



Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
**Bwrdd Diogelu**  
**Safeguarding Board**



# Annual Report

## 2024/2025



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
University Health Board



Gwasanaeth  
Prawf  
Probation  
Service



VOLUNTARY ACTION  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL  
MERTHYR TYDFIL

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# 0. Introduction and Foreword - Chair of the Regional Safeguarding Board

## Welcome to the 2024-2025 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report.

In March 2023, the Board published a three-year Strategic Plan and each year publishes an [Annual Plan CTMSB Annual Plan 2024-25](#) setting out its key priorities for the coming year. These priorities stem from the lessons that we have learnt over previous years and an analysis of the prevalent and emerging safeguarding issues affecting the region. There remains a strong focus on developing our strategic approach to exploitation both in relation to children and adults at risk, with the Board launching its regional Exploitation Strategy this year. The new, regional Exploitation Strategy will support agencies and those in our communities to effectively identify all forms of exploitation and understand how to report any concerns, as well as introducing a robust toolkit for professionals to assess risk and agree effective interventions to reduce this for all those affected. The implementation of the Strategy will be overseen by revised governance arrangements which will ensure implementation is effective and which will be responsible for undertaking post-implementation review and evaluation to support that this is fully meeting the needs of all those at risk of exploitation.

Recognising early intervention and prevention to reduce and eradicate abuse and neglect are crucial in meeting the needs of people we support, so a key focus this year has continued in respect of raising the profile of this across the region. We continue to work successfully in partnership with the NSPCC and other key stakeholders to raise and promote public awareness campaigns, supporting communities to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and how to report any concerns.

The Board has also supported the implementation of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) framework this year including improvements in recording learning outcomes and key recommendations which support practice improvements where harm to adults or children has occurred. The Board published six Safeguarding Reviews during 2024/25 and will continue to work with key stakeholders in 2025/26 to support future learning at a regional and national level.

Finally, I would like to thank all staff who work tirelessly across the region to protect our most vulnerable people in a time of significant demand. Their wellbeing remains a priority for the Board and we continue to seek assurances from partner agencies that staff are adequately supported.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, or if you'd like to get involved in informing our priorities, please contact our Business Unit by e-mailing: [ctmsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:ctmsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk)



**Lisa Curtis-Jones**  
Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

# 1. Safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

The region of Cwm Taf Morgannwg covers the local authority areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf with a combined population of approximately 427,000<sup>1</sup>

The **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board** is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

The two key **safeguarding** objectives of **protection** and **prevention** underpin the work of the Board and inform the priorities each year.

The responsibilities and functions of the Board are set out in the statutory guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It has an overall responsibility for challenging relevant agencies so that:

- There are effective measures in place to protect children and adults at risk who are experiencing harm or who may be at risk as the result of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
- There is effective inter-agency co-operation in planning and delivering protection services and in sharing information.

## Safeguarding Children

Section 130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a child at risk as a child who:

Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;

- a) Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

### What do we mean by Harm?

Harm is defined as:

- ill treatment - this includes sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and psychological abuse
- the impairment of physical or mental health (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).
- the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

### Types of Harm

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples for each of the categories of harm, abuse and neglect included in vol 5 Working Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk:



<sup>1</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics (Census 2021)

- **Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **Emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others
- **Sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **Financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be:
  - not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or
  - complaints that personal property is missing.
- **Neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

## Safeguarding Adults

S126(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as an adult who:

- a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,
- b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

**Abuse** can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial (includes theft, fraud, pressure about money, misuse of money) and can take place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place.



**Neglect** describes a failure to meet a person's basic needs physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health). It can take place in a range of settings, such as a private dwelling, residential or day care provision.

## Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs

In the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region there are two Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) that report to the Board: **The Cwm Taf (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf) Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Bridgend Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).**

The purpose of the MASH is to act as the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns. MASH provides the opportunity for a higher standard of safeguarding by providing all professionals with more information on which to make better, more informed, and more timely decisions. This enables the effective sharing of information between agencies, helping to protect children and adults from abuse and neglect.



Whilst the Bridgend MASH operates a fully co-located model with staff located at Bridgend County Borough's Civic Centre, within Cwm-Taf, agencies operate a hybrid model based out of Pontypridd Police Station. Working arrangements have evolved following the COVID-19 pandemic but have not compromised prompt information sharing and effective actions to safeguard people. The MASH services continue to embrace new communication/information sharing technology that support both in-person and remote working.

The collaboration of both Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs continues to be a key focus of the Board to streamline multi-agency safeguarding across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. Recent collaborative projects include:

- An ongoing multi-agency working group to support a consistent approach to modernised, operational MASH models utilising best practice and aiming to build on further, effective collaboration. The Terms of Reference and MASH Operating Protocols will continue to be subject to review into 2025/26 to ensure the key aims of protecting children and adults effectively are being maximised.
- A multi-agency working group to develop Multi-Agency Children's Services Threshold Guidance to support shared understanding of threshold decision making and eligibility support across the three local authority areas in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.
- Ongoing work to establish clear pathways for signposting and referrals for professionals (for both Children and Adults).
- Contributing to the National Independent Safeguarding Board's development of the National Multi-Agency Performance Framework. This will provide assurances to the Board on the efficacy of multi-agency safeguarding practice across the region.
- The successful implementation of a new MASH information sharing system that is fit for purpose for both Cwm Taf and Bridgend. The system is supported by dedicated online TEAMS channels, providing multi-agency online workspaces for real-time collaboration and decision making. A review of the revised MASH Information sharing system implemented in 2023, is also scheduled which will include a comprehensive consultation with system users to scope further system improvements during 2025/26.

## 2. Members of the Safeguarding Board

The Lead Partner for the Board is Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the membership complies with the statutory guidance issued under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014.

The lead partner hosts the Board's Business Unit and holds the Board budget on behalf of the statutory partner agencies.

A list of Board members is attached as Appendix 1.

## 3. What did the Board do in 2024-2025 to meet its Outcomes?

### Governance

The Safeguarding Board has, during 2024/25 undertaken a full review of its former governance structure (detailed at Appendix 2) and created a revised sub-structure which will be implemented in 2025/26. The new structure will more effectively support the Board's ability to carry out its core functions to achieve positive outcomes for children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

### Challenge and Scrutiny

The Board holds partner agencies to account in relation to their safeguarding activities through effective monitoring and challenge via its Safeguarding Board and Sub-Group meetings, reviews, inspection reports and audit activity. The Board also utilises its Risk Register to support the timely identification of any safeguarding risks and to ensure the efficacy of appropriate mitigating actions to address identified risk.

The Board encourages partner agencies to share individual inspections and reviews that relate to safeguarding and fosters a strong culture of learning and collaboration in respect of driving improvements in safeguarding activity. In 2024-2025, the Board received and reviewed the following reports and improvement plans from agencies:

- Probation Services Re-Set
- South Wales Police Cyber Crime
- NHS Wales National Safeguarding Service
- CTM Multi-Agency Professional Forum - Review of Suspicious & Unexplained Injuries (Children)
- Cwm Taf MASH Report – Michelle McManus, Professor Safeguarding Violence Prevention, Manchester Met University
- CIW – Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements
- Parc Prison – “Six to Fix” Priorities for Improvement Plan
- HMIP CTM Youth Justice Report

### Performance

The Board has a performance framework in place to capture safeguarding data which is consistently scrutinised via its sub-groups. Work has been ongoing during 2024/25 with partners to ensure that we have a consistent, regional, multi-agency framework. The Board has also ensured representation at a range of national forums this year in respect of keeping abreast of developing workstreams, national guidance and good practice to support the delivery of effective safeguarding. This has included:

- National Independent Safeguarding Board workshops in relation to the development of a National Performance Framework for Children
- Welsh Government Steering Group for Missing Children
- Wales Procedures Project Board
- Single Unified Safeguarding Review Implementation Group
- Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

The Board has a Children's Quality Assurance and Performance Group (CQAP) and an Adult's Quality Assurance Group (AQAP) that receives and analyses multi-agency performance metrics, scrutinising, respectfully challenging data and reporting on key thematic sources of harm. This ensures that the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data is analysed, focused on outcomes

and the lived experience of the child and/or adult through the journey of their intervention. Moving into 2025/26, the Board will seek to increase its focus in respect of “transitional safeguarding” with the aim of evaluating services and the effectiveness of support including the lived experience of children subject to safeguarding arrangements transitioning into adulthood.

## Children’s Safeguarding

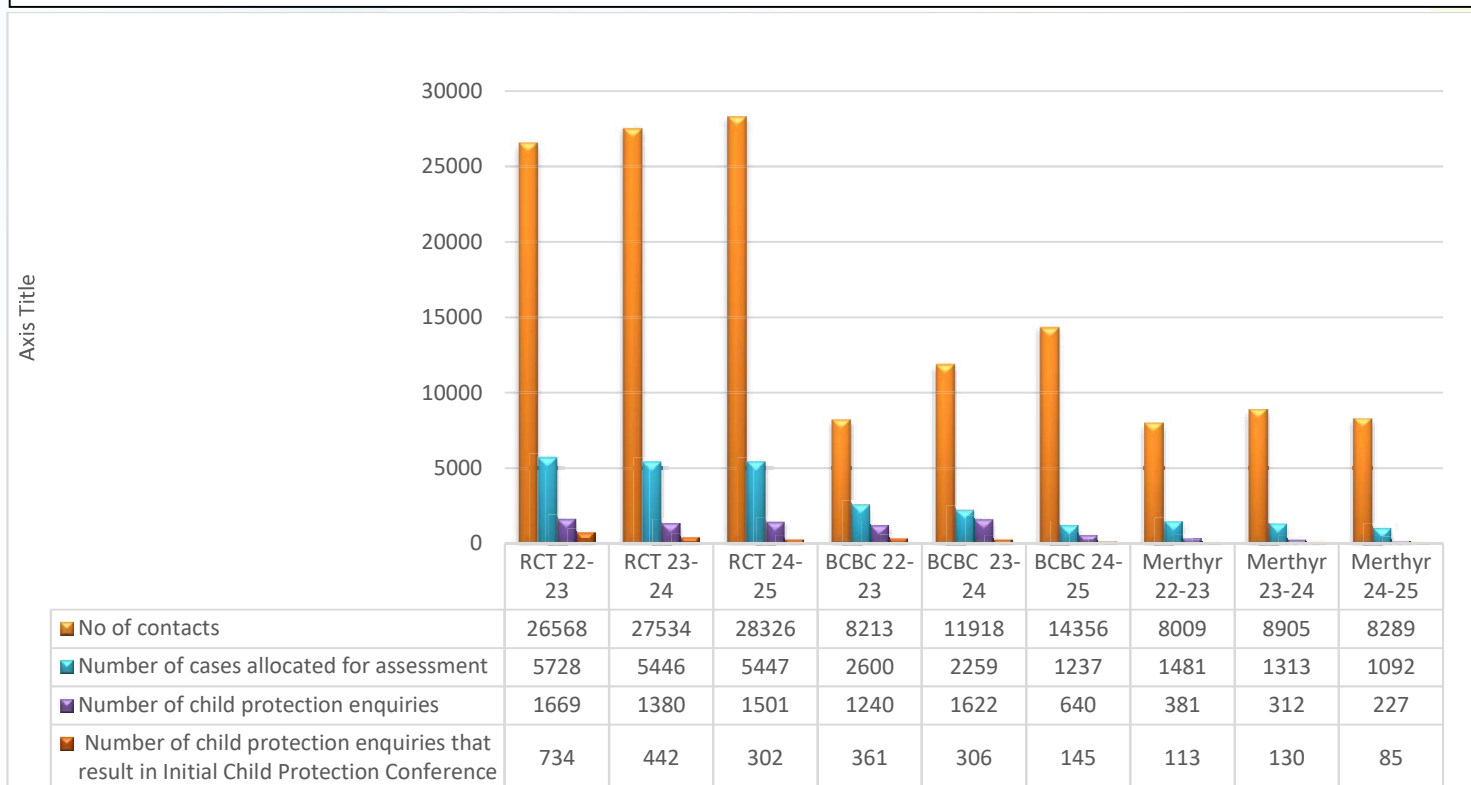
In 2024-2025, there has been a continued increase in the demand at the front door across RCT and Bridgend. Merthyr has seen a small decrease in the overall number of contacts received and this was attributed to the work undertaken with Education Services in relation to early help, prevention and quality referrals. Bridgend has seen the most significant increase of 32% throughout the year, although this is directly related to changes in service structures with Early Help and Prevention moving into the Children’s Services directorate. The joint campaign with NSPCC on raising public awareness on signs of safeguarding and how to report safeguarding concerns has continued this year which may also have impacted on an increase in safeguarding contacts.

In **Bridgend**, the Signs of Safety model has also led to the IAA Teams undertaking a greater level of activity when working with a family. The IAA Teams hold cases for the full 42 days where required and this increase in work with families is having a positive impact and often resulting in a step down to Early Help being appropriate. Routinely IAA undertake a Family Network Meeting, Words and Pictures and Mapping with families prior to determining next steps.

