achieved:

3.1 North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board:

Adult at risk: Ensure that the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board have measures in place to protect and prevent abuse of Adults at Risk and adherence to the All Wales Safeguarding Adults procedures.

Progress: The North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board have created a self-assessment audit tool-kit for all partner agencies to complete.



The tool-kit will focus on the following areas to ensure compliance with the Wales Safeguarding procedures

- Policies and procedures
- Recording requirements
- Workforce development
- Organisational culture
- Commissioning

The audit will be completed in September 21. This work package was due to be completed in March 2020 but all Board members felt this was not possible and is an example of where Covid impacted NWSB work.

We commissioned the development of Adult Safeguarding Videos. The materials covered all sections of the procedures and also highlighted the key principles of the procedures. As highlighted, the videos are available on the Social Care Wales website.

Work is well under way via the NWSAB Policies & Procedures Group to establish a pathway between Health and Social Care in relation to S126 enquiries and the role of the Lead Practitioner

Work is also being undertaken with the Regional Advocacy group to ensure we are able to capture more data around demonstrating that the Adult at Risk is at the centre of the safeguarding process.

A series of audits to assess compliance with the procedures was scheduled to start January 2021, however this has now been delayed due to the ongoing pandemic.

Adult at risk: Person centred practice is embedded within the safeguarding process across all agencies.

Progress: Additional Person centred guidance is being developed to accompany the

procedures. The workshops that are being commissioned via the Learning and Training sub group all include the focus on person centred planning.

Adult at risk: Ensure that multi-agency safeguarding pathway is effective around Domestic Violence and Adult at Risk Cases.

Progress: There is pilot of weekly MARAC meetings in order to discuss cases in a timely manner. This allows identification of any care and support needs or relevant information and advice that can be provided.

In addition to support the work taking place within the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board, the NWSAB along with the other Safeguarding Boards in Wales will look at creating specific practice guide on the following areas:

- Adult at Risk and Exploitation
- Adult at Risk and Domestic Abuse

3.2 North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board:

Child at risk: Ensure that the North Wales Safeguarding Children Board have measures in place to protect and prevent abuse of Child at Risk and adherence to the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.



Progress: The North Wales Safeguarding Children Board have created a self-assessment audit tool-kit for all partner agencies to complete. The tool-kit will focus on the following areas to ensure compliance with the Wales Safeguarding procedures:

- Policies and procedures
- Recording requirements
- Workforce development
- Organisational culture
- Commissioning

The audit will be completed in September 21. As highlighted this work package was delayed due to Covid.

Child at risk: Child centred practice is embedded within the safeguarding process across all agencies.

Progress: Building on the workshops held during 20/21, the NWSCB will hold further events around Child Centred practice.

We now have established links with Tros Gynnal children's group and will use this forum to ensure we have input from Children and Young People into all new policy developments / strategies.

Child at risk: Ensure that multi-agency safeguarding pathway is effective around Child Sexual Abuse cases.

Progress: During 20/21 the NWSCB have continued with the implementation of the National CSA Action plan via the LDG. Work that has been done in this area includes:

- The development of a specific CSA webpage on the NWSB website. The webpage includes information on the National Action Plan and a range of materials and links to information around the Stop it now campaign.
- We sent key messages via the NWSB twitter around the Stop it now campaign.
- The Stop it Now Leaflets have been sent out across the region specifically focussing on education and including Independent Schools.
- Lucy Faithfull/ Stop it now! Gillian Jones attended all three Local Delivery Groups in December 2020. Presentation, Posters, and briefings were shared with the group and the documents were circulated across the local delivery group area.

3.3 NWSB Improvement Plan:

Strong Leadership & Evidenced Compliance:

The NWSB continues to monitor its risk register - to ensure that the NWSB is made aware of any risks within and across services and is assured and updated on any action to be taken to minimise the risk.



Progress: Risk Register updated –key areas included:

- Impact of Covid 19
- Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

At the Business Development day, it was agreed that we needed to include the two practice items above to the risk register

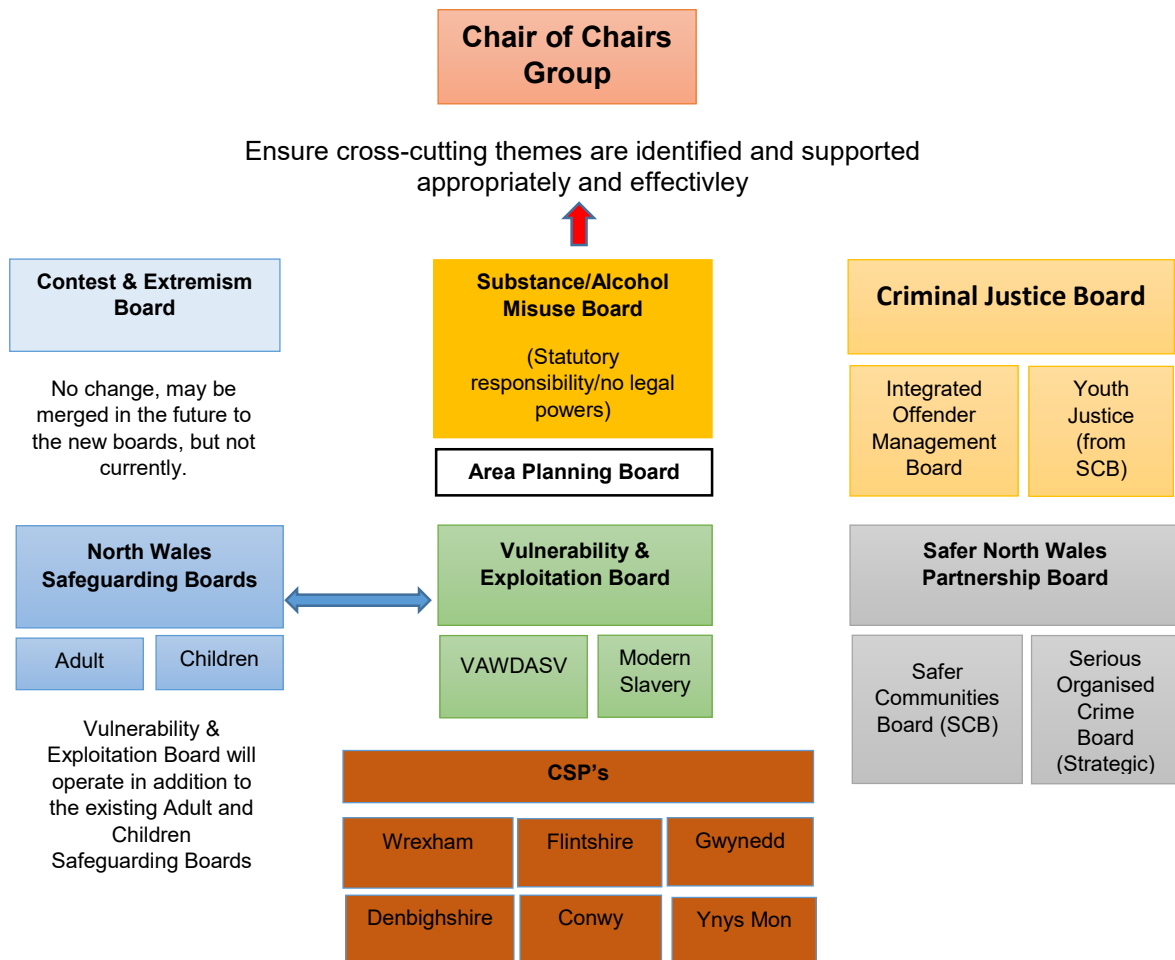
In other areas we had seen progress in reducing the potential risk for example the move to virtual meetings has seen an increase in attendance at sub group meetings

Links with other partnership boards are limited and not effectively managed – the work that has been undertaken via the regional partnership review has strengthened the links between respective safeguarding partnership meetings in the region.

Establish clear lines of accountability and reporting mechanisms - between the Safeguarding Boards and the wider safeguarding partnerships.

Progress: The regional safeguarding partnership review report has been completed. We have reduced the number of safeguarding partnership board meetings that were being held in the region.

The new structure is seen below:



The purpose of the Chairs' meeting of the North Wales Strategic Partnership Boards is to:

1. Provide strategic oversight of the Boards to ensure effective partnership working and minimise the likelihood of silo working
2. To ensure that the collective work of the Strategic Boards delivers national and regional priorities in relation to protecting communities, preventing crime, pursuing criminals and protecting and supporting the vulnerable.

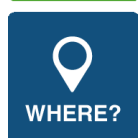
The Board will also seek to identify opportunities to align activity with other partnership arrangements across North Wales in order to provide a joint approach to the efficient use of resources and effective delivery of priorities.

To consider the proposals made at the recent Business Development Day around reviewing the Local Delivery group structure below the Children's Board.

Progress: The current structure remains in place following consultation with the sub groups. During this period, we have seen improved attendance at the sub groups. Holding virtual meetings has been successful for the sub groups.

Increased Knowledge & Continuous Learning: To be assured that we know the children, young people and adults who are most at risk in our region and effectively safeguard them. To continually develop and improve the way we work so that outcomes improve.

Progress: Better engagement at the LDG's has seen more informed discussions regarding safeguarding those most at risk. Work has taken place on piloting a "practice tool" which will assist identifying those children/ young people at risk of exploitation. Work is underway on developing a NWSB information sharing protocol, this will hopefully address concerns around sharing information. By delivering more training on the Wales Safeguarding Procedures we have seen increased awareness of the Practice Guides which go alongside the procedures.



To Respond to and implement action plans from the learning of APR's/CPR's and any high profile reviews such as national reviews/practice reviews to identify, and monitor the implementation of changes that help to prevent similar abuse or neglect happening to others, ensuring the Board that partners have taken appropriate action to improve areas of concern.

Progress: We still have further work in the following areas:

Children's

- Neglect – development of a regional Neglect strategy in 21-22
- Pre- birth assessment- practice guide to be updated

Adults

- The role of the care coordinator

The Business unit have been delivering training to NWP on the learning from practice reviews during the year.

We have tried to ensure that the reviewers deliver presentations to the LDG's following the publication of the report to ensure key messages are shared.

3.4 Business Development Morning

At the end of 2020/21, the NWSB held a Business Development morning. Given the impact of Covid-19 on Board business, it was felt that we still had further work to do in relation to the two priority areas that were identified the previous year and so we have continued with the following priorities:

To promote awareness and compliance around the Wales Safeguarding (Adult) Procedures (NWSAB). To promote awareness and compliance around the Wales Safeguarding (Children) Procedures (NWSCB)



Trefniadau Diogelu Cymru
Wales Safeguarding Procedures

We have held a number of workshops in the region on the Wales Safeguarding Procedures but due to Covid -19 we have not been able to complete the audits that we had planned during the year. We could also identify that in relation to Child Protection Conference appeals and Adult Safeguarding Practice complaints we have further work around ensuring we embed the key principles of child / person centred approach to practice.

One example in relation to the work we have done on the enquiries stage within the Adult Safeguarding process is we want to see evidence within case file records of:

- Are the enquiries person centred?
- Does the adult at risk lack capacity to make a decision to protect themselves from abuse?

In addition, we have added a further priority area for the year:

To continue to ensure a robust, resilient and consistent approach to safeguarding practice during the Covid-19 pandemic (NWSB)

As we will demonstrate within the annual report, we have focused throughout the year around the impact of Covid-19. This will continue to be a key part of the Board's work.

4.0 How have the Safeguarding Boards collaborated with other persons or bodies engaged in activities relating to the board's objectives?



The Business Manager has continued to attend the monthly meetings with the Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board representative alongside other managers from Regional Safeguarding Boards to discuss both national and local issues.