In **Rhondda Cynon Taf**, following a review of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service, RCT Children’s Services have continued to develop the Right Help, Right Time, Right Place Strategy that has evidenced the need to transform Prevention, Early Intervention and specialist statutory Children’s Services, ensuring a graduated response to need and a whole (multi-disciplinary) system response to ensure sustainable service delivery.

In **Merthyr Tydfil**, the child exploitation process has been adapted and is in use prior to a formal launch of the CTM wide Exploitation Strategy due in 2025/26. This has been positively received by families and positive feedback from a family member included how the process has changed their view of Social Services and working with professionals.

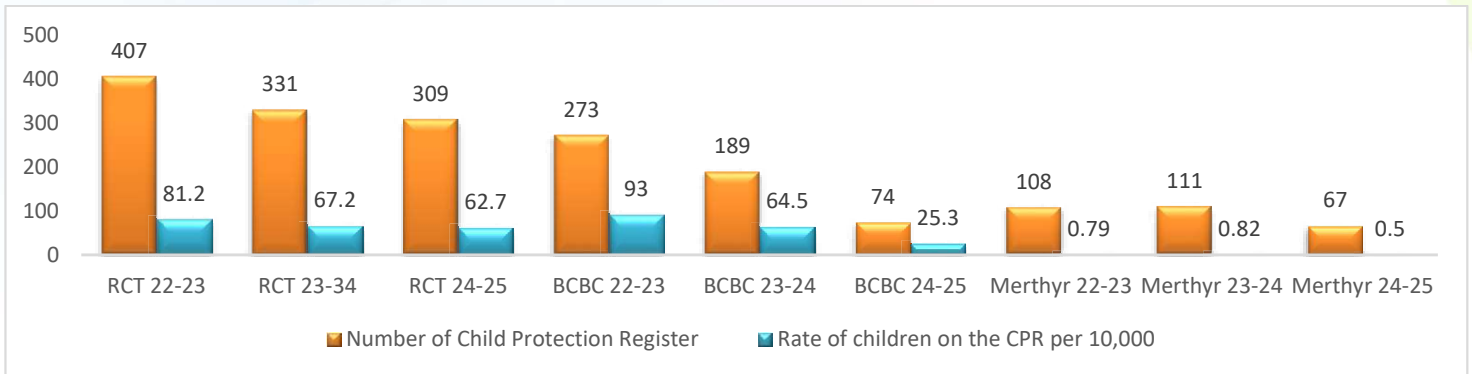
### Children's Safeguarding Data



The number of contacts that proceed to an assessment is relatively low across the region with RCT progressing 21% (1432/6761), Bridgend 5% (223/4164) and Merthyr Tydfil 15% (297/1957). Merthyr Tydfil and RCT have remained relatively stable when compared with 23-24 data and Bridgend has seen a decrease of cases proceeding to assessment. This year there has been a focus across the region on strengthening the offer of prevention, early intervention and signposting (where appropriate), internal quality assurance work on Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP) determinations (thresholds) and the development of Multi-Agency Children's Services Threshold guidance to support shared understanding of threshold decision making and eligibility support across the three local authority areas. There has been continued development and implementation of social work models of practice across each local authority and whilst these models are localised, there are similarities, with a key focus on strengths, relationships, collaboration, trauma informed, whole family approaches. These developments are in line with the recommendations of the CIW/Estyn Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements. A revised Child Safeguarding Referral Form (C1) and support guidance was signed off by the Board in December 2024. It is hoped these will assist further in the provision of the right support at the right time, quality referrals and a shared understanding of agency decision making.

Cases proceeding to child protection enquiries has decreased across the region and this is in line with the model of practice approaches discussed above, ensuring interventions with families are based on what matters to them, ensuring proportionate decision making and earlier prevention and intervention to prevent escalation into child protection processes. As such, the number of children on the Child Protection Register has also decreased this year.

### Child Protection Registration



For 2025-2026, we will continue to focus quality assurance work on child protection conferences, with a focus on multi agency contribution, child and family participation, including fathers, voice of the child, lived experience and re-registration and de-registration within the first six months to ensure recommendations from practice reviews and national reviews are taken forward.

## Model of Practice

### Bridgend Children’s Services

The Signs of Safety practice model has supported our practice in this period; we have seen an increase in compliments received from families and partner agencies about the improved processes and relationships within the Bridgend MASH. This is especially pleasing given the significant increase in demand seen in this period. Our complaints have decreased and when received are resolved more quickly. We continue to hold weekly, monthly and quarterly meetings and interfaces with regional partners to support working together and shared learning. We have created and appointed a Principal Officer - Social Work Transformation and a Consultant Social Worker Signs of Safety to support the continued implementation of our practice model and strengthen the quality of our practice and child assessments.

### Rhondda Cynon Taf Children’s Services

RCT Children’s Services Lead Manager for Practice continues to support the development of our model of practice in line with our vision. The new will strengthen practice, leading to safe reduction of entries to care; provide timely and responsive intervention to families to keep them together, de-escalating need and risk, safeguarding children and safely reducing the number of children who become looked after. The three key pillars of our practice are Relationships, Collaboration and being Trauma Informed. We have begun to roll out collaborative communication training across the workforce as part of the continued development of the model of practice and remain committed to providing a strength-based model, working alongside children and families, building on strengths to help them make the changes they need, whilst always prioritising our role in keeping children safe.

[RCTCBC CASE STUDY](#)

PDF

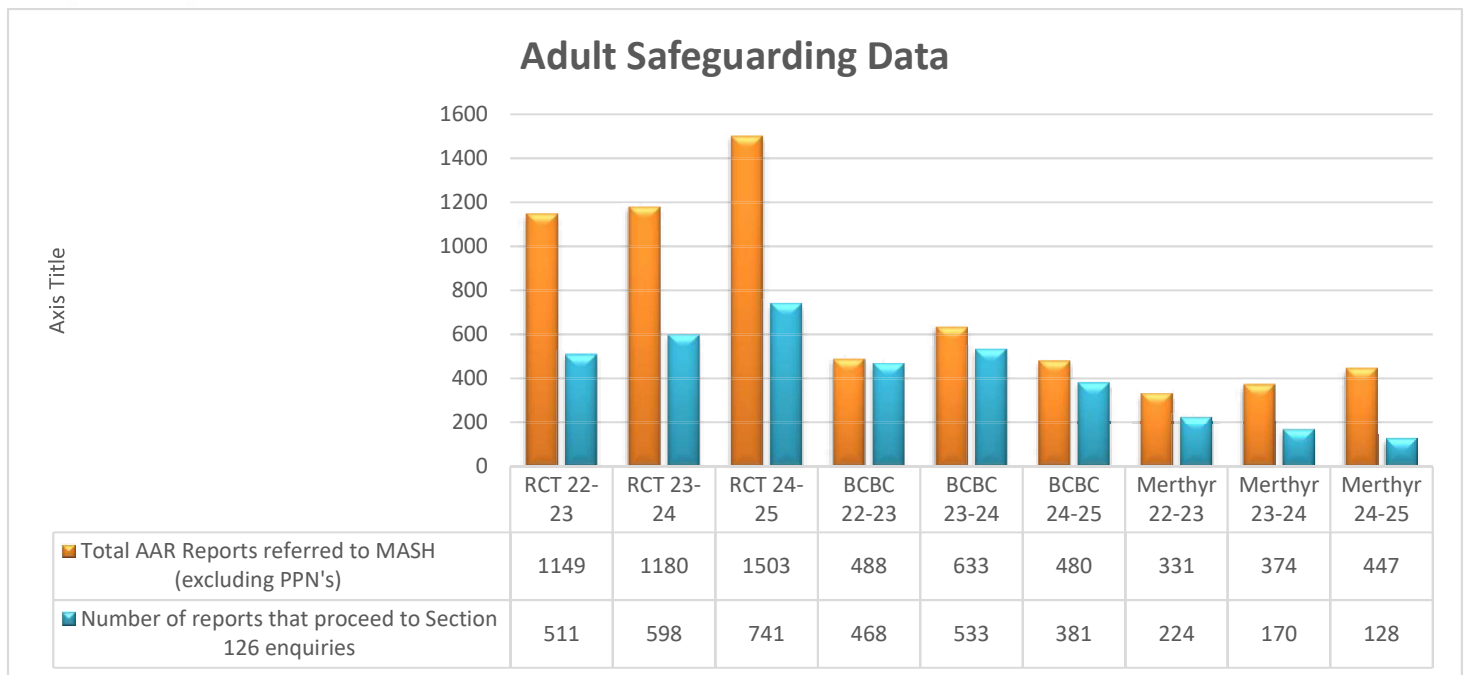
### Merthyr Tydfil Children’s Services

MTCBC children’s services utilise systemic model to support our practice. This has led to work on improving the quality of chronologies and how we work with families. The model is being embedded through additional training offers, peer support and regular case discussions with systemic practitioners. The systemic model considers how all the systems interlink and interact around the family and individuals rather

than considering them in isolation. The use of genograms, enhancing relationships and working with the whole system will lead to a reduction in the number of entries to care and reduction in the length of time children's names remain on the child protection register.

## Adult Safeguarding

Overall, there has been an increase in reports across RCT (24%) and Merthyr Tydfil (19%) whilst Bridgend has seen a decrease by 24% in 24/25. The percentage of reports proceeding to S126 continues to differ between the three local authorities. The overall percentage for Bridgend was 79%, 8% lower than 23/24 (87%), whilst it was 29% for Merthyr Tydfil, 16% lower than 23/24, and RCT remained consistent to 23/24 with approximately 50% of reports proceeding to S126.




### S126 completed within 7 working days 24/25

<b>RCT</b>	85%	<b>MTCBC</b>	81%	<b>BCBC</b>	68%
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All 3 local authorities continue to be committed to improving on the national KPI regarding S126 enquiries being completed within 7 working days.

**RCT Adult Services** have changed their referral process in the latter part of 24/25 and this has impacted on how data is collated. In January 25, a revised process where all enquiries/reports raising concerns about an adult at risk should be made to Safeguarding Duty via the submission of an A1 Referral Form only, with the only exceptions being WAST and SWP who have continued to use their own referral processes. This revised process will ensure consistent and accurate data reporting for the future. Work is also underway to address the percentage of cases proceeding to S126 including consideration of developing practitioner consultation and alternation provider reporting pathways.

**RCT Adult Services Case Study** 

In **Bridgend Adult Services**, changes have been made during 2024/25 to the management of Adult at Risk referrals, introducing a consultation process where referrers are encouraged to consult with the Adult safeguarding team before submitting an Adult at Risk Referral form (A1). This provides early advice and guidance prior to determining the need for a referral and also enables swift escalation of cases where required. This has improved partnership working with providers and developed confidence in staff and others to seek advice, ensuring informed decision, correct levels of interventions or support at the first point of contact. Changes made in 24/25 have effectively reduced the number of overall referrals being received. Some challenges remain in meeting the number of S126 enquiries being completed within 7 working days due to a small staffing team, but there are robust monitoring and escalation processes in place.

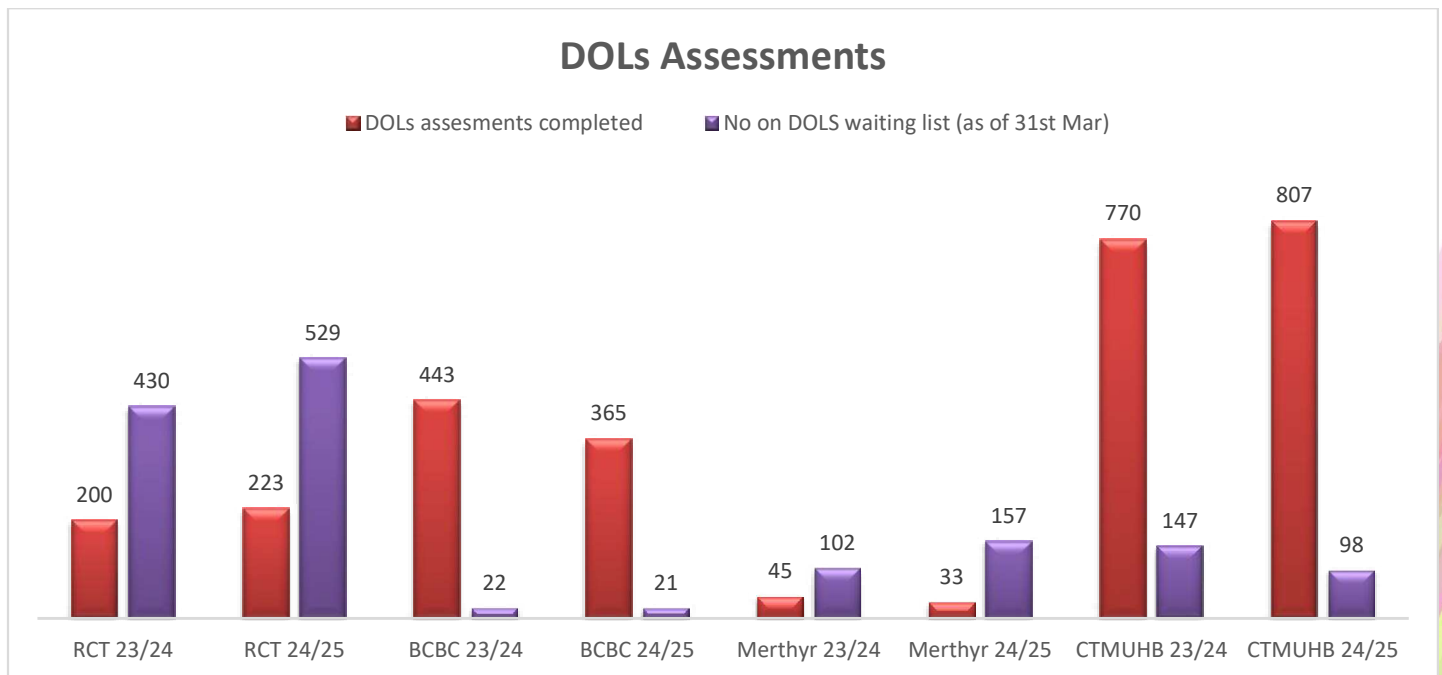
**Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services** have continued to see a rise in Adult at Risk referrals (A1). S126 has been identified as an area that requires future audit at the Adults Quality Assurance Panel (AQAP) to consider themes or trends and learning to improve practice. We have considered lessons arising from learning regarding the efficacy of recording safeguarding information in relation to adults at risk and this has been incorporated into the development of the new social care system MOSAIC that is due to be implemented regionally in January 2026. We also presented a case study to the AQAP highlighting that there is currently no formal adult protection medical process when an individual that's lacks capacity presents with unexplained injuries as is the case in Children's Safeguarding. This has now been escalated to an all-Wales level in partnership with our Health Board so that the Welsh Government is aware and can propose options to meet this un-met need in future.