Both the North Wales Safeguarding Adults and Children's Boards have been engaging with the other safeguarding partnership boards in North Wales in relation to the partnership review which has now been completed. We have contributed to the development of the recently created Vulnerability and Exploitation Board which covers Modern Slavery and the Violence against Woman Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence agenda. The Business Manager did work on the development of the recent Vulnerability and Exploitation strategy in the region.

In addition, practitioners from across the region are currently working with the WCCIS Programme Group in developing the safeguarding templates for the system, it is hoped that this will mean all regions across Wales will be working with the same documentation although the recent notification around the work done via Public Health Wales on a Health Safeguarding module will need to be clarified

The North Wales Safeguarding board has and still is consistently contributing to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures National Project Board. We continued to highlight

practitioner concerns around the need for further work to be undertaken on section 5 of the procedures.



The Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales's Office work on Abuse of Older People, has been highlighted at the Local Delivery Group meetings and information has recently been shared regarding the creation of the new

website to help older people who are being abused, or those at risk, find the information, advice and support they need.

In relation to the Children's Commissioner for Wales's office – we have provided information on Home Educated Children and also provided an update on Safeguarding in Independent Schools. The NWSCB is supportive of the work the Children's Commissioner is under taking on Home Educated Children in ensuring that Welsh Government respond to the concerns being highlighted.



The annual meeting with the North Wales Coroners service was delayed during the year but the meeting has taken place. We provided an overview of key practice review themes during the year and although the coroner has not seen similar themes during this year via their work, it will be something that we will continue to share information on.



The annual meeting with Care Inspectorate Wales was also held during this year and we presented an overview of the work of the Board and key practice themes from the last year.

We continued to have regular dialogue with the Police Crime Commissioner during this year.

The NWSCB have continue to meet on an annual basis with the Cheshire West Safeguarding Partnership. This year we have had more frequent meetings with Cheshire West due to some practice concerns regarding safeguarding practice in a hospital in the Cheshire West region.



A number of children/ families in the east of the North Wales region access that hospital for support, so the NWSCB have been seeking reassurance regarding the concerns.

5.0 Any requests the Safeguarding Board has made to qualifying persons under section 137(1) of the Act for specified information, and whether the requests were complied with.

None. The Board have been successful in obtaining information without having to resort to this measure by way of clear communication with the respective agencies, in particular those that do not meet the criteria of 'qualifying persons' under the Act.

6.0 Achievements of the Safeguarding Boards during the year.

6.1 Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

Interim Safeguarding Board Meetings:

During March and April 2020, 'interim' Safeguarding Board meetings took place as to give an update on what was happening in their area and what practices had been put in place to continue to statutory duties. An overview was given by all partners to give assurance to the Boards, that safeguarding needs were continuing to be met. We would like to acknowledge the work of the Vice Chair of the Children's Board who undertook the chairing of the interim meetings. Full Board resumed in May 2020 and has continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis where possible.



Overview of the impact of Covid-19 on practice:

As the Boards and subgroups continued to meet virtually, the following was highlighted:

March/April 2020

During the first week of lockdown at the end of March 2020, there was a significant reduction in comparison to 2019 and it was noted that there had been a significant reduction of referrals received from care homes.

Issues raised in referrals during Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions highlighted verbal domestic altercations, breakdown in relationships, and neglect including self-neglect. Also the trend was that safeguarding teams were receiving increased requests for advice from other professionals regarding submitting referrals, this was seen as positive, though it was highlighted that during this time the role of the safeguarding teams had changed in being able to adapt for the provision of advice and information.

Also highlighted in regards to vulnerable adults was that there had been a complexity of issues, people not understanding or observing self-isolation. Reduced or delayed movement between care homes

A great deal of work was undertaken with community groups which were set up very quickly at the beginning of lockdown. Challenges included that many volunteers had not had any training or experience in safeguarding but received support from experienced professionals. There had been a significant increase in social calls and practical support, including provision of food and prescriptions.

6.2 Update from agencies via the Local Practice Delivery Groups highlighting issues and themes during the pandemic:

6.3. Adult Practice Delivery Groups:

The Regional Safeguarding Adults and Children Practice Delivery Groups continued to meet throughout the year, virtual platforms facilitated those meetings, most of which were well attended.

The following issues and themes were reported:

6.4 Conwy & Denbighshire Adults Practice Delivery Group:

Staffing and meetings: All agencies reported that staff were working from home. Initial instances of staff sickness had increased the work load on those still working, whilst other staff had been redeployed to pressure areas. Safeguarding teams have adapted in their roles to offer advice and information to colleagues and other making contact, this was commented on as being positive.

Strategy meetings via dial in, skype, MS Teams and other platforms has worked well, though there have been some initial difficulties for holding regional meetings in finding a platform that can be used by all agencies. Some agencies such as Police and BCUHB are unable to connect via Zoom after initial security issues.

Safeguarding Reports: It was reported that there had been an initial decrease in the number of safeguarding reports and CID16's received during March and April but had started to increased again in May and June. Across the region it was evident that there was an increase in the incidence of neglect and in particular self-neglect, incidents of domestic abuse have not increased in line with what has been reported nationally. The safeguarding data indicates that providers have been the biggest reporters of safeguarding concerns.

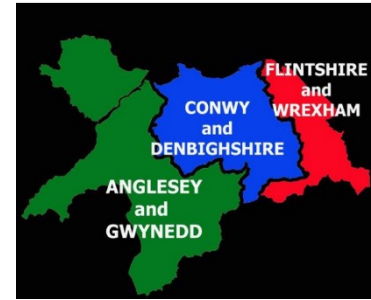
The quality of information contained in the safeguarding reports is very poor and continues to be an issue. Groups asked the NWSAB to look at how this can be addressed.

Nursing and Care Homes: Those that had cases of Covid-19 had increased monitoring on day to day basis. During the first lockdown, an increased number of calls had been received from care homes highlighting poor discharges and the disparity between discharges from acute and community hospitals.

Weekly meetings were held with care home providers and domiciliary care providers which were useful. During this challenging time providers reported support from Local Authorities and the Health Board had been excellent.

Quality of care concerns were being discussed through monitoring teams and safeguarding to ensure information is shared. The monitoring team also had discussions around ensuring individuals receiving services are communicated with and are able to voice views on their care and support during the lockdown.

During the period August to the end November, visits by social care staff and social workers continued to individuals living in the community and in care homes. Where



safeguarding concerns were raised, there was active promotion of visiting the individual when appropriate, ensuring all risk assessments were in place.



S126 Enquiries: The data reflects that there was a slight short fall in the duty to ensure S126 enquiries are completed within seven working days. As a response there was further oversight of this by the safeguarding teams and advice provided to practitioners managing the safeguarding S126 enquiries.

DOLS assessments: Still being completed with virtual assessments being undertaken, though some agencies decided to issue them for shorter terms. It was highlighted, during this period, the challenges of family visits etc. and that as a condition of granting authorisation some Local Authorities had added that the care homes should continue to review how they maintain residents contact with families.

Mental Health Services - It was highlighted within the Mental Wellbeing services that there had been issues with conveying people to hospital once a Mental Health Act Assessment has concluded this is required. There had been times where individuals have had to wait up to 24 hours for an ambulance as they were not seen as a priority. This then caused conflict with the value of parity of esteem as people were not accessing mental health services in the same way as those with physical health service needs.



A steering group was set up across the six local authorities in North Wales to look at issues affecting individuals using mental health services and issues practitioners face, for example access to Section 12 Doctors on a rota basis, how S117 aftercare is delivered.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: Reported a significant drop in Adult at Risk reporting in April, slight increase in May. Also noted was an increase in phone calls received for advice. Positive cross link working with local authorities, supporting each other during challenging times reported.

Advocacy Services: Alzheimer's society indicated that for them, the requests for advocacy had decreased. A duty desk had been introduced and information around how to support individuals once lockdown is eased was to be considered. Was also highlighted that there had been an increase in deaths of people with dementia, not only due to Covid-19 but possibly due social isolation.

North Wales Police: In terms of Covid-19 North Wales Police mirrored other agencies, and reported a decrease in number of CID16 referrals but increased in May/June.

With regards to MARAC, four weekly MARAC were set up. This provided an opportunity to discuss safeguarding in a multi-agency forum early on in the process and was deemed to be successful. Aim to roll out across the region.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures: In particular Allegations against Professionals and those in a position of trust. Since raising awareness of Part 5 of the procedures, there has been an increase in concerns following this process across the whole of the region. This is likely due to people recognising the need to refer concerns to the local authority and also greater identification at screening

6.5 Flintshire & Wrexham Adults Practice Delivery Groups:

Staffing and meetings: All Strategy Meetings held using telephone conferencing, and proved very successful. Saw an impressive commitment from partner agencies to ensure that safeguarding adults at risk remained the highest priority. Moved towards use of Video Conferencing for some Strategy Meetings where higher numbers of attendees preclude successful interaction on dial in facilities.

Safeguarding Reports: Since end of March 2020, the Adult Safeguarding Teams experienced a drop in the number of referrals received. Due to Covid19 families are spending more time together which is causing immense pressures as there are different generations living within households. There was also financial and aggressive abuse taking place. Other colleagues are contacting the Safeguarding Team more frequently so they can request advice and direction.

Whilst numbers of adult safeguarding referrals did reduce initially, the complexity of cases coming to the Adult Safeguarding team continued.

The quality of information contained in the safeguarding reports is very poor and continues to be an issue. Groups asked NWSAB to look at how this can be addressed.

The Adults at Risk teams worked closely with colleagues in other departments and agencies to identify people who may have been most at risk of “falling between the cracks” – those who do not receive domiciliary support and who may be less able to adapt and adjust to new ways of living during a time of crisis. Once identified, contact was made with those people and their care and support needs assessed. Worked with the third sector and with colleagues to tap into food and support networks that are being developed, to provide assurance that this very vulnerable group are not missed.

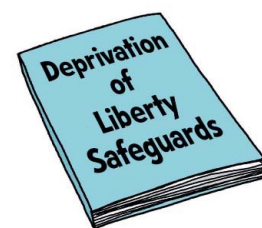


Nursing and Care Homes: Reported an increase of safeguarding reports received from Care Homes due to medication errors by staff. Care Forum Wales representative agreed with the information in relation to the decrease in safeguarding referrals being submitted from care homes. There had also been a decrease in other areas and highlighted that the number of infections and use of antibiotics had dropped. Possibly due to a decrease in visitors, the introduction of PPE and the Covid restrictions. It is to be acknowledged that the Care Sector did extremely well in keeping people safe, this included in house and independent sector.

S126 Enquiries: Enquiries were made using electronic communication systems where possible, but were very aware of the need to involve those professionals who do see adults at risk face to face. If a face to face visit was essential, other agencies involved where necessary, including health colleagues and police, to ensure that the visit was done safely.

Circulated a guidance note to all staff early in lockdown, listing the things to watch out for in terms of safeguarding adults at risk ensuring that practice was in accordance with PHW and WG guidelines relevant at the time. This advice was revised as required.

DOLS assessments: Continued to use the Welsh government prioritisation tool and assessors continued to work flexibly and imaginatively to ensure that assessments involved the individual service user as far as possible, on a case by case basis. Implemented guidance circulated by 39 Essex Chambers so that when assessments were carried out without a face-to-face assessment, could be sure they used the principles of the Mental Capacity Act to achieve a careful balance between protecting human rights and ensuring public health protection guidance is followed. All processes were carried out electronically and e-mail correspondence sent where possible rather than hard copies. Systems and processes were refined so that staff, although working remotely, could maintain the administrative side of DoLS assessments



Mental Health Services: Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) were available to carry out their roles. This was in the context of the emergency amendments to the operation of the Mental Health Act made under emergency Covid-19 legislation. AMHPs had been working with other agencies to ensure that assessments were carried out as safely as possible, balancing the need to carry out a full and fair assessment against the need to ensure safety for all involved. Each case was looked at on its own merits, including working with the Courts to secure warrants and conveying patients to hospital.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: It was acknowledged that the number of referrals had reduced dramatically but the volume of calls remained high, in particular from staff wanting advice. There had also been a change to the use of Mental Health unit in Wrexham as a regional older people's unit, supporting adults with dementia, the wards had been redesigned and this had seen an increase in number of referrals.

Staffing did not decrease but were working remotely to support other aspects such as field hospital and volunteer recruitment.

Advocacy Services: Local advocacy services in Flintshire and Wrexham reported they had seen an increase in the number of referrals from the community, especially in relation to IMCA and accommodation. Staff carried out the IMCA visits on a face to face basis but adhered to social distancing, though no Care Home visits were taking place. It had also been reported that they had been an increase in Children's Service referrals.



Alzheimer's Society highlighted there had been a complexity of issues, people not understanding or observing self-isolation. Reduced or delayed movement between care homes.

North Wales Police: Staffing in PVPU had remained consistent throughout the covid-19 situation and on the whole it has been business as usual. Challenge was the ability to manage reports, adult at risk reports highlighted as being low. Highlighted that there had been a greater demand on frontline police.

Probation Service: Individuals who are known to be higher risk were receiving door step visits, this also included domestic abuse cases, as staff wanted to ensure they are well and keeping safe. Those who did not have this type of appointment were able to visit the office. Face Time was also being utilised for offenders and conference calls

were held remotely. The Service received positive feedback and responses were effective.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures: With regards to section 5: Allegations against Professionals and those in a position of trust, it was reported there is a lack of clarity /lack of direction and needs a national/regional approach as there are potentially major implications for practice. Also regarding Cross border part 4s need clarity.



Contribution of Voluntary Councils: A great deal of work was undertaken with community groups which were set up very quickly at the beginning of lockdown. Challenges included the many volunteers who had not had any training or experience in safeguarding. They received support from experienced professionals. There had been a significant increase in social calls and practical support, including provision of food and prescriptions.

A positive point to note was that people became involved in their community and individuals reported feeling less isolated due to volunteers helping them. Concern was raised for the future in that there may be a big increase in financial hardship.

6.6 Gwynedd & Anglesey Adult Practice Delivery Group:

Staffing and meetings: Strategy meetings and case conferences are continuing to be held via MS Teams, Skype or phone as applicable. MS Teams appears to be working with good effect.

Safeguarding Reports: The number of safeguarding reports received continued to decrease. This trend was indicative across North Wales Local Authorities. Cases of self-neglect in particular have increased with more individuals being supported under the protocol. It is not clear whether more agencies are becoming aware of the self-neglect protocol and identifying more potential citizens or whether it is Covid-related issue.

Quality of information contained in the safeguarding reports is very poor and continues to be an issue. Groups asked NWSAB to look at how this can be addressed.

MARAC referrals for March and April figures were considerably lower than usual. More worryingly, domestic violence support agencies were reporting a surge in calls for support since the pandemic began.

S126 Enquiries: There had been a negligible decrease in the number of enquiries completed within the 7-day window. This was attributed to the complexity of the cases, and where the citizen has not wished to engage in the safeguarding process.

DOLS assessments: Received an increasing number of requests for Part 8 reviews as Managing Authorities are imposing tighter restrictions on residents to comply with the Act. There are no s21a challenges pending at this time.

As per the Coronavirus Act guidance, Best Interest Assessors (BIA's) were completing virtual assessments of residents noting in assessments the caveat of the Act. Copies of assessments were being requested via email and most homes were supportive of this. We were able to rely upon old assessments where the evidence indicates an unlikely regaining of capacity. Likewise, s12 doctors were assessing virtually.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: Reported a significant drop in safeguarding reports during April as a result of the Coronavirus. The figures in May were higher, the high number of reports coming through were from Care Homes. Neglect and alleged physical abuse continued to be the most prominent category of abuse in the West

North Wales Police: Reported that the mini MARAC meetings have continued and there has been a reduction in overall meeting time, no additional technology had to be used, and MARACs became more focused

Wales Safeguarding Procedures: Practitioners were continuing to work with the new procedures, however, it was reported that Section 5 is still problematic and causing increasing workloads.



Self-neglect has become the main type of abuse reported.

It is suspected this is related to the scaling back of social support services, such as day care and reduced availability of home care.

As well as the fact that informal support from family and friends has also been withdrawn or scaled back significantly.

6.7 Child Practice Delivery Groups:

6.8 Conwy & Denbighshire Children's Practice Delivery Group:

Staffing and meetings: All agencies reported staff were working from home where possible, but had been able to continue some face to face work with the provision of PPE, when necessary.

Many meetings have continued to be held on a virtual basis, which overall has worked well, however there have been some problems with agencies being able to use the same platforms due to security issues. Hybrid meetings are being considered, in particular with regards to conferences.





Corporate Safeguarding Health staff were impacted due to pressure on staff undertaking covid-19 vaccinations and provision of support on wards.

Increased stress levels were noted amongst health and social care staff, who also felt more challenged during the third lockdown. Recruitment issues were also noted. Concern has been raised the previous year around recruitment and retention in

the region; low numbers registered to undertake the Social Work Degree in North Wales.

Safeguarding reports: It was reported there had been a reduction in safeguarding reports at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, by June it was noted there had been a vast improvement in reports received, bringing the numbers in line with past figures.

Emotional abuse remained the highest category of abuse overall throughout the year, with an increase in domestic abuse incidents initially around February time.

It was highlighted there had been a decrease in Child at Risk reporting from Health, it was noted this could be due to Health Visitors not being able to undertake face to face visits, school closures and the reduction of outpatient attendance at main hospitals. This was consistent throughout the pandemic.



Education: During the lockdown period, there has been the additional risk of vulnerable learners and those not known to services not being seen or responded to via the usual safeguarding processes or procedures. A vulnerable learners communication group has been set up which meets twice weekly and this has gone some way in terms of exchange of information and support and advice to these identified families. There have been discussions around attendance codes as children remain out of education.

In terms of policies, a key area is to look at an educational neglect policy, and during this year updates to policies have had to include distance learning due to the circumstances.

Advice, support, guidance and training has been provided to staff including training on the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and digital resilience and online safety for children and young people.

Regular contact has been had with schools to emphasise the importance of schools' responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

BCUHB: It was reported interim training packs were provided online. Throughout the year training compliance improved. Health implemented a Covid action plan, risk assessments were undertaken with midwives and there was engagement with health visitors with regards to different ways of working.

It was highlighted there had been a decrease in Child at Risk reporting. It was reported this could have been due to Health Visitors not able to undertake face to face visits, school closures and reduction of outpatient attendance at main hospitals. This theme

continued during the second lockdown.

An increase in CAMHS cases was noted as well as an increase in non-accidental injuries, physical abuse and domestic abuse. The number of professional concerns reports received also increased.

North Wales Police: Police reported staffing remained consistent and it was business as usual throughout the covid-19 period. Staff worked from the office or home, when appropriate.

Virtual weekly MARAC were introduced; this worked well and feedback from partner agencies was positive. The virtual meetings enabled police and partners to fast track actions and address safeguarding within a week of the incident.

A DI for both MAPPA and MARAC appointed who will be responsible for the portfolio of MAPPA/MARAC across the whole force ensuring continuity.

NSPCC **NSPCC:** The key risks for NSPCC were due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many activities had to be reconsidered in particular with regards to face to face work with children and families. Also financial and fundraising had been impacted upon.

YJS: YJS reported staff have worked from home where possible. Due to Covid-19 there had been some sickness and isolation from staff, but this situation has now improved.

Five key standards have been integrated into the policies and procedures, in particular with regards to 17 – 18 year olds which may require support and to ensure children are not lost within the system.

Probation Service: Probation services continued as normal as possible but to a different model. Initially face to face visits stopped and were replaced with doorstep visits. Had previously moved from face to face to doorstep visits. A rota was put in place to meet high risk cases and staff spent their time split between the office, working from home and meetings via phone or Microsoft Teams.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures: In particular Allegations against Professionals and those in a position of trust. Since raising awareness of Part 5 of the procedures, concern has been raised about how the process is being carried out across the region.



6.9 Flintshire & Wrexham Children's Practice Delivery Group:

Staffing and meetings: Case conferences and core group meetings have been held virtually. Families appeared to communicate more openly and children have dialled in with the conference buddy scheme. Visits have been undertaken with use of PPE, telephone calls and via what's App which has been positive. Virtual meetings have been a positive way of engaging young people and families although the interaction has been lost with families with this format. Increased attendance has been noted at various meetings.

Safeguarding reports: From May 2020 onwards, referral numbers had increased. Performance indicators also increased during September. There had been an initial

decrease in police referral numbers which have now increased, including referrals from schools. Themes of referrals appeared around the issue of neglect cases which have spiked and when alcohol has been involved. Barnardo's reported that many referrals had been preventative and an increase in substance misuse since lockdown has eased has been noted.

Education: Work has been undertaken during the summer to ensure most vulnerable learners either remained at school, or accessed theatre, sports provisions or play schemes. Visits have continued with children who have been on the child protection register as well as statutory visits.

BCUHB: Challenges with health visitors and midwives' services were reported as they have worked within hubs. It was noted that there had been an increase in reports for under five year olds, child at risk reports remained very high. Training has been undertaken remotely.

North Wales Police: Investigative work has been undertaken remotely. Some staff have been in isolation but has been business as usual.

NSPCC: Services have continued on a virtual basis. CSE referrals have increased. Risk assessments were put in place in terms of face to face work and schools.

Barnardo's: Various services across the board have continued including childcare and disability teams. Concerns also highlighted around homelessness for the future as many children/young people had been accommodated in Glyndwr University.



YJS: Contact has been maintained with young people. Risk assessment process was put in place in case of further lockdowns.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures: It was highlighted all agency staff had been made aware of the new procedures and notified of the differences within the new safeguarding procedures. Practice guidance was circulated throughout organisations.

It was reported there was some challenges, specifically around Section 5.

6.10 Gwynedd & Mon Child Practice Delivery Group

Staffing and meetings: It was reported (in Anglesey) Case Conferences have continued to be virtual.

Virtual meetings have enabled some partner agencies to attend Child Protection Case Conferences more often than before COVID. Community Paediatricians have attended more Review Case Conferences than the period prior to COVID. Primary schools have also participated in more conferences.

Staffing levels were maintained with some staff working remotely from home and some staff presence in the office.



Staff demonstrated their ability to adapt and work creatively with families - making visits through walks that respect social distance and use platforms such as Microsoft Teams.

As time progresses several agencies now have corresponding capability to take part in some virtual meetings and therefore there have been opportunities to incorporate some virtual conference options.

Safeguarding Reports: The total number of referrals over the year and in particular, over the last quarter has decreased compared to the same period last year. Initially there was a decrease in referrals at the time of first lock-up and then an increase during the summer.

The number of children on the child protection register started to rise steadily at the start of last year's lock down period and peaked in September before gradually declining.

The number of adjourned or cancelled Case Conferences increased. This was for a number of reasons including exposure to COVID e.g. isolation of families, children ill with COVID symptoms, social workers unable to access families to complete assessments.

There have been weekly fluctuations in the number of referrals received. Analysis of the weekly reported totals for a 6-week period in comparison with the same period the previous year showed an overall 5% increase in referrals.