### Escalating Concerns

Reports from Local Authority Commissioning Departments were received each quarter in relation to service providers in escalating concerns. There were 5 in total during 2024/2025, a slight decrease from 6 during 2023/24.

<b>RCT</b>	1	<b>MTCBC</b>	1	<b>BCBC</b>	3
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### Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)



The Health Board had a 4.8% increase in the number of DOLs assessments completed during 24/25.

Bridgend has completed a programme of training to staff to enable them to undertake DOLs assessment. This has seen a reduced waiting time as evidenced by an 18% reduction in the waiting list as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, comparative to the same period in 2023/24.

Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil have seen an increase in the waiting list for DOLs assessments this year however a programme of work is underway aligned with the strategic priorities to address the backlog.

[RCTCBC DoLS Case Study](#)

PDF

## Self-Neglect

In **Merthyr Tydfil**, there has been no Self Neglect panel held in 24/25 as the threshold was not met in line with the existing Guidance. A review of Self Neglect pathways and procedures will take place in 2025/26 in line with expected, updated national Guidance and improved reporting capability provided by the new Mosaic safeguarding database due to be implemented from January 2026. Similarly, in **RCTCBC**, the Self Neglect Panel was paused during 2024 due to the retirement of the Service Manager who co-ordinated this and also the withdrawal of the administration support from the Safeguarding Board. Following the appointment of the new Service Manager in October 2024, work has been underway to re-establish the Panel and an internal RCT process for managing Self-Neglect referrals. A generic email inbox for referrals has been put in place in the interim which is monitored and responded to by the Head of Service/Service Manager

**Bridgend** have maintained Self Neglect Partnership Panels. A generic email address for referrals is in place and we have reviewed the existing Policy and referral process. We have developed a clear criteria for Panels however we also encourage ongoing consultations, discussions for support and guidance on self-neglect cases outside of the Panel.

Adult Services throughout the region will continue to progress improvement work with the Safeguarding Board's Adult Quality Assurance Panel into 2025/26 to support the implementation of a consistent and improved approach to self-neglect. The future development of Adult Thresholding Guidance for the region which incorporates the signs and severity of self-neglect will better support agencies and professionals to identify self-neglect concerns.

## Professional Disagreements

The Board's [Concerns Regarding Inter Agency Safeguarding Practice](#) (CRISP) Protocol supports practitioners in finding a resolution when they have a professional disagreement or concern in relation to another agency's safeguarding practice.

A review of the current Protocol (last reviewed in 2023) is due to take place during 2025 via the Board's Protocols and Procedures sub-group. The 2025 review will focus on simplifying the current guidance and will be supported by a communication strategy to ensure all key stakeholders and professionals are better aware of the Protocol. This will clearly outline a requirement for, wherever possible all inter-agency differences to be resolved directly between agencies under good practice arrangements. During 2024/25, there were no Stage 2 CRISPs referred to the Safeguarding Board.

## 4. How did we implement our Annual Plan and what were our key achievements?

The Board published a Three Year Strategic Plan (2023/2026) on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, setting out its priorities for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Year Two [CTMSB Annual Plan 2024-25](#)  
In relation to the Boards Strategic Priorities, a summary of our work during 2024/25 is detailed below:

### **Strategic Priority 1: We will re-set and establish where we are and where we need to be.**

Any pertinent safeguarding risks that the Safeguarding Board's partners identify are added to the Board's regional Risk Register which is overseen by the Executive Steering sub-group.

Agencies are able to add risks to the Register with Board supporting the appropriate scrutiny of these with the aim to reduce any safeguarding risk and support partners to identify resolutions or overcome challenges which may impact on effective safeguarding within the region.

#### **RCTCBC Education**

RCT Education Services work with a range of partners to develop their safeguarding approach.

Annually all schools must review and evaluate their own safeguarding procedures and the Board's School Safeguarding Policy is also reviewed each year. To ensure this is robust, we insist that this is taken to the Governing Body for ratification in the Autumn Term. Following previous good practice noted within the use of the 'My Concern' system across RCT we have extended the Contract for all schools for an additional year until May 2026.

#### **Bridgend's EEYPP Directorate**

All schools and maintained early years settings are required to undertake annual safeguarding audits which are scrutinised by the Education Engagement Team. These audits are completed as a self-evaluation tool for schools in collaboration with the Education Engagement Team (EET). For the school year 2024-2025, 56 schools rated themselves as green in their self-assessment safeguarding audits. There were no schools identified in the red category.

#### **MTCBC Education**

Merthyr Tydfil's Education Department fulfills its statutory duties and contributes towards the Board's priorities by:

- Working in partnership to identify the best outcomes for learners and supporting a greater level of partnership work with Children Services to develop joint pieces of work.
- Disseminating and sign posting relevant information such as toolkits, assessments and training to the designated Safeguarding Lead within all schools and education staff.
- Providing advice, information and guidance in relation to safeguarding concerns with schools and supporting them to act accordingly and follow reporting procedures.
- Taking action to reduce safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity.

This year, partners of the Safeguarding Board have continued to support further roll-out of the regional partnership campaign with the NSPCC to raise public awareness on how to report safeguarding concerns. This originated from a recommendation within an earlier Child Practice Review. This has included, in

partnership with Education departments across the region, the development of the '**It's Not Love**' play throughout a number of secondary schools which focused on healthy relationships helping children and young people to recognise the signs of abuse in order to better safeguard themselves.

### RCTCBC Adult Services

The Director of Social Services and the Head of Service are members of RCT's Corporate Safeguarding Board and continue to work with colleagues in the Social Care Workforce Development Partnership and Corporate Human Resources to embed the work of National Safeguarding Training and Learning Standards for all staff groups across the Council. RCT's Corporate Safeguarding Board has also developed publicity material to raise awareness of abuse and/or neglect across the Council, with staff and commissioned providers.

RCT Adult Services continues to offer an 'Early Help' service option for South Wales Police, via the Community Development Team.

The wellbeing of staff continues to be a priority for RCT Adult Services. Alongside the support available corporately from RCT Council, Adult Services offers regular staff forums with Heads of Service, where staff escalate issues of concern.

### Bridgend Adult Services

Adult Services have fully embedded the outcome-focused approach to care and support planning, identifying their outcomes and building on a person's strengths to achieve this. There is a greater focus on what matters most to the person and how their strengths, family, friends, and community can help them achieve their goals, empowering those we support and promoting choice.

### Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services

During 2024/25, all safeguarding training within the Authority was provided via an interactive application (BOB's Business). This enabled training to be provided to all staff and supported monitoring compliance and maintain knowledge within the workplace.

During the year they have reviewed data surrounding the number of referrals and caseloads within the Safeguarding Team. This data has supported further, successful recruitment within the Team.

Within the wider context of the safeguarding environment, they have reached out to significant stakeholders such as Cardiff City FC and Cardiff Blues RFC to explore areas of development within their current community resources.

### RCTCBC Children's Services

RCT Children's Services have robust partnership working arrangements across Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and the Community Safety Partnership with attendance and contribution at the CTM Community Safety Partnership and relevant subgroups. i.e. Contest and VAWDASV including workshops on the development of the Violence Prevention Board.

They are represented on the CTM Emotional Health and Wellbeing Group of the Regional Children's Services Programme Board which aims to take a lead on emotional wellbeing and mental health services and developments across the region of Cwm Taf Morgannwg for children and young people.

They have continued to contribute fully to the NSPCC/CTMSB campaign on raising public awareness and supported and contributed to the launch of '**It's Not Love**' Play across the region.

RCT Children's Services have continued to contribute significantly to the exploitation subgroup (MACE)

and the development of the CTMSB Exploitation Strategy including creating training that was shared with the CTMSB Exploitation Group for consideration of its use regionally. They continue to attend the Pan Wales Exploitation working group on behalf of the CTMSB.

Following a review of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service, RCT Children's Services have continued to develop the Right Help, Right Time, Right Place Strategy that has evidenced the need to transform Prevention, Early Intervention and specialist statutory Children's Services, ensuring a graduated response to need and a whole (multi-disciplinary) system response to ensure sustainable service delivery as the data demonstrates continued high and increasing demand at the 'front door' where a determination of 'no further action' has exceeded 50% over the last 3 years.

Positively in RCT, when compared to the same period last year there has been a 21% decrease in the number of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) and the number of children becoming looked after has remained relatively stable, decreasing by 3% last year.

They have continued to contribute to the National Independent Safeguarding Board's ongoing, national work on a multi-agency performance framework attending national meetings and holding localised discussions with the facilitators on behalf of CTMSB.

RCT Children's Services continue to develop our model of practice in line with their vision. A new model will strengthen practice, leading to safe reduction of entries to care; provide timely and responsive intervention to families to keep them together, de-escalating need and risk, safeguarding children and safely reducing the number of children who become looked after.

During 2024/25, RCT Children's Services have improved their Children's Services webpages for parents and carers and begun to develop bespoke webpages for children and young people including those who are care experienced so that information is in an accessible language and format.

### **Bridgend Children's Services**

Bridgend has worked to the priorities set by the CTMSB during 2024/25. They continue to progress their quality assurance framework and facilitate workshops to fully embed learning and share good practice examples.

The Quality Assurance Officer represents the Directorate on the Board Protocols & Procedures Sub-Group (PPG) and CTMSB Children's Quality Assurance and Performance Sub-Group.

They have fully embedded the information sharing platform "GOSS" within the Bridgend MASH and the IAA Team.

During 2024/25, they have worked with multiagency partners to develop Multi-Agency Children's Services Threshold Guidance. This Guidance will provide a framework for professionals who are working with children, young people and families and aims to help practitioners identify when a child may need additional support to achieve their full potential. This will be signed off via the Safeguarding Board later in 2025.

### **Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services**

Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services has supported the Board by contributing to the Board's Risk Register including the identification of any risks that will require recording into 2025/26. They have also been involved in raising the profile of neglect and multiagency working by supporting the regional NSPCC campaign, working with a range of multi-agency partners to contribute to this. They have also worked consistently with partners on the CTM Exploitation Strategy, future Cwm Taf MASH development and the SUSR process since implementation in October 2024. This has included nominating Chairs and Reviewers to support and lead on the Board's Safeguarding Reviews this year.

## Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB)

Each year, the Health Board reviews workplans aligned to its Safeguarding Maturity Matrix. The CTMUHB three-year Safeguarding Strategy aligns to the priorities of both the Health Board and Regional Safeguarding Board. Progress of work is monitored quarterly through the Board's Executive Group within the Health Board. This year, safeguarding resources have been reviewed and realigned to ensure effective multi-agency working, information sharing and communication.

Through an Annual Audit Plan, the CTMUHB review how improvements and learning are embedded into practice. In order to share learning from incidents, concerns and complaints, bespoke training and safeguarding supervision has been provided to areas within primary and secondary healthcare. Joint work has been undertaken with Local Authorities and South Wales Police in respect of specific cases where there has been identified multi-agency learning.

CTMUHB colleagues have continued working with agencies and third sector colleagues to identify key resources to share throughout services in the Health Board. The continued development of the hospital-based Health IDVA has been key in identifying opportunities for early intervention, prevention and effective safeguarding of those suffering domestic abuse who present at the secondary healthcare setting Accident and Emergency department within the Royal Glamorgan Hospital.