Education: It was reported the number of safeguarding referrals remain low.

Not all schools have returned to a normal timetable but the need to consider vulnerable children who would normally attend other settings, such as out of school clubs has been highlighted.

There has been positive work between Children's Services and Learning Services supporting the most vulnerable children, with a number of schools supporting children with home learning by providing laptops and worksheets for parents.

BCUHB: It was highlighted health have developed new ways of working as a result of COVID-19, with some staff starting to work back in the office part time.



Staff have contributed and taken part in multi-agency meetings via Skype/Teams. Staff have also been able to contribute to Child Protection Conferences in Anglesey via Teams. Conferences in Gwynedd have been managed differently. Staff have submitted reports for these conferences and been available by phone to answer any queries the chair may have.

There has been positive work between Children's Services and Health, with Health Visitors continuing to visit children on the register.

NSPCC: The NSPCC were commissioned to deliver the face to face multi-agency workshops for the Child at Risk module from January to March 2020 across North Wales. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the face to face Education workshops had to be suspended until it became possible to hold the workshops online.

It was reported many of the key risks for the NSPCC were due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many activities had to be reconsidered in particular with regards to face to face work with children and families.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures: Concerns have remained with regards to Section 5 in particular with regards to legal processes and further clarity was required.

There has been some difficulty in implementing the North Wales Practice Guidance on Part 5 meetings.

It has been discussed with the police, the requirement to hold a Professional Strategy Discussion, to determine whether the threshold has been met to convene a Professional Concerns Strategy Meeting. Practice experience has shown that police commit to the normal strategy meeting under section 3 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. This is held over the phone with the Practice Lead who makes a decision on threshold and in some cases plans and initiates inquiries / investigations.

NSPCC

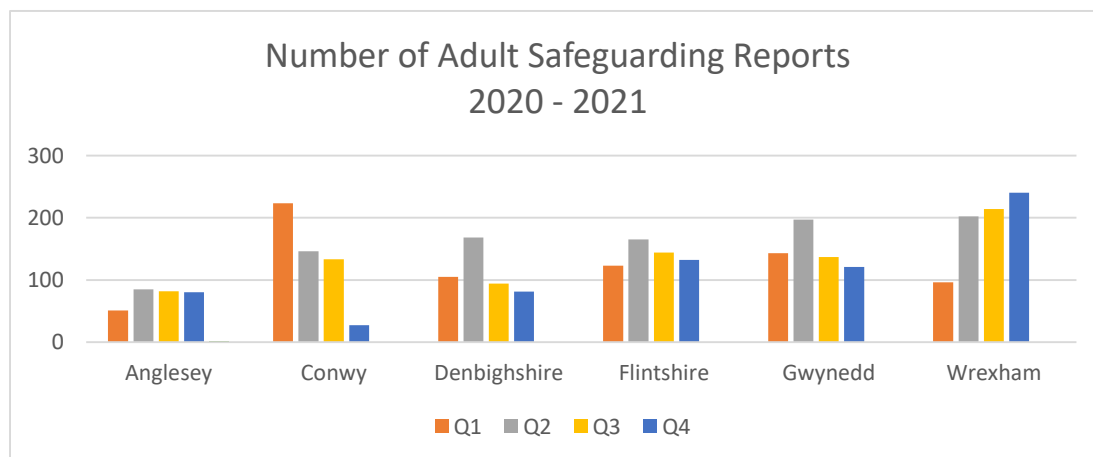
Since schools have returned and we have re-instated group work in respect of Inctrl which is around online use/abuse/exploitation

It is clear from the referrals received from schools that this is a significant factor, and we had a take up of 14 parent/carers group work and 14 young people within the first offer.

There has been an increase of online use within the pandemic which you can predict has increased the concerns of grooming and exploitation online

6.11 Key messages from Performance data

6.12 Adults Data

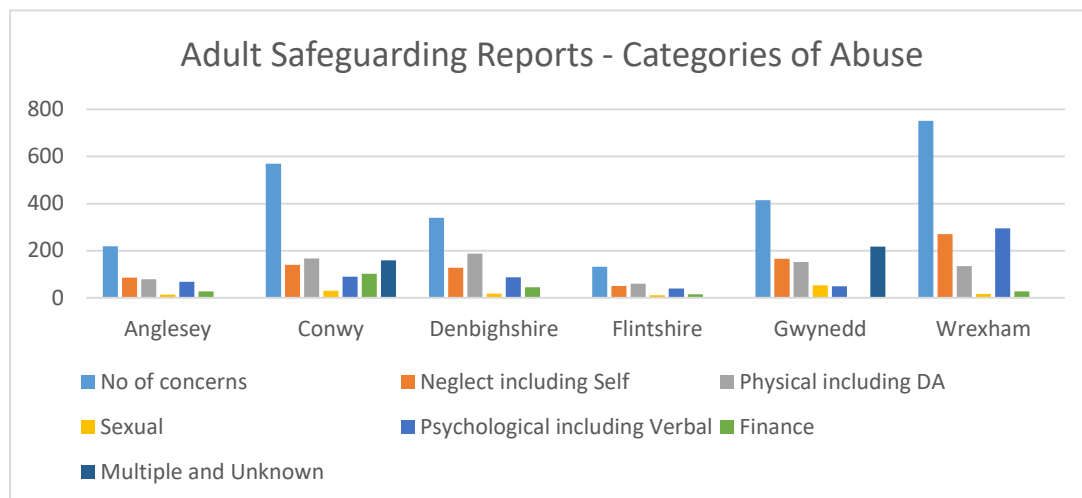


From the data sets that were presented at the LDG's it is clear that the impact of COVID 19 has been seen in the first three quarters, with referrals/reports low. We have started to see increased activity in certain LA's by the final quarter.

A number of Local Authorities using the WCCIS system have also highlighted some concerns with the collection of data.

NWSAB will also need reassurance that the Local Authorities are reporting performance in the same way in response to safeguarding reports.

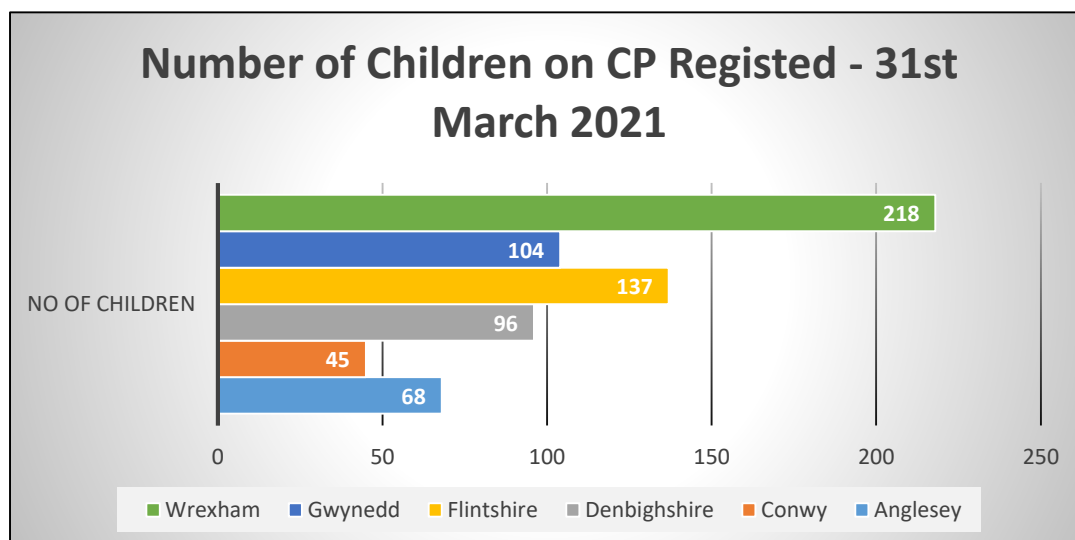
Categories of Abuse:



The most common category in relation to abuse category was in relation to multiple concerns. Feedback from practitioners was the increase in self-neglect categories as being different to previous years.

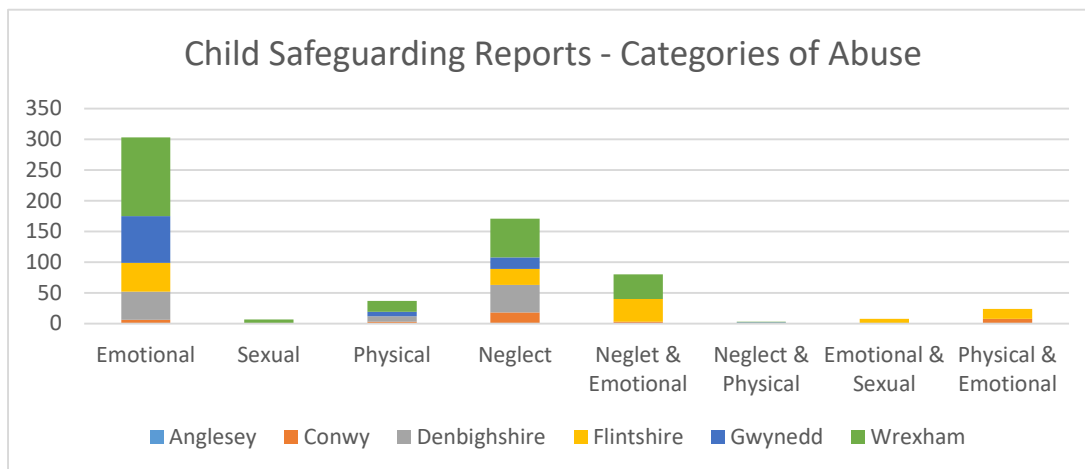
6.13 Children Safeguarding Report Data:

Data in relation to number of children on Child Protection Register as it stands at 31st March 2021, and categories of abuse.



Wrexham and Flintshire have both reported higher number of children on the Child Protection Register. Both Local Authorities are currently doing work on the reasons for the increase in registrations.

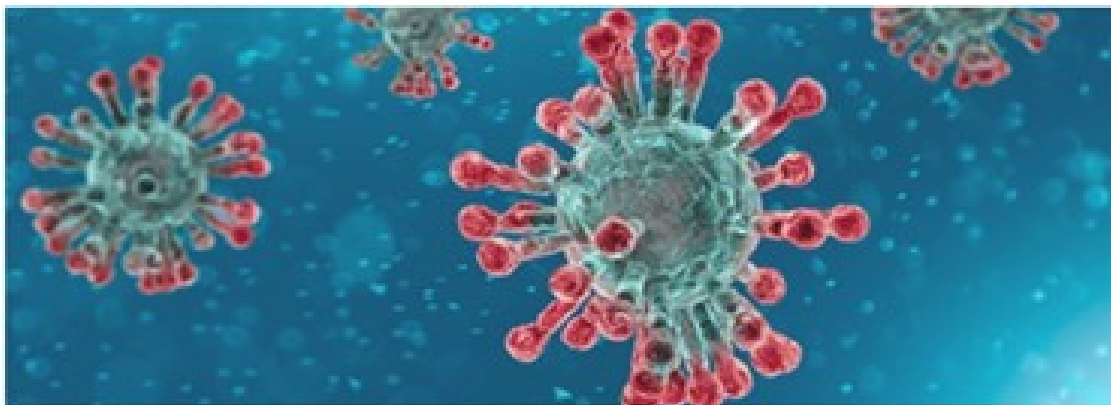
Categories of Abuse:



The categories of Emotional Abuse and Neglect were the two highest areas. This is similar to the previous years, during lock down the impact of Domestic Abuse and the emotional impact on the child was often the most common theme around cases being brought to case conference.

6.14 How did NWSB Respond to Covid issues being identified:

6.15 North Wales Safeguarding Board website - Covid



The NWSB website continued to provide valuable information to both the public and professionals. Throughout the year the website built on information around the pandemic with multiple resources, including resources for children, easy read guides and links to other useful websites.

Documentation was added on a weekly basis to ensure current and up to date data and resources. The sharing of practice guidance throughout the pandemic, both developed by the Safeguarding Board and information received from Welsh Government and other professional bodies included amongst others:

- [Safeguarding 7 Step Process - Covid 19](#)
- [British Association of Social Workers - Professional practice guidance for home visits during Covid 19](#)
- [Welsh Government Covid 19 Safeguarding Children practitioner hand out.](#)
- [Stay at home resources for children, families, adults and key workers](#)
- [Corona Virus - NHS Factsheet for kids](#)
- [Supporting staff experiencing DA during social distancing and isolation.](#)
- [Good days and bad days during lockdown](#)

Media Awareness

During the first lockdown the NWSB circulated the following press release on the 2/4/20. All Safeguarding Boards across Wales have reported to Welsh Government a significant drop in the number of safeguarding reports that Local Authorities have received during this lock-down period.

The First Minister will also highlight this worrying trend in a speech this week. A number of potential reasons have been highlighted for this significant drop.

The North Wales Safeguarding Board are asking everyone within the region to look out for one another in order to help those who may be at risk of abuse and neglect. This is a message which applies at all times, but now more than ever, people at all ages need protection.

The North Wales Safeguarding Board video “See Something / Say Something” message is particularly relevant at this current time. Please take this opportunity to view the video and share with all relevant colleagues and members of the public.

You can watch the video by clicking [this link](#).



Improving the quality of referrals/ reports

During the year, it was highlighted that the quality of safeguarding referrals/ reports in particular in adults was a practice issue. The NWSAB recirculated the Ten Top Tips for completing an adult safeguarding report.

At events during safeguarding week, we highlighted this Ten Top Tips for example at the event held for Care Forum.

The guidance can be found [here](#)
Adult Safeguarding Report form can be found [here](#)

6.16 NWSAB Covid 19 Safeguarding Concerns

The Business unit developed an additional toolkit for officers around managing Covid 19 specific safeguarding concerns.

The tool kit was shared with other regions in Wales. It covered particular Covid related safeguarding concerns such as:

- Infection prevention and control:
- Social distancing

The Impact on the Workforce:

Both Boards have a specific agenda item on the impact of Covid on the Workforce.

A number of practice issues were highlighted:

- Not being based in the office with colleagues
- Isolation for a number workers living alone
- Workers having to give evidence in court hearings from their home

The Board sought reassurance that all organisations in attendance at board meetings, that their workforce had access to support services that promoted their wellbeing.

6.17 Covid 19 -Longer Term Implications for the NWSB

Emotional Wellbeing issues following lockdown

We were already starting to see an increase in referrals to specialist mental health services across the region and this particular practice area will need to be monitored by the Boards and the respective sub groups.

Sadly, the two most recent Child Practice reviews that are about to commence are in relation to a child and a young person who took their own lives.

In adults safeguarding we are also starting to see an increase in concerns around alcohol and substance misuse.



Safeguarding issues within Care Homes

As the Care Home restrictions on contact are eased across Wales, it may be that we will start to see more safeguarding issues being highlighted.

We may also see potential cases where providers in balancing introducing restrictions to keep people safe from COVID-19 have failed to ensure that they are applying the least restrictive principle in line with the Mental Capacity Act.

7.0 The extent to which each member of the Safeguarding Board contributed to the Board's effectiveness.



North Wales Police

Detective Superintendent Protecting Vulnerable People Unit (Vice Chair) of the NWSCB and also attends the NWSAB.

A number of officers from the unit are chairing practice reviews on behalf of the NWSB.

Police Crime Academy Workforce Officers have supported the NWSB in the delivery of the Joint Investigation Training and Achieving Best Evidence courses

Attendance and contribution to all NWSB sub groups.

In relation to the NWSAB priority area, North Wales Police have now commissioned an in house training package over 2 weeks focusing on Adults at Risk and the broad partnership investigations and safeguarding elements. 2 courses have been held so far with a further 3 this calendar year.

These are focused on operational practitioners and managers.

We have offered online training environment for colleagues within front line policing roles with access to current training and information to assist with Adults at risk.

North Wales Police – Good Practice Example - Children

Operation Encompass which is the automatic referral to schools of any child who has been a victim or witness of Domestic abuse across North Wales has been seen as a success. The level of referrals is considerable and the feedback from schools about the rich picture developing has enabled a shift in focus and support for children in schools, where performance or behaviour was unexplained. HMICFRS have also held this approach in high regard from a recent inspection.



Isle of Anglesey County Council

Director of Social Services attends both NWSCB and the NWSAB.

The Quality Assurance Service Manager from Children Services has recently chaired a Child Practice Review. In addition, two safeguarding officers from the authority have also agreed to be reviewers for upcoming child practice reviews.

Service Manager from Adults is also the Chair of the Adults local delivery group.

The local authority has representatives at all the relevant sub groups. In response to the learning from practice reviews, the Local Authority has invested in training to both Children and Adults Services on the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act.

In addition, the Local Authority have commissioned an impact assessment in relation to the implications of Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS): to identify financial, workforce and system changes required. Whilst the Council will not be able to fully appraise those demands until the Code of Practice is available, it is taking steps to ensure readiness for what will undoubtedly be a considerable additional pressure.

Anglesey Council – Good Practice Example – Dissemination of Learning:

Following the publication of a CPR or APR Report in North Wales the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit produce a Briefing Note which is shared within the relevant services. This provides a synopsis of the report: highlights the lessons learnt and considers what changes/actions are required locally. Lunch and learn sessions have been arranged with practitioners to look at various sections of the WSP informed by the lessons of the APRs. A Managers' Lunch and Learn session will focus on self-neglect following the briefing on the Conwy 2015 APR at a recent management meeting.



Conwy County Borough Council

Strategic Director of Social Care & Education is Chair NWSCB. Learning and Workforce Development Manager is Chair of Joint Workforce Development and Training Group.

Conwy also provide the Legal Advisors for both Boards.

The local authority has representatives at all the relevant sub groups.

Conwy County Borough Council – Good Practice Example (Adults)

Background: A safeguarding report was made in relation to a couple Mr and Mrs A where there was reasonable cause to suspect that they were experiencing physical, emotional and financial abuse by their son. Mr A and Mrs A were individuals with care and support needs.

Individuals outcome: Mr and Mrs A's voice was central to the safeguarding case. Whilst both declined formal advocacy, they spoke about their desired outcomes with their social workers. Both Mr and Mrs A attended the case conference and were able to express their individual outcomes and were clear they wanted to stop experiencing abuse, but also wanted to maintain a relationship with their son.

Multi-agency work: A Care and Support Protection Plan was developed and agreed with Mr and Mrs A. This included how the care they received would support the couple, as well as deliver support from neighbourhood policing. There was also identification of relevant preventative measures such as assistive technology and information on the Live Fear Free helpline.

Due to circumstances within the case, North Wales Police were able to support the removal of the son from the couple's home and then assisted Mr and Mrs A to secure their property. In addition, the police and social work team worked together to provide additional support to the couple. Alternative accommodation was secured for the son and support was provided to safely collect his possessions. The Care provided was increased to provide support in areas that became unmet needs by virtue of the son no longer living at the property. Mrs A also received information, advice and assistance from the independent domestic violence advisors.

Safeguarding outcome: It was important to Mr and Mrs A that they were able to maintain a relationship with their son, who would be able to visit the property but no longer reside there.

A review of the outcomes was concluded at case closure. Mrs A advised that she felt safer following the safeguarding intervention.



[Denbighshire County Council](#)

Corporate Director: Communities attends both the NWSCB and the NWSAB.

The Service Manager for Safeguarding and Practice Quality is the Chair of the Children's Policy and Procedures group and has recently been a reviewer for a child practice review.

The local authority has representatives at all the relevant sub groups.

Denbighshire County Council – Good Practice Example – Adults

Background: A is a 22-year-old female with learning difficulties and mental health issues who was discharged from a psychiatric inpatient unit, to the address of a man whom she had befriended on the internet.

'A' was deemed to lack mental capacity to form relationships over social media.

'A' had refused offers of temporary accommodation by the homelessness service. There was concern regarding the nature of the relationship between 'A' and the man with whom she was staying, and the potential risks she may be exposed to. Checks were carried out

in relation to the individual 'A' was residing with, and he was found to be in breach of a license agreement. He was also deemed a specific risk to vulnerable women.

Action taken: Multi -Agency meeting convened under the Self -Neglect Procedures which including representation from mental health, legal, homelessness prevention, police, probation and adult social care services.

Checks were carried out in relation to the individual A was residing with, and he was found to be in breach of a license agreement. He was also deemed a specific risk to vulnerable women.

Actions taken by the probation service and police ensured that he was arrested and returned to prison immediately.

The difference/impact to the Citizen and or the service: Following subsequent meetings under the Adults Who Self-Neglect Procedure, 'A' was able to access more suitable accommodation with a significant package of support from adult services.



Flintshire County Council

Chief Officer Social Services is Chair of the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board.

Senior Manager Safeguarding & Commissioning is Chair of Flintshire & Wrexham Safeguarding Adults Delivery Group.

The local authority has representatives at all the relevant sub groups.

Flintshire County Council – Good Practice Case Study –Children

During the pandemic Social Services, Education and Theatr Clwyd worked to ensure summer activity for vulnerable children and young people. The Summer Hubs was a project developed for young people who needed additional support due to the impact of lockdown. The project took place during the summer holidays and young people took over Theatr Clwyd for four weeks, when no one else was allowed in. They could be found on the stages, in the rehearsal room and in a specially erected marquee outside the building.

Flintshire County Council recognised the benefit that a project which supported some of the most vulnerable families in the community could have. In partnership with Theatr Clwyd a fun and creative programme was developed – away from the traditional model of care.

Flintshire Social Services identified 23 young people who needed additional support and would benefit from the project and 37 young people whose parents had been key workers for the local health board. They took part in fun, creative activities providing them the opportunity to socialise in person and giving the families respite from an unforgiving year. Activities included drama, dance, visual arts, beat boxing, comedy, composing and song recording. One of the groups finished their summer hubs

experience by performing a play on Theatr Clwyd's main stage in front of the Theatr's Team and another wrote and recorded their own song.

The project employed 28 creative freelancers, many of whom had not worked with young people in this way before. Full training, including safeguarding training, was given prior to the workshops and the success of working with them in this way has led to Theatr Clwyd developing a long-term programme that will employ creative freelancers to provide activities including provision during school holidays.

Some of the young people have said that it was the first time that they had stuck with something for so long and expressed their desire to keep coming back and how much they had enjoyed making friends with other people in their group. This has led to the team continuing to meet with the participants and a weekly project has been running in 2021.

The project was one of 11 national projects shortlisted in the category of Best Arts Project - for the 2021 Hearts for the Arts Awards by The National Campaign for the Arts. Whilst the project did not win the Judges said:

"An important project targeted at vulnerable children and providing them with much needed support and creative activities during the difficult days of lockdown. A reminder that not all engagement activity during COVID-19 was virtual – it is impressive that this project managed to delivery such a comprehensive programme of activity with social distancing measures in place."

"A brilliant council and Theatr partnership supporting the well-being of young people, which should be used as a model for others."



Gwynedd County Council

Senior Adults Safeguarding and Quality Manager is leading on a work package for the Board at the current time.

The Head of Service (Children's) has continued to represent the Board in relation to the National Project Group developing the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The local authority has representatives at all the relevant sub groups.