CTMUHB work in partnership with BCBC to safeguard those individuals who have had a near miss in respect of suicide or self-harm. This forms part of the regional approach to reducing the risk of suicide.

## Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST)

The **WAST** Safeguarding Team participate in an annual benchmarking exercise with the National Ambulance Safeguarding Assurance Group (NASAG), as well as continuing to engage alongside NHS partners in the completion of the Safeguarding Maturity Matrix. These workstreams support benchmarking of their current position, horizon scanning of emerging themes and inform the workplan to continue to adapt and support safeguarding priorities in WAST and with partners. The WAST support the work of the Safeguarding Board by a presence at Board meetings and by contributing to relevant Safeguarding Reviews.

## Probation Service

During 2024/25, the Probation Service has contributed to the redesign of the CTM Safeguarding Board's governance structure. The Probation Service are committed to being represented at all levels of the Board and to developing and enhancing their contribution. They have volunteered to vice-chair two of the Board's new sub-groups in further support of the Board's work moving into 2025/26 contributing to effective governance for the Board, leadership and engagement.

## South Wales Police (SWP)

SWP enters each year with a clear mission: to protect, serve, and reassure our communities, with a specific focus on those most vulnerable. Their Delivery Plan 2025–29 anchors this mission in practice, providing a strategic framework for continuous improvement and strong governance.

Our contributions are shaped by our values: courage, integrity, and compassion. We deliver against our priorities through joint action, intelligence sharing, and an unwavering focus on victim-centered outcomes. SWP contribute to the Board's governance and safeguarding priorities by providing a consistent presence within the Board's structure, working with key stakeholders and supporting the effective delivery of work priorities. For example, during 2024/25, SWP have supported the development of the regional CTM

Exploitation Strategy and the future modelling of the Cwm Taf MASH. The MASH Executive Group is currently chaired by the SWP Safeguarding Lead who also attends Board meetings and CTMSB Executive Group meetings.

As SWP re-set for the year ahead, their direction is clear: to be an outstanding police service, visibly committed to safeguarding, and relentless in protecting the most at risk in our communities.

## **Strategic Priority 2: We will re-learn by reflecting on the past year and agreeing how what we learn as a Board can make a difference to safeguarding practice :-**

### **RCTCBC Education Services**

Learning Framework – Education is in ongoing discussion with Welsh Government and Social Care Wales around the training framework and implications for school-based staff. This includes new draft training for Group B practitioners.

Communication and Engagement – pupil and parental voice activities are planned in one school per Cluster to capture the voices of children and parents/carers which includes lines of questioning around safety and safeguarding in schools. The findings of this will be developed into the next Education Strategic Plan.

### **Bridgend's EEYPP Directorate**

There is a focus on providing regular safeguarding training to education staff and school governors with enhanced resources for professional learning and supervision. This training is delivered by the Education Engagement Team and reviewed every year to align with strategic improvements and changes. The Education Engagement Team provide safeguarding support and challenge to schools by acting as a 'critical friend' to help identify and address areas for development, this includes termly visits and oversight of safeguarding audits. Training for Governors has been expanded and is offered both online and face to face. Further sessions with schools are planned into 2025/26 to continue to enhance joint working and develop shared understanding.

Recommendations from child practice reviews and regulatory inspections are implemented and embedded into the EEYPP Directorate Safeguarding Board meetings, annual audits, Team Bridgend to ensure learning is shared and practice is improved across all settings.

Safeguarding outcomes and risks are monitored through the local authority Corporate Safeguarding Board and reported through the annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.

The Education Engagement Team have scheduled 2 hour 'drop in' sessions for Children and Families Services each week to support the educational provision of children looked after. Making sure children are aware of their opportunities and are signposted appropriately to support services.

Children and Family Services are working with the Education Engagement Team, Bridgend Youth Justice Service and South Wales Police on incidents within schools to review current practice and process. The intention is to identify whether there are alternative ways to intervene earlier and prevent issues escalating. The professional consultation line in the Bridgend Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is live for schools to use for information, advice and guidance on safeguarding concerns.

Bridgend Children's Social Services have implemented reflective sessions. This allows an opportunity for agencies to learn from one another in how to support and work with families.

The EEYYP Directorate's work is integrated with the priorities for safeguarding corporately and that of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, ensuring consistency and shared learning across the region.

### **Bridgend Youth Justice Service**

Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS) undertook a comprehensive review of its strategic direction at the start of 2024–2025, aligning internal goals with updated Youth Justice Board priorities and the needs of children and families in Bridgend. Key actions included:

- Annual development day with Board members and staff
- Implementation of new KPIs and a strengthened performance monitoring framework
- Continued focus on governance and accountability, with improved Board attendance monitoring and cross-agency collaboration.
- A clear aim was reaffirmed: to prevent criminalisation through early intervention, ensure children's voices shape services, and to embed trauma-informed practice across all levels of delivery.
- BYJS actively used audits, data, and case learning to improve its safeguarding practice during 2024/25 some examples of which were:
  - The 'All About Me' child feedback tool captured lived experiences and directly shaped practice development, including trauma-responsive planning and education support.
  - An internal review of restorative justice feedback from victims identified gaps in emotional support and information clarity. As a result, BYJS is formalising a trauma-informed, victim-centred response pathway.
  - Learning from specific cases, such as those involving children with undiagnosed neurodivergence, led to better cross-agency pathways (for example, SALT and neurodevelopmental referrals).

### **RCTCBC Adult Services**

The development of a regional Power BI dashboard has enabled us to begin to analyse and interpret available data more effectively, both in terms of our internal performance activity, and in comparison with partner local authorities.

RCT Adult Services has established a practice learning and reflection group, attended by Team Managers from across adult services. The group shares learning from published reviews, including those from other areas, as well as from other opportunities to learn, such as complaint investigations or coroner's inquiries. The Team Manager from the Adult Safeguarding Team attends these sessions. Team Managers are then able to disseminate the learning to their teams.

## Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services

During 2024/25, Merthyr has been successful in the recruitment of a new Adult Team Manager. This has brought improved consistency and stable leadership for the existing Team. This has resulted in the following:

- A review of existing processes and decision making
- An improvement in the documentation of practice specifically for Section 5 (Professional Concerns) referrals by using WCCIS to record these. This has resulted in data and thematic information to facilitate future planning.
- Improvements in Welsh Government returns with over 70% success in making decisions within 7 days whilst also receiving an increase in safeguarding referrals over the year.
- The Safeguarding Team is now fully staffed and developing training strategies to support and encourage positive practice throughout our adult services.

## RCTCBC Children's Services

RCTCBC has a strong corporate safeguarding framework that ensures all employees, elected members, commissioned services, suppliers and contractors are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. This includes RCT Council Safeguarding Training Standards to ensure all staff and commissioned providers in RCT have consistent and good quality training that is relevant to their roles and responsibilities. RCT are committed to supporting the CTMSB's multi agency training, RCT Children and Adult Services facilitate multi-agency training on Section 5, Wales Safeguarding Procedures, safeguarding allegations/concerns about practitioners and those in a position of trust across the CTM

RCT Children's Services have representatives on all subgroups of the Board and we have been fully committed to the new SUSR process and committed staff across the service directorate to attend the chair, reviewer and panel training. Learning and good practice from reviews is valued and shared via management forums on a regular basis and cascaded throughout the organisation in a number of formats. RCT Children's Services hold whole service mandatory summer safeguarding session to ensure key messages from reviews, audits and wider national work enabling space for practitioners to reflect on effective practice and learning.

RCT Children's Service remain committed to hearing the voices of those with lived experience and although the loss of our Participation Officer this year has caused some challenges, we have continued to engage with CYP's, parents and families. This year we consulted with a number of Looked After Children on participating in CLA reviews, attended Foster Wales network meetings to meet with foster carers on supporting children and young people to participate in their review and their digital My Voice My Review consultation.

During 24/24 RCT Children's Services have improved our Children's Services webpages for parents and carers. The developed webpages were launched in May 24 for parents, carers and families and 16+ and a communication plan was developed through the corporate website and the development of posters and QR code at various locations across RCT. They have begun to develop bespoke webpages for children and young people including those who are care experienced so that information is in accessible language and format.

## Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services

Merthyr has been involved in highlighting areas of concern, risks and workforce pressures where appropriate. Staff attend training including preventative services.

Communication is undertaken with staff and safeguarding issues highlighted. Child practice reviews are shared with the teams and managers.

Joint work with Education continues with joint audit work identifying areas of strength and areas of development. From an Early Help perspective, we have seen an increase of referrals from Education that are proportionate and the correct referrals for preventative support.

### **Wales Ambulance Service Trust (WAST)**

WAST colleagues have attended SUSR learning events which has ensured the voice of our practitioners have directly contributed to the review process and supported reflection of events and helped to identify learning for future practice.

Our Safeguarding Team has a close collaborative relationship with the WAST “*Putting Things Right*” team and any safeguarding themes identified are shared throughout the organisation and inform learning and training opportunities within the WAST.

### **Probation Service**

Essentially, the Probation Service promotes the Safeguarding Board’s Training agenda alongside the mandatory training provided by HMPPS, ensuring staff are appropriately trained and briefed to undertake the important role they play in safeguarding their community.

### **South Wales Police (SWP)**

South Wales Police is firmly rooted in a culture of continuous improvement. SWP recognise that safeguarding is complex and evolving, and SWP must remain open to learning if they are to protect the most vulnerable effectively.

SWP’s dedicated review and learning team provide critical scrutiny and support to ensure that insights and recommendations are translated into meaningful change. This includes ensuring learning reaches operational teams through guidance, supervision, and practical tools to improve frontline delivery.

Learning is embedded in how SWP lead, supervise, and improve.

As active members of the Regional Safeguarding Board, SWP are committed to collaborative learning, continuous reflection, and driving improvements that strengthen our collective safeguarding response.

## **Strategic Priority 3: We will agree on how we can re-develop as a Board to maximise opportunities to improve how we safeguard people.**

### **RCTCBC Education Services**

Cybercrime – discussions have taken place with all schools led by RCT ICT around the issue and prevalence of cybercrime and the importance of safeguarding school systems from this threat.

Extremism – a number of schools and central Education staff participated in extremism workshops to more fully understand this issue and the Prevent agenda so that schools/staff can make effective referrals for cases of concern.

Regional Consistency – RCT Education has worked closely with Bridgend and Merthyr Education over the last year to form strong partnership working and approaches to safeguarding including drafting a consistent school Group B training package and the annual review of the CTM School Safeguarding Policy.

## **Bridgend's EEYPP Directorate**

BYJS has taken substantial steps to develop safer, more responsive services:

- Expansion of health triage partnerships to strengthen early identification of mental health, communication, and substance misuse needs.
- Ongoing development of the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) and trauma-informed leadership, including a trauma lead role, has enabled targeted interventions for care-experienced children and those with complex trauma.
- The service implemented the practice of writing reports “to” children, not “about” them.
- Volunteers and young people are now actively involved in recruitment panels, service development, and co-producing restorative and information resources.
- BYJS is also working toward service sustainability post-YEF by identifying alternative funding and formalising key community partnerships (for example, The Bridge Community Hub and Fighting Homelessness).

In summary, BYJS has demonstrated a clear commitment to resetting priorities around safeguarding, learning from practice and performance data, and redeveloping services in line with trauma-informed, child-centred principles. Multi-agency collaboration, innovation, and lived experience have been central to delivering safer outcomes for children and young people during 2024–2025.

## **RCTCBC Adult Services**

Adult Services nominated a number of managers to attend the SUSR training that was held in July 2024. We are therefore well placed to support the work of the Board in establishing and supporting the SUSR process.

Since the appointment of the Service Manager for Safeguarding, Careers and Advocacy they have concluded work to revise RCT's advocacy guidance for staff. 'Lunch and Learn' sessions have been developed to launch the guidance, accompanied by a 7-minute briefing.

RCT Adult Services will continue to participate in the work to review the Cwm Taf MASH operating model and are committed to maintaining a physical presence in the MASH base, whilst acknowledging that staff report a hybrid model of working contributes to support their wellbeing, and that, corporately within RCT, the effectiveness of hybrid working in terms of time-efficiency have been recognised.

## **Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services**

Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services acknowledge the paramount importance of working together in the Cwm Taf MASH and sharing information at a leadership level. This has resulted in:

- The Safeguarding team has a duty service to offer practitioners advice and support.
- Developmentally they are using information / lessons learnt from the SUSR process to share via team briefings to reflect and learn positive practice outcomes.
- The Team Manager is working with partners to develop an adult exploitation strategy for the region.
- Team manager is also the lead worker for the region to develop an all-Wales A1 referral form.
- They also support further learning via the Board's Adult Quality Assurance Panel which they also Chair.

## **RCTCBC Children's Services**

Following a review of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service, RCT Children's Services have continued to develop the Right Help, Right Time, Right Place Strategy that has evidenced the need to transform Prevention, Early Intervention and specialist statutory Children's Services, ensuring a graduated response to need and a whole (multi-disciplinary) system response to ensure sustainable service delivery.