The Local Authority is leading on Effective Child Protection which is a regional transformation project.

The project aims to ensure child protection practice is effective. A practice framework has been designed to address this. It is based on four principles:

- Conversations - effective communication through practicing 'collaborative conversations'
- Thresholds - consistent decision making when assessing risk
- Change - a clear focus on the change that is needed to prevent harm
- Measure - measuring our progress towards outcomes.

It has continued to deliver to target during 2020/1, despite COVID constraints. It was extended during the year to develop Practice Resources for the roll-out of the model to other Local Authorities if desired. The project and development of resources continues to 2021/22.

Gwynedd Council – Good Practice Example – General Practice (Children)

Tim Emrallt – sexual harmful behaviour: The purpose of the Emrallt team is to support professionals working with children who demonstrate inappropriate, problematic or harmful sexual behaviours.

It works with professionals from the Education, Health and Social Services sectors and provides consultation and training. It aims to reduce the number of HSB cases being referred into statutory services following an incident of abuse. It does this by trying to ensure that within Gwynedd there is a range of professionals across many sectors both in statutory and early intervention services that are suitably skilled with knowledge and an understanding of what PSB and HSB looks like; in order to provide timely and appropriate interventions, so as to prevent abuse from taking place and minimise its effect. The Team also works to upskill and improve support by means of assessment and intervention for those cases where an incident has already taken place; both victim and perpetrator in order to support children and young people and ensure that they receive the most appropriate support they require.

In March 2019, funding was secured for two years from the Integrated Care Fund to establish and develop Tim Emrallt, the first problematic and harmful sexualised behaviour team in Wales. Gwynedd and Ynys Mon Youth Justice Service host the team, which is based in Y Felinheli, providing oversight from a senior practitioner and subsequently three workers were appointed as the lead person for each targeted agency, social services, health and education.

As this is a project funded initiative, there are quarterly reporting demands which focuses on targets identified by the Welsh Government.

An evaluation has been commissioned by the University of Bangor, the intention is to have an independent appraisal of work completed and to strengthen the case for the team to continue. Due to the reduction in demand seen during COVID-19 future proposals must include education and health to understand the benefits for these services and demonstrate the short to long term impact on their services as well when dealing with children who display HSB.

In order to secure further funding in the future, there may also be scope to seek the views of neighbouring local authorities who have expressed their interest in our project with a view to further develop and enhance the need for upskilling and raising awareness for their staff around HSB.

Despite the impact that coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on all agencies, Tim Emrallt has continued to deliver during the period and is on track in its development. Links placements and transitions is ongoing. Tim Emrallt is offering advice and consultations have been made across all agencies, partnership group established and focused work on specific areas such as sibling abuse, additional learning needs, fostering/residential to professionals ranging from social workers, teachers, fostering/residential placements and transitions is ongoing. Tim Emrallt is offering advice and consultations to professionals

ranging from social workers, teachers, school nurses, support worker's parents and foster carers.

Recently reported on in the Research in Practice article

On the whole the project was able to continue despite the pandemic and it allowed us to focus on developing our strategy, resources and other objectives that had not been prioritised prior to COVID-19. The fact that the team has been able to facilitate so many training events to 281 attendees is a credit to the team and the attitude of staff within the local authority.

Having received 46 enquiries over the past 12 months, there are 22 children currently being supported by Emrallt.

Tim Emrallt was once again identified as an example of innovation and good practice in Gwynedd's recent Care Inspectorate Wales Assurance inspection.



[Wrexham County Borough Council](#)

Director of Social Services attends both the Adults and Children's Board.

Head of Service, Adult Safeguarding and Mental Health is representing the NWSAB on the proposed Task and Finish group on Section Five of the procedures.

Head of Service for Children Services is also the Chair of the Children's Local Delivery Group.

The local authority has representatives at all the relevant sub groups.

The Adult Safeguarding Team adapted quickly to the adjustments in relation to undertaking enquiries, holding strategy discussions and Adult Safeguarding meetings virtually and through the use of various forms of virtual technology to include WhatsApp, Conference calling, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx and BTMeet Conference Calling. Whilst this did present somewhat of a challenge initially, operational instructions were written and live support provided to any staff member with connectivity issues, throughout the pandemic.

To assist with the ability to report concerns regarding Adult Safeguarding, the Department's Practice Development Manager worked with colleagues in ICT to develop the first 'online' reporting system for members of the public. This system ensures that anyone with a safeguarding concern for a vulnerable person can access and file a Safeguarding report electronically and through the Council's internet page; [Reporting Abuse or Neglect of an Adult at Risk](#).

Wrexham County Borough Council – Good Practice Example - Children

The Department's partnership with the Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) Team has been a particular success with one young person who has cognitive impairment development delay. This young person's understanding of risk is impaired and risks were increasing in

relation to sexual exploitation as a result. There were real concerns that none of the plans in place were keeping this young person safe. Discussions held at the Department's Solutions Panel determined that a referral should be made to the MST.

Through involvement with this service, risks were significantly reduced. The young person's behaviours within her own home were being managed. Family reported that there was less lashing out and aggressive behaviours. With all the support involved, behaviours continued to de-escalate and this young person was eventually removed from Child Protection registration and stepped down to a Child in Need of Care and Support Plan. Mother reported that behaviours were manageable and through the therapy and support provided, mother was able to make adjustments in her approach which only further helped to sustain the positive change. This young person was removed from MET (Missing, Exploited, Trafficked) Panel within two months of referral to MST and the family have continued to work well together.



Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Associate Director Safeguarding (Vice Chair) of North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board.

Head of Safeguarding Children is Chair of Conwy & Denbighshire Children's Practice Delivery Group.

The two most recent Child Practice Reviews published in North Wales had reviewers from the Corporate Safeguarding Health Team.

Safeguarding Practice Development Lead from Corporate Safeguarding led on the work around delivering the most recent Joint Investigation training in the region

Attendance and contribution to all NWSB sub Groups.

Gwasanaeth
Prawf
Probation
Service



Probation Service

Head of Local Delivery for North Wales Probation Service attends the NWSCB and ensures relevant attendance at the Adults Board.

Also where possible attendance and contribution to the relevant NWSB sub groups.

Continue to support the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) agenda and embedding training for all staff to support the development of a multi-agency ACE informed approach for early intervention and root cause prevention.

As part of our assurance framework we have also reviewed all of our high and very high risk of harm domestic abuse cases via a tool agreed with the Welsh Government Lead for Domestic Abuse, Dr Cerys Miles. The findings from this audit have been shared locally by the Team

Managers with their respective Detective Inspectors to ensure best practice in managing this cohort of persona on probation.

In addition to this assurance exercise every community case has been reviewed by the responsible Probation Practitioner to ensure both alignment with the EDM and also ensure due consideration to the contextual changes brought about by COVID 19 restrictions.



North Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Representative from this service attends North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board.

NWFRS are represented on all NWSAB Adult Practice Delivery Groups, the Adult Practice Review Group and attends and contributes to the NWSAB Policy & Procedures Groups.



Ymddiriedolaeth GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambwylans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
NHS Trust

Welsh Ambulance Service Trust

Attendance at both NWSAB and NWSCB, representation on all Safeguarding Adults Delivery Groups.

Senior Safeguarding Specialist Chair of Adult Practice Review Group up to March 2021.

Representative also attends NWSAB Policy and Procedures Group.



Care Forum Wales

Chief executive of Care Forum Wales attends North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board and contributes to NWSAB Policy & Procedures Group.

CFW representatives are active members of the NWSAB Safeguarding Adults Delivery Groups across the region.



Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Public Health Wales

Has representation on both NWSB's and provided regular updates to the Board during the pandemic period to support the work of the Board.



Barnardo's & NSPCC

Both organisations have provided invaluable support to the NWSCB. Barnardo's Board member is also Chair of the Child Practice Review Group



NSPCC also assisted in providing training in respect of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures highlighting the changes in practice regarding Safeguarding Children.

7.2 Board Attendance:

The Business coordinators have continued to track attendance at the Board meetings and also at the sub groups. We have continued to see good attendance at Board meetings. We acknowledge that it was not always possible due to the work demands for senior officers to attend Board meetings but another representative from the organisation unable to attend would deputise.



NOTE: These figures include the interim Safeguarding Board meetings that were held throughout the pandemic.

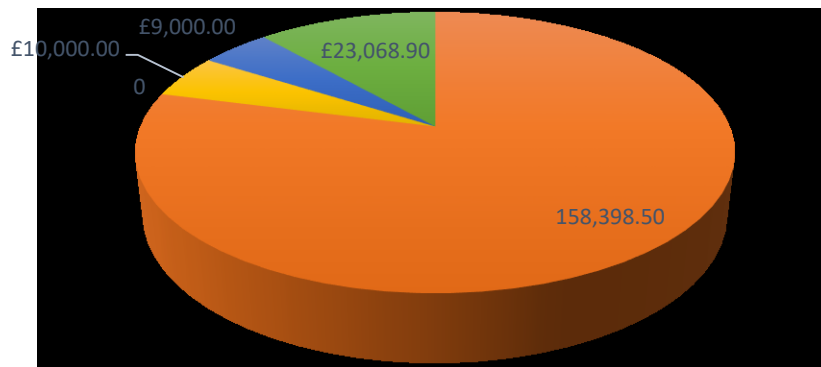
8.0 An assessment of how the Safeguarding Boards used its resources in exercising its functions or achieving its outcomes.

8.1 Funding

The North Wales Safeguarding Board has used the National Funding Formula to assess and identify annual funding from statutory board partners. The pie chart below illustrates how the board has made use of the financial resources within the context of income and partnership contributions.

Expenditure 2020/21

Total: £200,467.40



■ Staff Costs ■ APR/CPR costs ■ Training costs ■ Translation cost ■ Additional costs

8.2 The Business Unit and Covid-19

North Wales Safeguarding Board Business Manager		
Business Coordinator NWSAB	Business Coordinator NWSCB	Regional Safeguarding Administration Officer

The bulk of the expenditure has gone on staffing costs.

The Business Unit also provided additional support operationally during the first lockdown period.

The board administrator in addition to her core tasks was working part -time within a care home setting as a care support assistant.

The Business Coordinators were also supporting a help-line that was established within the local authority contacting vulnerable residents to check on their wellbeing.

The Business Manager was also requested to provide support to the local safeguarding teams if required.

In addition, this year, the Business Manager has chaired a number of the sub groups meetings where demands due to the pandemic have prevented Board members being available to chair meetings and also has drafted a number of the practice guidance documents for the region.

8.3 Development of Policies & Procedures:

The Boards' Policy & Procedures Groups continued to meet virtually during the last year and the following practice guides and protocols were completed:

- Protocol for the management of multiple incidents between adults at risk
- NWSB Guidance Tool for making Adult Safeguarding Decisions
- NWSB Allegations against Professionals and those in a position of trust (as required within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures)
- NWSAB Management of Complaints Practice Guide (as required within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures)
- NWSAB Covid 19 Safeguarding Concerns
- North Wales Practice Guide Decision Making at Child Protection Conferences (as required within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures)
- North Wales Practice Guide Enquiries to the Child Protection Register (as required within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures)
- North Wales Practice Guide Working with people displaying disguised compliance
- NWSCB Practice Guide – Managing Complaints in relation to the Child Protection Conference (as required within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures)
- North Wales Practice Guide; Joint Enquiries by Social Services and North Wales Police (as required within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures)
- NWSCB Safeguarding Disabled Children Policy
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures – 'What's Different?' Children Safeguarding
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures – What's Different? -Adult Safeguarding Adults.