RCT Children's Services continue to develop our model of practice in line with our vision. The new model will strengthen practice, leading to safe reduction of entries to care; provide timely and responsive intervention to families to keep them together, de-escalating need and risk, safeguarding children and safely reducing the number of children who become looked after. The three key pillars of practice are Relationships, Collaboration and being Trauma Informed.

RCT Children's Services have continued to be responsive to emerging concerns and/or significant incidents occurring in the community where Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence were a significant concern. This has led to a multi-agency contextual safeguarding approach to safeguard vulnerable individuals and spaces within the community.

There was regional collaboration with British Transport Police as part of a multi-agency response to Criminal Exploitation and County Lines. The operation successfully engaged with 54 children through prevention, assistance and protection efforts, provided support to 22 vulnerable adults through advice, direct assistance and treatment. It also successfully seized weapons and drugs and disrupted an unbranded county line

## **Bridgend Children's Services**

Bridgend Children's Services continue to make great strides in the embedding of the Signs of Safety practice model and we have created and appointed to a post of Consultant Social Worker-Signs of Safety. The strength-based approach to working is benefitting children and families they work with and this can be evidenced in audit activity and feedback from families. . They have fully embedded Sign of Safety Child Protection Case Conferences and will be taking forward Care Experienced Reviews being conducted under the practice model.

They are piloting the "Most Significant Change" model and will be able to report on this moving forward.

BCBC have further developed their response to exploitation and have a monthly panel which supports multiagency collaboration in responding to exploitation. This is also going to be extended to Adult Services and this process is in its early stages.

## **Wales Ambulance Service Trust (WAST)**

WAST have continued to develop their digital reporting mechanism ("Doc-works") and explore further opportunities to support and protect vulnerable persons in our communities. Within this reporting period they have:

- Observed increased numbers of PREVENT referrals since the implementation of an internal digital Prevent reporting mechanism to assist our colleagues to share concerns of radicalisation with Counter-Terrorism Policing Wales.
- We understand from partnership working with Alzheimer's Society Cymru that Dementia referrals are supporting people affected by dementia through the diagnostic process, where families are being given support and advice around early detection and are guided through the diagnosis pathway.



- Doc-works is currently supporting the development of an innovative new bespoke digital platform for recording all safeguarding enquiries which will automatically collect data and produce data reports. This advanced system will provide a secure platform to maintain records whilst capturing data to provide clear case management governance.
- Created a bespoke Safeguarding Mailbox specifically for Safeguarding Allegations/Concerns about practitioners and those in positions of trust, to support managers and maintain highest levels of confidentiality.

## Probation Service

The Probation Service continues to work collaboratively with members of the Safeguarding Board to develop pathway to ensure safeguarding checks are undertaken at the point of first contact with the Probation Service. This has enabled much improved risk assessment and management and the protection of children and vulnerable adults. We are reviewing our commitment to MASH arrangements and appreciate the benefit of multi-agency collaborative working.

## South Wales Police (SWP)

SWP are committed to continuous innovation in safeguarding.

They remain alert to opportunities that allow them to enhance how they identify, assess, and respond to vulnerability. This includes maximising the use of technology, improving the quality of multi-agency information sharing, and building capability within our teams to act decisively and with compassion.

Their safeguarding approach is intelligence-led and victim-focused. Across safeguarding functions, they have strengthened supervisory oversight, created pathways for early intervention, and embedded more consistent risk management practices.

SWP also understand that effective safeguarding cannot be achieved in isolation. Our success depends on mature partnerships, shared accountability, and a willingness to re-develop practice together. As part of the Regional Safeguarding Board, SWP are fully invested in improving system-wide coordination and creating the conditions for long-term, sustainable improvements in how we safeguard those most at risk. SWP have committed resources to attend and support the SUSR process within the Board ensuring consistent support from designated Police lead officers in supporting learning from serious case reviews to improve future safeguarding outcomes.

## Other Board Priorities

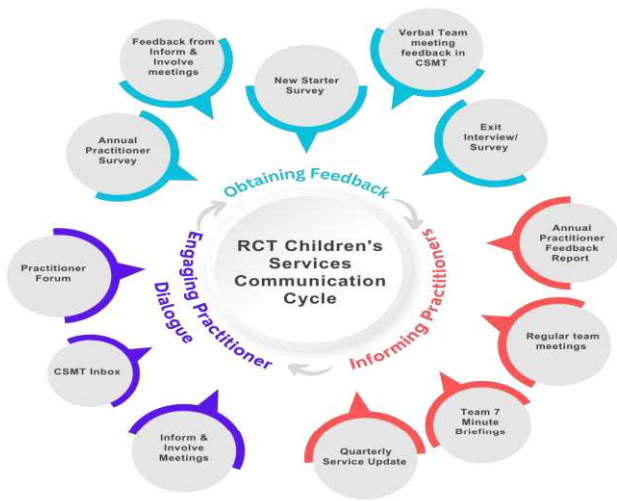
### Workforce and Wellbeing

Recruitment, retention and the wellbeing of staff remains a key priority. All staff working across our partner agencies should feel valued and supported, in particular, at a time when there are continued pressures and increasing demand on our services. We continue to promote staff well-being through a range of different means and ask partner agencies to report to the Board on how they are ensuring that this priority is being addressed.

### RCTCBC Children's Services

Workforce and wellbeing remains a key priority for RCT Children's Services with a workforce strategy and a regular steering group in place with a key focus on staff wellbeing, staff development and retention. Staff development and career opportunities remain an integral part of the workforce plan with the continued development of a children's social work academy and children's residential academy as part of our 'Grow our Own' agenda.

RCT recognise the importance of an engaged, motivated and healthy workforce. Over the last two years, Children's Services has introduced a range of mechanisms through the introduction of a Communication Cycle to capture the voice of practitioners. The aim of the Communication Cycle is to improve communication and well-being across the service, and it is now firmly embedded.



**Staff have access to a psychology led, reflective spaces forum, mental health self-service platforms as well as formal support through occupation health. RCT Children's Service are also piloting an enhanced flexible working pilot.**

### **RCTCBC Adult Services**

The wellbeing of RCT's workforce remains a priority. All staff working in the Council have access to a range of wellbeing services, both online and in person, via Occupational Health and Vivup service. Staff are able to self-refer or can be referred by their manager. There are a range of Corporate Policies in place, which are intended to support staff in the workplace, such as the Council's Leave of Absence policy, Working Carers Policy and Reasonable Adjustments scheme. During 2024-2025, a number of members of staff from the Adult Safeguarding Team have accessed additional support via these arrangements. Staff within the Adult Safeguarding Team receive regular supervision, in-line with the Adult Services Supervision Framework. During the latter part of 2024-25, the team were involved in team development sessions with an external facilitator. This work will continue in 2025-26, with the aim of supporting the team with the increased level of activity in recent years.

### **Merthyr Tydfil CBC**

Staff are our biggest asset, and we want to ensure we support them as a priority. Staff wellbeing remains a core focus in Merthyr Tydfil, with all agencies committed to promoting a healthy, resilient workforce. A wide range of health and wellbeing initiatives are now in place and reported bi-annually to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB). These include caseload management, access to counselling and employee assistance programmes, wellbeing apps, development sessions, and supervision, as well as tailored strategies to support individual needs. MTCBC offer hybrid and refresher training to ensure accessibility for all staff, including foster and kinship carers. New staff benefit from a robust induction programme aligned to the All-Wales Induction Framework, with clear pathways to qualification. Over 800 staff across various services accessed training last year, reflecting our commitment to workforce development. In addition, we continue to support anti-racism and cultural competence through cross-departmental action planning, contributing to a more inclusive and culturally aware workforce.

## South Wales Police (SWP)

Recognises that its staff operate in a high risk and high threat environment and are exposed to traumatic incidents regularly. We therefore support the provision of the Trauma Risk Management (TRIM) pathway where all Officers should be referred following any traumatic incident. There is a dedicated counselling service available via our Occupational Health Unit with additional private counselling through the Police Federation. We have a number of workforce champions who support a range of staff welfare issues including mental health, pregnancy and menopause and provide dedicated welfare officers for those staff subject to any investigative procedures. SWP also provide a support network which further supports staff with issues of diversity and neurodiversity. In addition, there are national support services eg. Oscar Kilo and Police Care UK and the Police Benevolent Fund which can provide financial aid and support for members.

## Bridgend Council Adult Services

Staff wellbeing remains a priority. The Council Health and Wellbeing Group meets every quarter, with the Adult Safeguarding & DoLS Team Manager a member of this group. Employees can access a 24/7 employee assistance programme. Also provided is a range of wellbeing support resources and workshops.

The Local Authority develops an annual Health and Wellbeing Calendar which promotes opportunities to improve health and wellbeing. In addition, a Health and Wellbeing Newsletter is published monthly, and Wellbeing Champions have been trained across directorates. The Local Authority is holding its first Health and Wellbeing Event in September 2025, focussing on interactive stalls to support mental and physical wellbeing. Additionally, the Directorate has made available bespoke wellbeing training and support for teams via SCDWP, and specialist trauma informed support for staff who require it. Staff have had access to individual coaching and mentoring and a bespoke leadership management and development programme has been established for managers in social care.

## Suicide Prevention

During 2024/25, there have been some challenges with progressing regional work in respect of suicide and self-harm prevention primarily due to a requirement to review the former governance of this work-stream. BCBC developed a localised Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Group to support enhanced working arrangements and responses to suicide and self-harm within their area with an intention to review this in line with revised regional arrangements in due course. To this end, during the latter part of this year, significant work has taken place via the Suicide and Self Harm Steering Group in partnership with Public Health Wales to progress revised governance arrangements within the CTM region to support the future, robust delivery of the suicide and self-harm prevention work-stream. Work continues to progress to a fully agreed governance structure which will robustly support the suicide and self-harm agenda within the region into 2025/26. This has been further supported by a new all Wales Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy which was published on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 [Suicide prevention and self-harm: strategy and delivery plan | GOV.WALES](#)

The Board's Business Unit continues to support the provision of the Immediate Response Group meetings in partnership with South Wales Police. These support a robust, multi-agency critical incident management response and community support model where serious incidents likely to result in high level impact to communities within the region occur.

## CTMSB Protocols and Procedures

The Board has a Policy and Protocols Review Group (PPG) that has strong representation across the multi-agency partnership. The PPG review and evaluate the Board's policies, procedures and guidance to ensure that these comply with legislative requirements and good practice developments. These are also key to providing additional support for partners and practitioners in respect of the delivery of effective safeguarding within the region. The work of the PPG also links closely with recommendations from the Board's practice reviews and national reviews and multi-agency audits with regards to the review and/ or development of policy and practice guidance.

The following Board protocols and guidance documents were reviewed and updated during 2024-2025:

- CTM DoLS Policy (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards)
- Complex Abuse Protocol
- Guidance in relation to Pre-Birth Referrals and Child Protection Conferences
- Section 47 Joint Enquiries Protocol
- Working with Parents or Carers who Misuse Substances
- Adult Protection & Support Orders Protocol
- Managing Adult Large-Scale Safeguarding Investigations
- School Safeguarding Policy

## Partner Agency Achievements

In addition to the joint work that is undertaken as a multi-agency Board, individual partner agencies also share their achievements in relation to safeguarding.

### Bridgend Council Children's Services

We continue to operate our monthly Exploitation Panel in advance of the formal launch of the regional Exploitation Strategy which supports multi agency collaboration and solution focused practice for children and young people at risk of exploitation.

**Bridgend Council Adult Services** has worked in successful collaboration with a range of key stakeholders including Parc Prison this year to support improved safeguarding within the secure estate resulting in a significant reduction in the level of self-harm and related deaths within the prison in the latter part of 2024/25.

**Merthyr Tydfil CBC** - work has continued in 2024/25 on developing our regional strategic approach to exploitation, both in relation to children and adults at risk. Partner agencies have worked together to develop our governance arrangements and agreeing appropriate tools to support the identification and assessment of all forms of exploitation. Recognising early intervention and prevention is crucial in meeting the needs of people we support; a key focus this year has been raising the profile of abuse and neglect. We have successfully worked in partnership with the NSPCC and other key stakeholders to raise and promote public awareness campaigns across the region.

**Rhondda Cynon Taf Children's Services** - RCT are continuing to develop access to information and advice for families and professional including a high-quality digital offer, ensuring accessible information and advice that is reliable and trusted and supports families to help themselves. RCT data indicates they are responding to high levels of local need and increasing complexity in the families they work with and positively the data and quality assurance work evidences an improvement in performance with 98% of assessments having what matters and there is evidence of timely, consistent and stable use of thresholds

applied at the 'front door'. Positively in RCT, when compared to the same period last year there has been a 12% reduction in the number of section 47 enquiries and a 21% decrease in the number of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) and our children becoming looked after has remained relatively stable, decreasing by 3% last year. This is driven by the strengthening of early intervention/signposting and CASP interventions (where appropriate).

**Rhondda Cynon Taf Adult's Services** - As a result of an adult practice review, Service Managers from Adult Services developed guidance for staff supporting and safeguarding adults at risk that are disorientated in the community. Three 'lunch and learn' sessions were held to launch this guidance, which was co-produced with staff and managers.

**Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board - As below:**

### **Good practice/case studies/key achievements**

#### **CTMUHB**

CTMUHB have improved their secondary care pathway for the management of bruising and injuries in immobile children, including the development of a family leaflet.

To ensure the voice of the child drives improvements in health services CTMUHB have made feedback questionnaires available digitally for use by children, young people, parents, carers and professionals. A video has been developed to provide a visual tool to children attending the health boards child protection medical hub.

The Health Board's Annual Audit Plan has identified areas of good practice in respect of safeguarding and learning from these, incidents and reviews inform training and education resources. The Annual Audit Plan was developed following key recommendations from the Joint Inspections of Child Protection Arrangements. This year CTMUHB have appointed a practice educator to evaluate current practice in sharing learning and develop materials that will support wider learning across CTM services.

Utilising funding from Welsh Government the Health Board have successfully increased the number of DoLS authorisations and raised awareness across its services in respect of MCA.

CTMUHB safeguarding and mental health teams worked in partnership with the WAST and SWP to review the care of a young woman in mental health crisis. Identified learning influenced changes in practice, improving partnership arrangements.

Joint work was undertaken between the Health Board and Children's Services to explore further opportunities to improve communication and information sharing. Work was also undertaken to establish a pathway for children and young people who require safe care while awaiting child protection medicals.

The Health Board have developed new roles to support adult safeguarding, MCA, training and education. These posts support colleagues across the Health Board to support learning in respect of safeguarding.

### **Good practice/case studies/key achievements**

#### **Wales Ambulance Service Trust (WAST)**

We have reviewed and updated both the Trust's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy and the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Ask & Act Policy. These revised

policies, together with the associated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), have been approved through full internal processes during this reporting year.

Microsoft Forms were utilised in the consultation process to collate and evidence responses. This proved a new and innovative way to complete a Trust wide consultation, with our Policy Team expressing interest to explore utilising this method with other consultations.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for our Safeguarding Strategic Group (SSG) were refreshed in 2024 to build on an established framework, providing influence, strategic direction, leadership and governance to provide assurance WAST meets all safeguarding statutory duties. The TOR now also reflect the group's commitment to the Welsh Government Corporate Parenting Charter.

### **Good practice/case studies/key achievements**

#### **Probation Service**

The Probation Service continues to chair the Cwm Taf MARAC illustrating our commitment to leading multi-agency collaboration and safeguarding victims of domestic abuse. We have also committed to the role of Vice-Chair for the Board's new SUSR sub-group and Improving Practice Delivery Group in 2025/26 further supporting the deployment of the SUSR framework within the region. Also, in collaboration with the CTM University Health Board, we have promoted the use of sexual health kits to people on Probation and are exploring the implementation of follow up care from a sexual health nurse. We are looking to commence blood borne virus testing in Bridgend to improve health outcomes of people on Probation.

The Probation Service has actively contributed to the safeguarding of Youth to Adult community justice transition cases by facilitating and chairing robust MAPPA arrangements which have safeguarded both the young people and existing and future victims and worked collaboratively with Board partners during this year to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements were in place linked to the Government's early release of offenders from the secure estate.

### **Good practice/case studies/key achievements**

**South Wales Police** have continued this year to work collaboratively with the CTMSB and a range of partners to minimise the impact of critical incidents that have occurred within the region. We have instigated regular briefings with professionals to ensure vulnerable individuals and communities are supported and to minimise community impact issues. We provide dedicated Safeguarding lead officers working within the region who support the work of the Safeguarding Board which this year has included collaboration in respect of the regional Exploitation Strategy, Cwm Taf MASH Review and the audit work of the Board. We continue to lead on Immediate Response Groups supported by the Board's Business Unit and a range of key stakeholders. We are committed, moving into 2025/26 to continue effective joint working on a range of safeguarding priorities within the region including exploitation, cyber-crime, VAWDASV, sexual harm and suicide/self-harm prevention.

## 5. Safeguarding Themes

### Audit Activity

Achieving improvement in safeguarding policy, systems, and practice is a core function of the Board. Audit work is carried out via task and finish groups set up by the Quality and Performance Sub-Groups. Any recommendations made by case audits are monitored by these groups to identify how practice needs to adapt to reflect any learning. The key learning themes from audits completed this year are summarised below:

AUDIT ACTIVITY	THEMES IDENTIFIED
<p><b>Adults</b>            Non-Attendance / Out of            Timescale at Strategy            Discussions</p>	<p><i>Reason for Audit: Where Strategy discussions have taken place outside of seven days following a determination being made. To explore the reason for being out of 7-day timescale along with highlighting the professionals that do not attend.</i></p> <p><b>Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A need to consider how the safeguarding process is ended when a death occurs during the s126 enquiries in order to share any lesson learned and for reflective practice to take place.</li> <li>• Where a strategy is delayed due to a professional's annual leave, there is a need to document what other options have been explored and who else could attend.</li> <li>• Information regarding the views and wishes of the person is basic and isn't reconsidered throughout the process.</li> <li>• How the current Performance Indicator can be improved with clear information as to rationale where it is not achieved.</li> </ul> <p><b>Areas of Effective Practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of robust, effective S126 enquiries that resulted in no requirement for a strategy discussion and reduced pressure on all agencies who would usually be required to attend.</li> <li>• There were clear, immediate safeguards put in place for each case prior to the strategy meeting/discussion taking place. This was documented.</li> </ul>



- In general, all strategy meetings were carried out within the required time.
- Overall good multiagency attendance at strategy discussions.
- All strategy minutes were comprehensive and set out the concerns and what was being done to address them.
- Care support and protections plans were implemented as part of the process.
- All enquires were thorough and well written and considered the persons immediate safeguarding needs.

**Areas for Development:**

- To agree within staff teams that if someone is unable to attend a strategy, they explore if someone else is available who can attend on their behalf as opposed to delaying a meeting.
- Documenting clearly why there has been a delay and what actions have been completed to prevent the delay.
- Ensure that the views and wishes of the adult at risk are consistently obtained and updated as the process progresses.
- How local authorities and partners can better manage diary availability to support the effective and timely convening of strategy meetings.
- Clear escalation pathways where concerns are identified.

**Adults**

Number of cases that required criminal investigation

**Learning:**

- A significant percentage of perpetrators were related to victims
- The highest proportion was in respect of sons as perpetrators
- Only 4 cases in RCT where the perpetrator was unknown (thefts from the victim's home address)



- The majority of offences took place in the community in home addresses, with a small proportion taking place in hospitals and care homes. Only 2 offences took place where victims lived in supported accommodation
- The biggest proportion of crime was financial abuse
- There were limited successful prosecutions – only 3 out of 34
- RCTCBC: 4 repeat victims
- MTCBC: No repeat victims
- BCBC: 1 repeat victim

**Areas of Effective Practice:**

- Where crimes had been committed these were recorded in accordance with Home Office Crime Recording Rules.
- Where appropriate, PPNs were submitted and shared to Adult Services
- There was evidence of effective investigations into sexual offences and the physical abuse. Albeit only 1 resulted in charge.
- Appropriate safeguarding was noted to be considered and in place and documented on investigation logs.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- Police to be aware of the statutory time limitations.
- Police to consider victimless prosecutions where there are independent witnesses to a crime even though family may not wish to pursue criminal charges (wider public interest)
- Officers in the case to ensure regular updates are provided to Adult Safeguarding

**Children  
Multi-Agency  
Professional Forum -  
Suspicious &  
Unexplained Injuries**

**Introduction**

Following the publication of the Child T review, which included recommendations for agencies to quality assure arrangements for child protection medicals, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board decided to complete some further work.

**Background**

As part of the child T action plan, the University Health Board (UHB) had completed several areas of work which related to process, staff awareness, pathways and cultures within the organisation. This work prompted Board members to consider how these areas were conducted in all its constituent agencies



The Board's Executive Group decided to commission a Multi-Agency Professional Forum (MAPF) to complete this work.

### **Process**

The process included the formation of a panel of agencies who oversaw the work which was backed with a Terms of Reference governing the project. A large amount of research was done including interviews with professionals, audits and reflective practice workshop sessions. There were also several meetings held with specific agency staff to establish 'benchmarks' for each agency.

The three specific areas of work concentrated on the pathway for Non accidental injuries, the identification of concerns and the governance and quality assurance aspects of the process.

### **Key Learning Points**

It was evident that a large amount of work had been invested in establishing the current position in each agency and this had produced some very positive results across this area of work.

It also became apparent that the majority of this work had been completed on a single agency basis which led to a certain lack of consistency across the region.

Much quality assurance work, including audits, had taken place to provide agencies with assurances that pathways and processes were embedded in practice. Also, many policy documents, flowcharts and guidelines had been produced to ensure compliance.

It was established that most of this work had been completed by individual agencies within their own Local Authority areas.

### **Good Practice Highlighted**

Partner agencies were keen to express their appreciation of the UHB hub which operates across the region and provides excellent facilities and service for users.

It was also noted that both Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) in the region provided a consistent approach to safeguarding concerns and were well organised when convening strategy meetings and other responses to suspected suspicious and unexplained injuries in children.

### **Recommendations Include:**

- A revision of policy documentation to ensure regional consistency
- A robust out of hours approach to cases of NAI
- To ensure the inclusion of health staff in out of hours meetings
- Multi agency training is amended to include information about NAI

- Guidance is provided for staff on good responses to disclosures
- An escalation process is developed to support resolution of differences in relation to CP medicals
- A 'deep dive' of cases to be completed to assure Board members of the position & the development of a multi-agency audit programme

## Adult Practice Reviews, Child Practice Reviews and Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews

In 2024-2025, the Board published 3 Child Practice Reviews, 2 Adult Practice Reviews and 1 SUSR Mental Health Homicide Review.

The learning and recommendations from Reviews are recorded in an Action Plan overseen by the Safeguarding Board. This is cascaded across all partner agencies with the Board requesting agency updates of learning actions undertaken. Learning from reviews also informs the Board's annual Training Plan which further supports future learning opportunities for Board partners. Moving into 2025/26, the Board's revised sub-structure will create a new SUSR sub-group which will consider and agree future review referrals and a new Improving Practice Delivery group who will be responsible for bringing further efficacy to the oversight of recommendations, learning and actions from our reviews. This will provide a robust framework that fully supports the All Wales Single Unified Safeguarding Review implementation within the region.

**The Board published the following Reviews during 2024/25. Further information relating to the Reviews and how our partner agencies have applied learning from these is detailed below:**

Review	Case Type	Brief Case Summary
<a href="#">Adult W</a> <a href="#">7 minute briefing</a>	<b>Adult Practice Review</b> <b>Bridgend</b>	<b>Date of incident: 27/04/22</b> <b>Death of an elderly female.</b>
<p><b>CTMUHB</b> - This Review has been shared through the Health Board's Safeguarding Operational Group, learning repository and integrated into bespoke Level 3 training. The Safeguarding Intranet page has been redesigned to ensure resources are made available within a learning library. Supervision request forms have been developed and one to one safeguarding supervision is now available to District Nursing teams. The MCA lead and practice educator within the Health Board has provided bespoke training to CTMUHB district nursing service.</p> <p><b>Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services</b> - During this year Merthyr is developing face to face, staff / team meetings to cascade information and learning with all practitioners.</p> <p><b>Probation Service</b> - The Probation Service were not actively involved in this review, however, the findings relating to professional curiosity, record keeping and line management responsibilities are congruent to the continuous improvement actions within the Probation Service's Delivery Plan.</p>		

**RCTCBC Adult Services** - This review concerned an adult who was open to adult services in RCT at the time of her death. The Review was sent to all managers and the social work teams in RCT. There have been a number of Peer Practice Meetings focusing on raising awareness of and embedding the learning, as well as recognising and sharing the positive practice that was noted in the review, so that this can be shared amongst other teams. As a result of these sessions, self-neglect champions have been identified across adult services in RCT to lead on this complex area of practice. The review has also been taken into account in our training needs analysis with additional training around self neglect being commissioned for delivery in 2025-26.

**South Wales Police** - South Wales Police chaired this review. Recommendations and the 7 minute briefing have been disseminated to front line officers as part of Op Amddiffyn and Learning Development Services concerning Right Care Right Person, Mental Capacity.

With particular focus on welfare checks, partner agencies are now aware of the legal restrictions placed upon South Wales Police. If there is risk to life and limb: Section 17 of PACE gives the police the power to enter premises without a warrant in order to save life and limb or prevent serious damage to property. This represents an emergency situation and it is for the police to exercise the power. However, it is not enough that the police should have a general welfare concern about somebody in order to use this power of entry, which may only be used in cases of emergency, not general welfare.

**Wales Ambulance Service Trust** - The action plan and recommended learning from this review was presented to WAST SSG in June 2024. A refreshed MCA training package is to be disseminated to all frontline operational staff during WAST's 25-26 Continuing Professional Development program. A dip sample of relevant clinical records where patients have been determined to lack capacity without onward conveyance, from both pre and post MCA training program taking place, will be audited to measure the effectiveness of this learning and positive impact on practice in relation to supporting patient's lacking capacity, decision making, agreed actions and documentation.