Other information developed included:

- Evidencing Difficult Decision Making- Practice information sheet.
- NWSCB Information for Parents/Carers and Young People about Child Protection Conference Complaints.
- Duty to Report – Adult at Risk practice information sheet.
- Section 126 Enquiries – Practice information sheet.
- NWSAB Management of Complaints Practice information leaflet.

8.4 North Wales Safeguarding Board Website

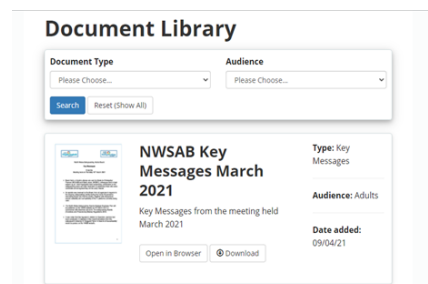
The Safeguarding Boards website continues to harness resources to keep practitioners and the public updated with regards to impending policy changes, new support helplines, and general information gathered from across Wales and the rest of the UK.

NWSB Key Messages:

Key messages from the North Wales Safeguarding Board meetings have also continued to be made available via the resources library, together with the published annual report for last year and the NWSB Business Plans for 2021/22.

7 Minute Briefings:

The use of 7 minute briefings to highlight issues and themes throughout the year proved to be very successful. In total there are 139 briefings currently available on the website with 30 of those being published during the pandemic.



North Wales Safeguarding Board Resources - 7 Minute Briefings.

8.5 National Safeguarding Week

Unlike previous years, the NWSB did not hold a regional conference instead we encouraged officers from across the region to attend the NISB conference. We did deliver some webinars including an event for Care Forum Wales members. This event was around the learning from Adult Practice Reviews and in particular from a review which focused on a Care Homes Provider.

Key messages such as:

- Ensuring Care Homes have an up to date Whistleblowing policy
- Key findings from a regulatory inspection are shared with commissioners as soon as possible from the inspectorate

We highlighted the “duty to report” throughout the safeguarding week.

8.6 Child and Adult Practice Reviews

During the year we had the following levels of activity in relation to reviews:

Number of Child Practice Reviews commissioned during 20/21	Number of Child Practice Reviews published during 20/21	Key themes
3	2	<p>In relation to the three child practice reviews commissioned- we were starting to see the impact of Covid-19 on Child / Young Person’s emotional wellbeing during lockdown</p> <p>The two published reviews had the common themes around Neglect and Disguised Compliance.</p>

Number of Adult Practice Reviews /MAPF commissioned during 20/21	Number of Adult Practice Reviews /MAPF published during 20/21	Key themes
2 (MAPF)	1 (APR)	<p>In relation to the key themes from the two MAPF that will start in 21-22.</p> <p>One is around the robustness of the transition process into adult services The other MAPF is around self-neglect</p> <p>The published APR the key themes identified included commissioning and the lack of placements choice for an individual with dementia</p>

In addition, the APR sub group did a further review of the action plan that was completed in respect of Operation Jasmine. The action plan had been completed the previous year but given the recent coroners hearing, the group felt it had to further review the action plan.

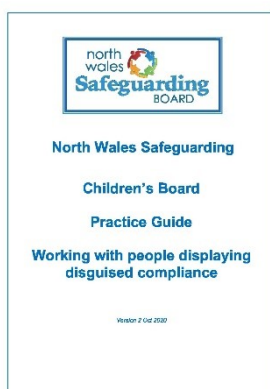
Commissioning of Reviewers

Given the pressures on the workforce, the NWSB made the decision that we would increase the use of independent reviewers to ensure reviews were not delayed. The three child practice reviews underway all have commissioned reviewers and likewise the Adults MAPF we have an independent reviewer.

We will be monitoring costs throughout the year in relation to this Business area.

9.0 Any underlying themes in the way the Safeguarding Boards exercised its functions as shown by an analysis of cases it has dealt with, and any changes it has put into practice as a result.

In relation to the identification of practice themes that have been identified from audits / child / adult protection conference appeals and practice reviews the following key themes have been identified.



9.1 Disguised Compliance

Within the region, the most recent child practice reviews have identified the issue of disguised compliance. Key themes from practice reviews we have seen:

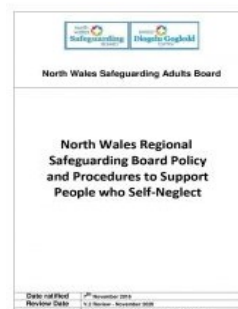
- A lack of measurable progress at reviews, despite apparent effort and co-operation from parents;
- Parental agreement to change but not completing agreed actions to achieve it;

- Change occurring due to the efforts of other agencies rather than the parents;
- Inconsistency in the areas where change is achieved with parents opting to work with some professionals and not others or on some actions and not others; children's views differing significantly from that of the parents.
- Frequent missed appointments.

In response to this practice theme, the Children's Board published its practice guide to support Multi Agency Practitioners in identifying and responding to cases where potentially the parents/ carers may be displaying disguised compliance.

9.2 Self-Neglect

The North Wales Safeguarding Board was the first Board in Wales to develop a Regional Self-Neglect Practice Guidance in 2018 and was nominated for a Social Care Accolade in the category of "Effective Approaches to Safeguarding Practice".



We have continued to undertake awareness raising workshops on Self-Neglect. As a region we have seen an increase in safeguarding reports on self-neglect. This year we have identified the need to further update the practice guidance but with a particular emphasis on children services.

A practice review on a child highlighted how the parental self-neglect had impacted on the care of the child. We commissioned Michael Preston –Shoot to deliver a workshop on "Think Child, Think Parent and Think Family" The aim of this was to further promote awareness in the region of the Self-Neglect Practice Guidance and the need to consider the whole family approach.

We have also identified the need to update the practice guidance on Supporting Children, Supporting Parents with severe mental health problems & or substance misuse

9.3 Compliance with the Mental Health Measure 2010

This particular practice issue has been highlighted in the most recent Adult Practice Review published by the Board in March 2020 but has been identified in previous practice reviews across Wales. It is around the role of the Care Coordinator. A person's Care Coordinator will be a key professional working with an individual in secondary mental health services. The Care Coordinator will be their "principle source of information" and will be "responsible for seeking their active involvement and engagement with the care and support planning process"



Within the practice review undertaken, it was unclear if any professional was undertaking the role given the individual was in receipt of a multiple care services. The absence of a care coordinator led to a lack of information sharing between agencies and the individual not having an up to date care and support plan.

We have requested that in particular agencies providing secondary mental health services are ensuring compliance with the measure. In addition, we are requesting that agencies ensure that individuals in receipt of secondary mental health services are given information around the role of the care coordinator and a named professional who is undertaking this role.

9.4 Escalating Concerns

The last two adult practice reviews in the region, have identified concerns around the robustness of the Escalating Concerns process.

The key features within the reviews:

- Robustness of the monitoring process
- Information sharing between agencies
- Risk assessments on the residents

It was also unclear if all agencies were complying with the Quality services, delivering what matters Escalating Concerns regional procedures

In response the Business unit have made arrangements to present at the Regional Commissioning Board in June. In addition, the Wales Safeguarding Procedures audit which all Board Partners have to complete in September does request reassurance around commissioning and compliance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

9.5 Pre-birth Assessments



Following on from last year's annual report, we had highlighted the practice issue around pre-birth assessments. The Health Board have implemented regular themed audits around compliance with the regional practice guide around pre-birth assessments.

We are now in the process of updating the regional practice guidance on pre-birth assessments to reflect the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

10.0 The number of adult protection and support orders which were applied for in the Safeguarding Board area:

During this period, none of the six local authorities in the area have made any applications for an adult protection and support order. We are aware that discussions have been held with legal representatives but alternative routes have been found rather than applying for an order. We are currently in the process of updating the regional practice guidance in respect of APSO to reflect the names of lead / approved officers who have responsibility for applying for an order following changes in staffing in the area.

11.0 When and how children or adults exercised an opportunity to participate in the Safeguarding Board's work.

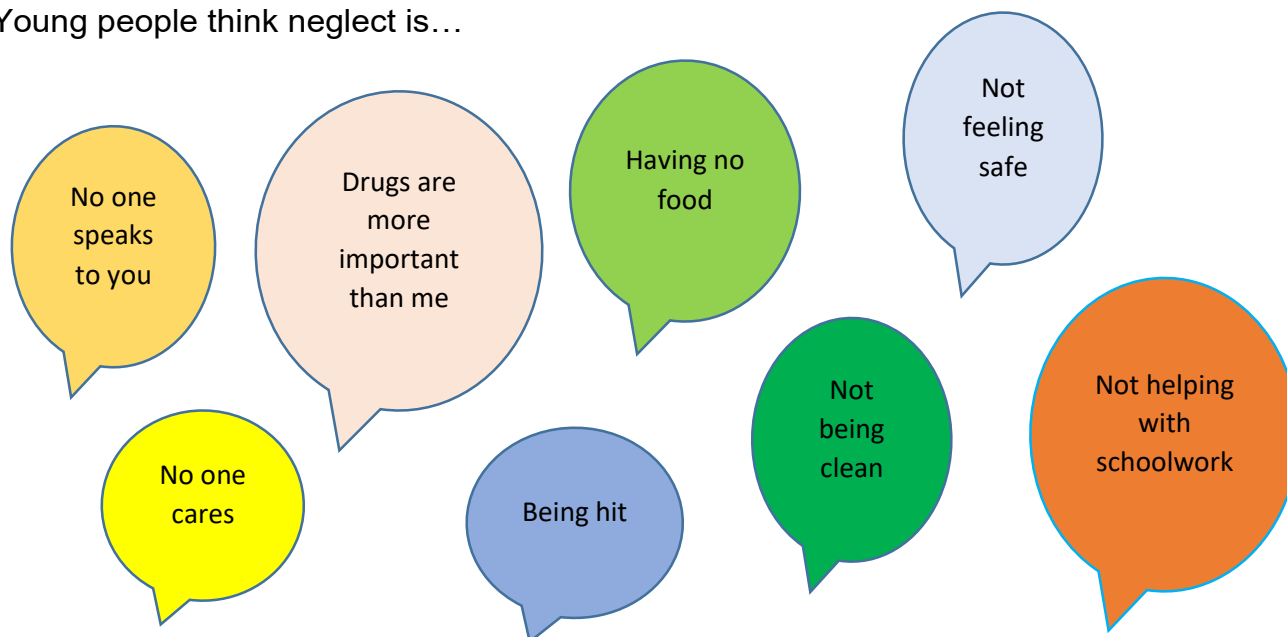
This is also an area of work that has been impacted during the pandemic.

Children

In relation to children's work, the Children's Business Coordinator has been attending regular meetings with the regional advocacy provider Tros Gynnal.

The feedback we have had from children/ young people is that the number of requests that they have had to input into surveys/ attend virtual forums has been significant and so we have seen a reluctance to engage. Instead we have focused on encouraging children and young people to engage with the National Surveys undertaken by the Children's Commissioner.

Young people think neglect is...



This work package will influence the development of the strategy in 21-22. In addition, throughout the training we have delivered on the Wales Safeguarding Procedures we have highlighted the voice of the child/ child centred practice.

We have seen numerous examples across the region of the work the local authorities have done around engagement with children/ young people. An example of this is the work

Denbighshire County Council have done. The Council have commissioned Mind of My Own which is an online platform that allows children and young people to share their views with their worker. The platform went 'live' with children & young people across Children's Services and Integrated Families First Teams 08/06/2020 and Education as of 01/09/20. To date; 131 young people accounts, 149 worker accounts, 246 statements received

There is a 'Safety Link' function built in to the software that alerts the Service if a young person has stated they feel; unsafe, unhappy or scared which is treated with urgency and followed up. Children and young people are also signposted within the app to report any urgent concerns with 'Childline'.

Adults:

All the training packages that we have delivered on the Wales Safeguarding Procedures we have emphasised the voice of the Adult at Risk and the importance of a person centre approach to the safeguarding work. The Adults Business Coordinator has been attending the North Wales Regional Advocacy group to discuss the key themes that Adults at Risk have been highlighting during the safeguarding process. In response to

some key messages, we have developed a further training package to be delivered in 2021-22:

12.0 Any information or learning the Safeguarding Board has disseminated, or training it has recommended or provided.

12.1 Events & Training:

	Event title and brief description	Organiser
June, July and October 2020	Virtual Education Sessions Education and Early Year's provision learning workshops to consider the requirements set out around the role of Education Professionals within the new All Wales Safeguarding Children procedures.	NWSB
16.11.20	Think Family Approach Recent learning from A child practice review which highlighted impact of parental self-neglect on the child	NWSB
18.11.20	Key Practice learning from APRs for Care Providers Aims: Purpose of APRs, overview of key practice themes, how actions identified are implemented into practice, update on national developments with regards to adult safeguarding	NWSB
20.11.20	WSP Section 5 Workshop Aims: To support those managing/chairing section 5 meetings in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and NWSB practice guidance.	NWSB
24.2.21	Intra-familial child sexual abuse: This one-day multi-agency training course will equip professionals across health, education, social care and policing with an understanding of]the scale and nature of child sexual abuse; the challenges, myths and obstacles which can limit identification and response; who commits intra-familial child sexual abuse; how sexual abuse takes place in families ; understanding the child's experience – the impact of abuse, signs and indicators of abuse and the barriers to disclosing it; children's disclosures and your role as a professional. The training will support you to improve your understanding of child sexual abuse within the family environment, and help you to better identify signs and indicators and respond effectively to protect children.	Joint between CSA Centre and NWSB
February, March and April 2021	Joint Investigation Training Purpose: to focus on the current Joint Investigation process between North Wales Police and Child Social Workers from the	NWSB

	beginning of the referral to its conclusion. It provides an insight into police investigations, use of forensic evidence, medical examinations and the use of the Criminal Justice system to manage investigations.	
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12.2 Impact of Covid-19 on the Welsh Language

One of the challenges during this period has been able to ensure that officers have been able to contribute to meetings in their first language. The Business unit have found limitations in relation to IT systems that are able to provide a translation service that does not impact the meeting.

The MS Teams module does not provide this function and due to security concerns the Zoom It system not all agencies have been willing to access this system. We will continue to try to make the necessary arrangements to ensure all officers are able to contribute to meetings in their first language.

This is not only an issue for the NWSB but all safeguarding boards across Wales should be addressing this issue.

13.0 How the Safeguarding Board has implemented any guidance or advice given by the Welsh Ministers or by the National Board.

The North Wales Safeguarding Board have responded to guidance and advice given by the Welsh Government and the National Board. Earlier in the report we highlighted how we responded to the Welsh Government guidance around the functions of the Safeguarding Boards during Covid-19.

We ensured that additional guidance documents during Covid-19 given by the Welsh Government were shared at the Board sub groups which included the following:

- Together we'll keep children and young people safe as we rebuild from Covid-19.
- Vulnerable children and young people: coronavirus.
- Education safeguarding guidance: coronavirus.
- Guidance recently published by Welsh Government for those working in adult services.

In relation to the National Independent Safeguarding Board, the region has contributed to the working group on the Evaluation of Integrated Multi Agency operational safeguarding arrangements in Wales – Phase 1. The findings have been shared across the region

The board has ensured the sub groups have discussed the learning from the thematic analysis of the Child Practice Reviews which although was published the end of the previous reporting year, it has highlighted key practice issues that we needed to respond to:

The 4 main cross cutting themes are:

1. Greater weight is given to some professionals and family members' knowledge. This hierarchy of knowledge led to 'tunnel vision', where certain attitudes are formed and then become hard to challenge. The views of mothers tended to be privileged over both children and fathers.
NWSCB response – we asked the training sub group to ensure that safeguarding training delivered in the region highlighted key themes around engaging with fathers/ hidden males in the household
2. Information sharing within and across agencies.
NWSCB response- we are currently developing the NWSB Information Sharing Protocol
3. Faulty assessment was prevalent with practitioners sometimes evaluating people as individuals not the wider domestic/family context.
NWSCB response – local authorities across the region have done work around the assessment process, as a region we also held an event around “think child/ think family”
4. Children's voices or the perspective of the child were sometimes missing and/or not always central to practice.
NWSCB response – this was a particular focus within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures training that was delivered within the region “the voice of the child” and ensuring it is reflected in practice.

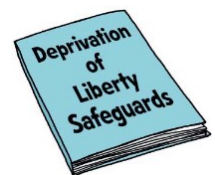
The other practice area that we highlighted following guidance from the NISB was around scams in particular for vulnerable adults. We produced materials which were shared across the region and also in local community centres.

14.0 Other matters relevant to the work of the Safeguarding Boards.

During the year, other practice issues have been highlighted to the Board which has implications for the Board work going forward.

Liberty Protection Safeguards

The Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) is due to come into full force in April 2022, replacing the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) as the system to lawfully deprive somebody of their liberty. The NWSAB, have had regular updates via the Local Delivery Groups regarding the number of authorisations and renewals that have taken place during the year.



In relation to the change to the LPS, the following key challenges have been identified in the region

- Training Program for the workforce – we will monitor this via the Workforce Training sub group

- Identifying the number of 16/17 years in the region who may require a LPS.
- The potential costs in relation to LPS



Safeguarding in Schools

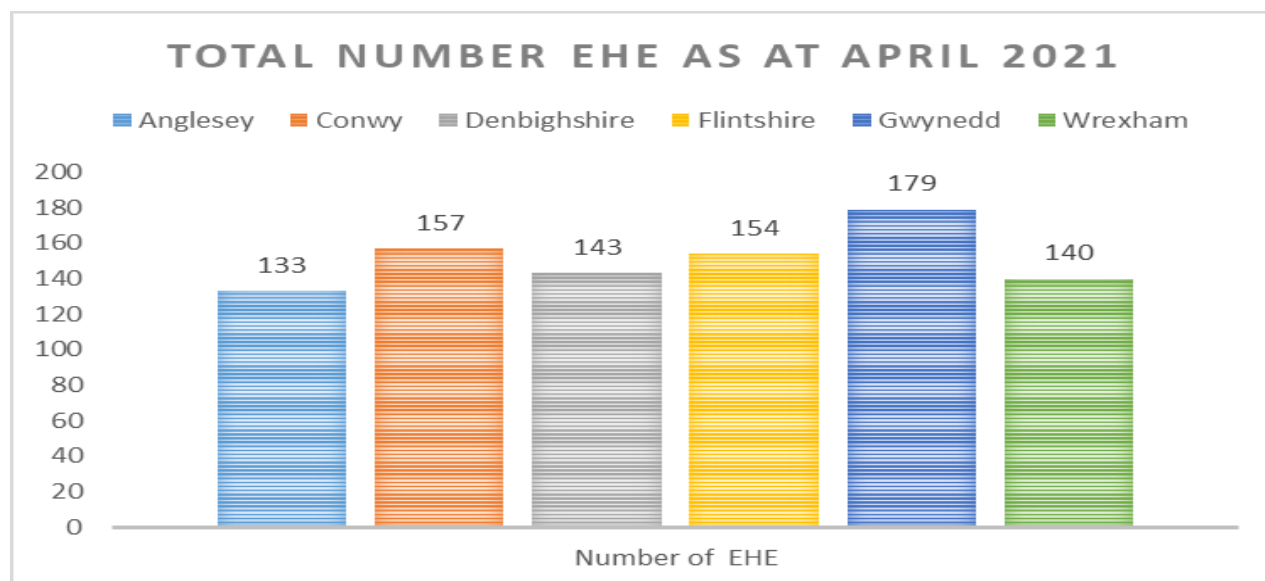
Towards the end of the reporting year for this report, we had already started to see an increase in relation to media reports around peer on peer abuse in schools including the independent schools.

In response to this we have done further work in accordance with the CSA action plan. The Board received a presentation from a Senior Board member, who had attended the IISCSA inquiry regarding concerns around safeguarding practice in relation to an Independent School in the region.

The presentation highlighted gaps in legislation regarding Independent Schools and Safeguarding Practice. In response the Board Chair has written to the Safeguarding and Advocacy Unit in Welsh Government requesting action to be undertaken to address the concerns identified.

Elected Home Educated: The NWSCB is supportive of the work being undertaken by the Children's Commissioner in Wales regarding Elective Home Educated Children. We have seen a further increase in the number of Home Educated Children in the region.

Total number EHE as at April 2021



It is important that across Wales we ensure we have the appropriate level of safeguarding in place for the children and young people who are home educated.

Single Unified Safeguarding Review

The North Wales Safeguarding Board is represented on all the sub groups around this national project. The aim of the project is to create a single process of conducting safeguarding reviews in Wales whereby lessons can be identified and acted upon in

order to safeguard communities.

In September 21, we will present an options paper to the Board to consider a change from having a separate Adult / Child practice review sub group moving to one regional case review group.

We will be seeking additional funding for the Business Unit to manage the increase level of activity and also seeking clarity that the legal framework in place and not open to challenge regarding a Unified Safeguarding review process

Domestic Abuse Act

We will be considering the implications of the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 for practitioners in the region.

The Business Unit have already provided a 7-minute briefing on the new legislation and further work will be done during the year.

Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020.

In January 2020 the Senedd passed the Welsh Government's Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020. To highlight the legislation, the NWSCB have provided a 7-minute briefing and done a blog on the website. During safeguarding week in Wales, we will hold an event to promote awareness around the Act.

WCCIS

Across the region, a number of the Local Authorities and officers from Corporate Safeguarding Health have been working together to develop the Adult Safeguarding Module on WCCIS to ensure consistency of practice.

With the recent developments around the Once for Wales It system for Health Practitioners, we will need to ensure the interface between the two systems to support all practitioners and avoid additional paperwork for practitioners to complete.

GLOSSARY:

AMH	Adult Mental Health	LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children's Board
APR	Adult Practice Review	MAPF	Multi-Agency Professional Forum
AWCPP	All Wales Child Protection Procedures	MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
BCUHB	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	MHLD	Mental Health Learning Disabilities
CAMH	Children Adolescent Mental Health	NISB	National Independent Safeguarding Board
CCBC	Conwy County Borough Council	NPS	National Probation Service
CHC	Continuing Health Care	NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
CPR	Child Practice Review	NWP	North Wales Police
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company	NWSB	North Wales Safeguarding Boards
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	NWSAB	North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board
DCC	Denbighshire County Council	NWSCB	North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board
DoLS	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards	POVA	Protection of Vulnerable Adults
LDG	Local Delivery Group	P & P	Policy & Procedure
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review	PCC	Police Complaints Commissioner
EAPR	Extended Adult Practice Review	PHW	Public Health Wales
ECPR	Extended Child Practice Review	PRUDIC	Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood
FCC	Flintshire County Council	PVPU	Protecting Vulnerable Persons Unit
GC	Gwynedd Council	SCWDP	Social Care Workforce Development Partnership
HASCAS	Health and Social Care Advisory Service	SERAF	Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behavior	WAST	Welsh Ambulance Service Trust
IOAC	Isle of Anglesey Council	WCBC	Wrexham County Borough Council
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	WG	Welsh Government
LA	Local Authority	YN	Ynys Mon
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely		
LDU	Local Delivery Unit		

If you have any comments about the Board's work or wish to find out more, you can contact North Wales Safeguarding Board on

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