<p><b><u>Child F</u></b> <b><u>7 minute briefing</u></b></p>	<p><b>Child Practice Review</b> <b>Bridgend</b></p>	<p><b>Date of incident: 30/09/21</b> <b>Death of a 13 year old female child.</b></p>

**CTMUHB** - This Review has been shared through the Health Board's safeguarding operational group, learning repository and integrated into Level 3 training. The Safeguarding intranet page has been redesigned to ensure resources are made available within a learning library. Learning has been shared with the Care Experienced team. The Health Needs notification form was adapted to include a risk assessment, this has since been accepted nationally. The new form clearly articulates risk to care experienced children when they are moving around different authorities. Improvements have been made to CAMHS (*Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services*) reporting arrangements when care experienced children do not attend appointments or access the service, this ensures, as a corporate parent the Local Authority are aware of needs not being met.

**RCTCBC Children's Services** - RCT Children Services cascades Practice Review Learning via Children Service Manager Team meetings and Team Manager meetings. This is further disseminated and discussed in individual team meetings where practitioners reflect on the learning and practice.

**BCBC Children's Services** - Learning from the review has been incorporated into training to teams in regards to findings from this and other reviews. Staff involved were provided with de-brief sessions on the findings and the 7-minute briefing was circulated to all teams for awareness. In addition, the recommendations have been implemented into service plan improvements.

**Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services** - This was shared with the teams in a communication session and managers at ECSMT. Discussion held regarding learning and QA Team manager also considers

learning and may audit MTCBC case-files to ascertain if any issues in MTCBC are relevant for learning.

**Probation Service** - The Probation Service were not actively involved in this review, however, the findings relating to professional curiosity, record keeping and line management responsibilities are congruent to the continuous improvement actions within the Probation Service’s Delivery Plan

**RCTCBC Adult Services** - The Review report has been sent to all team managers and was discussed in relation to the themes identified, and which are relevant to adult services. In particular, where we are working with adults who have lived experience of being looked after, the need for our practice to be fully trauma informed.

**RCTCBC Education Service** - The consideration of provision for out of county CLA learners is a key focus of our Virtual CLA Headteacher and the team. This additional support for CLA learners and oversight function ensures that we can follow up school places for CLA learners in other Local Authorities to ensure this is timely and appropriate.

**South Wales Police** - South Wales Police chaired this review. Good practice by SWP recognised – Report Recommendations and 7minute briefing disseminated to Learning Development Services and Missing Person Investigation Team. Highlighted the importance of informing the receiving area Police, Social Services and Education Services when a child under the care of the Local Authority is moved out of area. Promote sharing of information such as Care Plans, Assessments and awareness of previous referrals to CAMHS (*Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services*) in the previous area and access to child advocacy.

[Adult V](#)  
[7 minute briefing](#)

**Adult Practice Review**  
**Rhondda Cynon Taf**

**Date of incident: 07/07/20**  
**Death of an elderly female.**

**CTMUHB** - Training and education in respect of controlling and coercive behaviour is incorporated into all safeguarding training. Domestic Abuse is a priority within the Health Board’s safeguarding strategy.

Recognising the value of the Health Independent Domestic Violence Advisor role within CTMUHB, funding has been granted through Value Based health care to expand this service. They have been involved in bespoke training delivered to community services. These roles are pertinent to sharing learning in respect of domestic abuse through training, advice and support.

The review was shared throughout the Health Board through leadership and operational groups.

**Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services** - During this year Merthyr is developing face to face, staff / team meetings to cascade information and learning with all practitioners.

**Probation Service** - The Probation Service were not actively involved in this review, however, the findings relating to professional curiosity, record keeping and line management responsibilities are congruent to the continuous improvement actions within the Probation Service’s Delivery Plan

**RCTCBC Adult Services** - This review concerned an adult who was open to adult services in RCT at the time of her death. The Review was sent to all managers and the social work teams in RCT and was discussed at Peer Practice sessions, in line with established practice for disseminating the learning from reviews. As a result of this review, and the associated action plan, domestic abuse champions have been established across adult services. Their role is to act in a consultative capacity to colleagues who are dealing with practice issues around domestic abuse and coercive control. The champions themselves are being supported to develop a community of practice to share research, best practice and access additional training so that they can feel confident in their role.



**South Wales Police** - Recommendations and 7 minute briefing have been disseminated to front line officers as part of Op Amddiffyn and Learning Development Services. Partner agencies awareness of sibling domestic abuse, referrals to IDVAS and MARAC and importance of Lasting Power of Attorney and Office of Public Guardian.



<p><b><u>Child Y</u></b> <b><u>7 minute briefing</u></b></p>	<p><b>Child Practice Review</b> <b>Bridgend</b></p>	<p><b>Date of incident: 31/07/21</b> <b>14 year old male child incarcerated following their involvement in the murder of another child within the family.</b></p>
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**CTMUHB** - Good practice was identified in respect of joint working between mental health services and partner agencies. Effective practice has been shared through training and education resources and learning from this review disseminated across CTMUHB services. Bespoke training was provided to CTMUHB Members who often are the Exec on call to ensure they were familiar with processes such as PRUDiC, strategy meetings etc.. and the need for each to take place following a significant incident. This is to ensure that colleagues are confident in multi-agency working out of hours. The review was shared across child and adult services through our intranet pages, email and operational groups.

**RCTCBC Children's Services** - RCT Children Services cascades Practice Review Learning via Children Service Manager Team meetings and Team Manager meetings. This is further disseminated and discussed in individual team meetings where practitioners reflect on the learning and practice.

**BCBC Children's Services** - work has been completed with our Hubs and learning from the review has been incorporated into training to teams in regards to findings from this and other reviews. Staff involved were provided with de-brief sessions on the findings and the 7-minute briefing was circulated to all teams for awareness. In addition, the recommendations have been implemented into service plan improvements.

**Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services** - This is shared with the teams in a communication session and managers at ECSMT. Discussion held regarding learning and QA Team manager also considers learning and may audit MTCBC case-files to ascertain if any issues in MTCBC relevant for learning.

**Probation Service** - Whilst not involved with Child Y, the Probation Service was voluntarily involved with other family members during the review period. The 7 Minute briefing has been shared and learning discussed at team meetings.

**RCTCBC Education Service** - The findings in this case highlighted regular communication from school during the pandemic. At this time in RCT, there was information shared on all known vulnerable learners with schools to ensure routine contact was made and the expectation of schools was made clear. There are clear learning steps if faced with a similar situation in future to ensure plans are robust where children are not attending school regularly.

**South Wales Police** - Recommendations and 7 minute briefing have been disseminated to front line officers as part of Op Amddiffyn and Learning Development Services. Importance of physical visits and attendance at school impacted by Covid provided backdrop of disguised compliance. All agencies to evaluate full circumstances and background to determine causation of child injuries and importance of child protection medicals.



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<p><b><u>Adult S</u></b> <b><u>7 minute briefing</u></b></p>	<p><b>Mental Health Homicide Review</b> <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b></p>	<p><b>Date of incident: 21/11/21</b> <b>35 year old male with mental health needs incarcerated for the murder of a female unknown to him.</b></p>
<p><b>CTMUHB</b> - Learning from this review influenced many policy changes. The learning was shared widely with Mental Health colleagues through safeguarding and mental health operational groups and collaborative working in respect of the action plan derived from the review. The review will be made available through the health boards redesigned training and education pages and will form part of a learning event planned for mental health colleagues in 2025.</p> <p><b>Probation Service</b> - The Probation Service were not actively involved in this review, however, the findings relating to professional curiosity, record keeping and line management responsibilities are congruent to the continuous improvement actions within the Probation Service's Delivery Plan.</p> <p><b>RCTCBC Adult Services</b> - This review concerned an adult who was open to the mental health services in RCT at the time of the incident. Since then, ongoing work has been undertaken with colleagues in the UHB to learn the lessons drawn from this review and associated investigations. The Review has been sent on to the social work teams. In addition, learning is shared within Multi-disciplinary team meetings focusing on raising awareness of and embedding the learning from the Review and incorporating that learning into processes.</p> <p><b>South Wales Police</b> - Recommendations and 7 minute briefing have been disseminated to front line officers as part of Op Amddiffyn and Learning Development Services. Importance of promoting necessity to sharing information across agencies particularly with, by and across Health Boards. All staff within the Public Service Centre are trained effectively and understand the process. Management Support Team reviewed Misper reports for learning – specifically around circulation and individual learning fed back to the individual and their supervisors.</p>		
<p><b><u>Child C</u></b> <b><u>7 minute briefing</u></b></p>	<p><b>Child Practice Review</b> <b>Bridgend</b></p>	<p><b>Date of incident: 13/09/21</b> <b>Death of a 9 year old female child.</b></p>
<p><b>CTMUHB</b> - This review has been shared through the Health Board's safeguarding operational group, learning repository and integrated into bespoke Level 3 training. The Safeguarding intranet page has been redesigned to ensure resources are made available within a learning library.</p> <p>A Standard Operating Procedure has been developed around conference attendance for school aged children, ensuring the most appropriate health representative attends conference. A new conference report was developed to ensure the voice of the child and a day in the life of child is captured. Bespoke training was provided to the school nursing service to share the learning from this review and key recommendations integrated into wider children and young people safeguarding training.</p> <p><b>RCTCBC Children's Services</b> - RCT Children Services cascades Practice Review Learning via Children Service Manager Team meetings and Team Manager meetings. This is further disseminated and discussed in individual team meetings where practitioners reflect on the learning and practice. Mandatory Summer Safeguarding Sessions were facilitated in 2024 with the 'Embedding Learning into Practice – Themes from Safeguarding Reviews' Child C review and learning was included in these sessions.</p> <p><b>BCBC Children's Services</b> – learning event and 7 Minute Briefing completed</p>		

**Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services** - This is shared with the teams in a communication session and managers at ECSMT. Discussion held regarding learning and QA Team manager also considers learning and may audit MTCBC files to ascertain if any issues in MTCBC relevant for learning.

**Probation Service** - The Probation Service were not actively involved in this review, however, the findings relating to professional curiosity, record keeping and line management responsibilities are congruent to the continuous improvement actions within the Probation Service's Delivery Plan.

**RCTCBC Education Service** - The learning from this review was disseminated via email. RCT Education form key partners in Core Groups with school staff attending wherever possible. Other internal Education services are also represented where they are involved with the family. Periods of school closures provide difficulties for Core Group attendance particularly during the summer holidays but it is hoped, with the rollout of a new Management Information System, that it may be possible to gather safeguarding information in the future even when schools are closed.

**South Wales Police** - Recommendations and 7 minute briefing have been disseminated to front line officers as part of Op Amddiffyn and Learning Development Services. Importance of promoting necessity to sharing information across agencies and quoracy at Child Protection and Safeguarding Multi Agency meetings.

## Complaints

The Board's Complaints Procedure provides families and individuals with the opportunity to make a complaint with regards to the multi-agency child protection conference process and procedures, the multi-agency adult protection meetings process and procedures and Section 5 Wales Safeguarding Procedures complaints in relation to practitioners. Where such complaints satisfy the requirements of the Board's Complaints Procedure, an Independent Panel will usually be convened to consider the complaint and provide a written outcome to any complainant.

### CTM Safeguarding Complaints Procedure

During 2024/25, there were 4 complaints received in relation to the Child Protection Conference process and 1 in relation to Section 5 WSP Practitioner Concerns. Of the 5 complaints received, the following outcomes were made by the Board's Independent Complaints Panel:

- **4 complaints were upheld**
- **1 complaint was not upheld**

Information and outcomes in respect of complaints are shared with the Board's Children or Adult Quality Assurance sub-groups with any learning or recommendations to inform improved practice. In 2025/26, a full review of the Complaints Procedure is scheduled which will enhance the existing policy for both professionals and service users. This will include best practice guidance for services and partners in terms of ensuring a robust response to complaints at the first point of contact to minimise any escalation to the Board's Complaints Procedure.

## **6. Information Training and Learning**

Board partner agencies are required to review the training needs of practitioners in the area and the Board to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to safeguarding training, taking into account themes and learning arising from the delivery of the Boards functions. This work is monitored by the Board's Training and Learning Sub-group (TALG).

## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training

The Local Authority Workforce Development teams (Cwm Taf and Bridgend) are the main source of reporting on safeguarding training, although all partner agencies must ensure that adequate safeguarding training is delivered to staff. The Board supports a range of training provision to support partners and professionals in safeguarding practice utilising a range of training options including on-line and face to face delivery.

During 2024/25 the Board supported the delivery of a range of training sessions aimed at improving safeguarding practice and supported an extensive training delivery package to support the implementation of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Framework implemented in October 2024. We also worked in partnership with other agencies and professionals to promote wider, multi-agency safeguarding training. This included working with the regional VAWDASV Advisor in respect of Coercive and Controlling Behaviour and Domestic Abuse training provision and the RCT Community Safety Lead to support “Prevent” awareness raising sessions across the region. In addition, during Safeguarding Week 2024 further training sessions were supported across the region.

The Board also works with a range of national safeguarding stakeholders to support training and good practice delivery including Social Care Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales, the National Independent Safeguarding Board, Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, Welsh Government and the Home Office.

Moving into 2025/26, the Training and Learning Group will be amalgamated into a new Engagement, Learning and Communications sub-group which will support an enhanced 2025/26 Training Plan on behalf of the Board. The aim of this will be to ensure that the Board is able to fully support and deliver multi-agency safeguarding training across the region, in closer partnership with a range of delivery providers and further enhance required training identified from our SUSR review recommendations. The new ELC group will work closely with the new Improving Practice Delivery Group to ensure a cohesive join-up in respect of any learning needs from our practice reviews, audits and improvement plans.

## National Training Framework on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

The table below outlines Cwm Taf Morgannwg’s progress regarding the VAWDASV National Training Framework in 2024-2025:

Group	Numbers completed
1 eLearning	3848
2 Ask and act	310
3 Ask and act champions	6
4 Specialist provider training	2
5 Specialist managers	1
6 Senior leaders	75

## Welsh Government Training Grant

The Board receives an annual grant from the Welsh Government to support additional safeguarding training activities. This year the grant enabled us to support training arising from recommendations from our Practice Reviews, audits and other Board priorities. Some of this year's training included:

(\*not an exhaustive list):

- Hidden Men
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities
- Working with Disguised Compliance
- APSO Awareness
- Self-Neglect and Hoarding

## Multi Agency Practitioner Events:

### Extremism and Radicalisation sessions

Information and awareness raising sessions were offered throughout the region in collaboration with the CTM Community Safety Partnership. [Shout Out UK](#) held sessions for parents and professionals about extreme narratives, ideologies, radicalisation methods, protective measures and Prevent.

With a current trend in the radicalisation of younger people, and the internet and social media being a major factor, these sessions aimed to equip professionals and parents / carers with increased knowledge in respect of radicalisation tactics, with a particular emphasis on social media use.

13 face to face sessions were held throughout the region and six sessions were held online, reaching a total of 790 people.

## Improving the Response to Child Sexual Abuse: The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway

The [National Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse](#) hosted an online session on 'Improving the response to Child Sexual Abuse: The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway'.

This Pathway is an interactive online resource that sets out how to respond to concerns of child sexual abuse at key points: From first concerns and early help safeguarding through to child protection and criminal justice. It focuses on meeting the needs of children and their families and is designed to empower professionals to understand the role they, and their colleagues, can play to best protect and support children.

## Briefing on the National Review into CSA within the Family Environment

In March 2025, the National [Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse](#) delivered an online briefing to highlight the key findings from the [national report](#). Anna Glinski, one of the authors of the report, presented the key findings and recommendations to multi-agency practitioners. This report was commissioned by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to explore the challenges in identifying,

assessing and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment. 155 professionals from Cwm Taf Morgannwg signed up to join this event.

## Dissemination of Learning

As part of developing a positive culture of learning, the Board uses a range of methods to disseminate best practice and learning within the workforce, including Multi-Agency Practitioner Forums, information within the Board's e-bulletin, Safeguarding Updates, use of Twitter, Facebook and the Safeguarding Board's website. The Board's Business Unit and Communications and Engagement Officer support the dissemination of learning events available for professionals and work in partnership with a range of agencies to secure training and best practice opportunities.

## Safeguarding Updates

The Safeguarding Board's website continues to host ['Safeguarding Updates'](#) and the information on this web-page is used to generate e-mails to the Board and partners, with encouragement for these updates to be shared widely. Information includes:

- Recently published policies and protocols
- Recently published practice review reports
- Safeguarding Campaigns
- Good Practice Information
- New legislation
- Consultations and National Reports

## Safeguarding Week 2024

Wales National Safeguarding Week campaign is an annual campaign that aims to raise awareness of and provide training on safeguarding issues. Safeguarding is about protecting vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect and ensuring their wellbeing. Making sure people are supported to live full and happy lives is also an important part of safeguarding. In 2024, the campaign took place between 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> November. The theme in Cwm Taf Morgannwg was **'Safe Spaces'**.

Some of the highlights of the week are listed below:

### Play Your Part/Chwarae Dy Ran



The 'Play Your Part/Chwarae Dy Ran' campaign is the joint campaign between the NSPCC and the Safeguarding Board that was developed following a [Child Practice Review](#) that was undertaken by the Safeguarding Board. The official launch of this campaign took place online during Safeguarding Week, with over 100 people joining the session to receive an overview of its objectives, logo and name.

Elements from the campaign were shown to partners and people working or volunteering with children and young people to raise awareness of 'Chwarae Y Dan/Play Your Part' and to encourage them to get involved, assist with the promotion of information and resources and to take up the offers of training and awareness raising through the ['Listen Up, Speak Up'](#) initiative, the ['It's Not Love'](#) play and the ['Talk Pants'](#) programme.



**“Out of Control”**  
An exploration of CSE through a different lens



During Safeguarding Week, [Spectacle Theatre](#) joined forces with [Barnardo's Better Futures](#) to bring practitioners in the region who work with children and young people, an opportunity to enhance their understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation and help them to identify and provide proportionate responses to meet children's needs. This was done by a rehearsed reading by members of the Spectacle Theatre group of the play 'Out of Control', followed by a participatory workshop exploring the issues around grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation.

The session was well received and feedback included:

- “The play was very useful in terms of recognising signs and reacting to them.”
- “Very informative and a lot of information to consider for my role”.
- “Really useful training. Loved the interactive aspect and the performance”.
- “I thought the play delivering the training was an excellent idea”.
- “I work with children and young people a lot and all of the content in today's session was relevant”.
- “Useful, up to date info to share back at our service”.

During Safeguarding Week, the '[Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse](#)' hosted an online session on '[Improving the response to Child Sexual Abuse: The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway](#)'. This Pathway is an interactive online resource that sets out how to respond to concerns of child sexual abuse at key points: From first concerns and early help safeguarding through to child protection and criminal justice. It focuses on meeting the needs of children and their families and is designed to empower professionals to understand the role they, and their colleagues can play to best protect and support children.



**Merthyr Tydfil Education Services Safeguarding Week Activities**

As part of the activities for Safeguarding Week, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Education Safeguarding Officer delivered 'Safeguarding Hero' training to over 60 pupils from 14 primary schools throughout the County Borough.

[Spectacle Theatre](#) delivered an interactive performance followed by workshops on various safeguarding themes for students from two of the High Schools in Merthyr Tydfil – Cyfarthfa and Afon Taf.





## Positive Risk and Shared Decision Making for older people at Home and in the Community

This in-person event was arranged by [Age Connects Morgannwg](#) and was aimed at professionals and volunteers working with older people in various settings.

This provided an opportunity to network with colleagues from different sectors from across Cwm Taf Morgannwg and included a formal workshop from [Social Care Wales](#), an information session, best practice lightening talks from different organisations and information stands.

Feedback was positive, with 96% of respondents rating the event as 'excellent' and included:

- ***“The talk by Jay was brilliantly delivered and the subject matter was something that we all probably know but it is good to hear and be reminded of in a formal setting”.***
- ***“Many thanks for doing this event, it was very enjoyable and exactly what we all need to be thinking about in our work!”.***

### “Talk PANTS”



During Safeguarding Week, the [NSPCC](#) delivered an online session on [‘Talk PANTS’](#). The “Talk PANTS” campaign is about supporting professionals and those with caring responsibilities of children aged 3-11 to have simple, age-appropriate conversations with children that will help keep them safe from sexual abuse.

- *“Excellent presentation with lots of really good information, which I will share”.*
- *“Very thought provoking”.*
- *“Very informative, very knowledgeable staff delivering”.*

### CTMUHB

As part of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's comprehensive Safeguarding Week 2024 Events Programme, their Children's Nursing Team were providing advice to parents in their homes regarding safe sleeping spaces for babies.

## 7. How have we collaborated with others?

Working in partnership with others is integral to the work of the Board as safeguarding is an issue that cross-cuts many different services and can have a significant impact on our communities. We work in partnership in a number of ways, with individuals, agencies, partnerships and organisations both within and external to Cwm Taf Morgannwg. Regional partnership working across Cwm Taf Morgannwg has remained strong, whether it involves planning workforce needs and training requirements, safeguarding services, integrating service provision or responding to region-wide challenges.

### **Public Service Board**

The Public Services Board (PSB) acts as the principal strategic leadership forum for the planning, commissioning, and delivery of public services across organisational boundaries to achieve better outcomes for people.

### **Community Safety Partnership**

The Board works closely with the CTM Community Safety Partnerships on common areas of interest, such as domestic violence, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, preventing serious violence and domestic homicide reviews.

### **Public Health Wales**

The Board has been working this year with PHW and a range of other statutory and voluntary partners to reinvigorate the Suicide and Self-Harm work-stream in the region including revised governance arrangements. The Board also collaborates with PHW in respect of its practice reviews.

### **Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board**

Members of the Board participate in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP) Project Board to ensure that the WSP for children and adults, along with the accompanying practice guides, remain fit for purpose and are adopted appropriately.

### **Welsh Government**

The Board works closely with the Safeguarding and Advocacy Division of the Welsh Government on matters including the Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews that include Adult and Child Practice Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews and safeguarding-related legislation and policies and as part of wider networks across Wales. This includes other Welsh Safeguarding Boards.

### **National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB)**

A member of the NISB attends each Board meeting and provides advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding from a national, independent perspective.

### **Social Care Wales**

The Board has contributed to the development of the National Training Framework, led by Social Care Wales and has continued to work pro-actively with SCW this year to support information dissemination in respect of Group B and Group C Safeguarding Training.

### **Advocacy Providers**

Advocacy providers sit on the Board's Adult Quality Assurance and Performance Sub-Group to ensure that the voices of adults at risk are heard and to support the delivery of best practice.

### **Third Sector**

We continue to work with a range of third sector partners who bring added value and expertise to the Board and its work. We continually seek opportunities to work with the third sector to improve safeguarding approaches in the region.

### **NSPCC**

Joint partner in respect of child safeguarding activities and awareness raising campaigns

### **University of South Wales**

Supporting Safeguarding Reviews and enhanced joint working arrangements

## 8. Participation and Involvement

Children, young people and adults who are affected by the exercise of the Safeguarding Board’s functions should be given the opportunity to participate in the work of the Board. We recognise that this is an area where we would like to extend the reach of the Board in collaborating more effectively with those with lived experience. As we progress into 2025/26 it will be the aim of the Board to actively seek out enhanced opportunities with our children, young people and adults to participate in our work.

The information below highlights some of the work that has been carried out during 2024-2025:

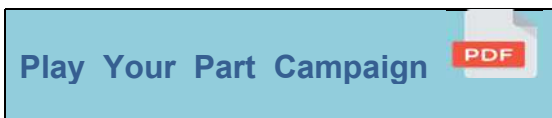
### NSPCC “It’s Not Love” Play and Campaign

As part of the ‘Play Your Part’ campaign, the Safeguarding Board and the NSPCC collaborated with three groups of children in each local authority area in the region to localise the play script before the two week **‘It’s Not love’** play tour. The play which was delivered to over 1,500 young people and 100+ professionals across multiple schools throughout the region was well received. The feedback from pupils highlighted their concerns in relation to healthy relationships and their views on different elements of what consisted of healthy and unhealthy relationships. The feedback has been used to inform the next stage of the campaign, which will focus on challenging unhealthy norms, promoting respectful relationships, and empowering boys to reflect on masculinity and allyship.

#### “It’s Not Love Launch Activity”



#### NSPCC CTMSB Full Report:



## Social Media

Throughout this year, information on a range of safeguarding issues for both the public and professionals has continued to be shared via the Board's Social Media. The Board aims to support a consistent awareness of how to identify safeguarding concerns, particularly for those in our communities and how to access relevant help, guidance and support. We also utilise our social media to promote information and important safeguarding information from partner agencies that aim to keep children and adults safe.

## CTMSB Website

The Board is aiming to revise its current website to support a more user-friendly version where key safeguarding information and support can be accessed quickly and easily.

## Contributions of Board Members

**Each Safeguarding Board partner has a responsibility to ensure that the Board is operating effectively. There are clearly defined Terms of Reference for the Board and each sub-group as well as role profiles for Board Members.**

The Board continues to review the effectiveness of measures taken by partners and other bodies in relation to safeguarding via its quality assurance work, audits, and performance management. All the required statutory partner agencies in Cwm Taf Morgannwg are represented on the Board and its sub-groups with positive attendance. Whilst the majority of Board meetings take place on-line, it is the intention to increase some of these to face to face moving forward.

The Board's Development Day which took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to set the priorities of the Board for 2025/26 was well attended with partners contributing fully to the event. Board Members have been working pro-actively to support the revised CTM Board structure due for full implementation in 2025/26 with members supporting the new Chair and Vice-Chair requirements for this.

The Board provides induction information for new members which includes:

- The Board's Induction Pack
- 7 Minute Briefing
- Board Structure
- Terms of Reference for Board and its sub-groups

[CTMSB Induction Pack](#)

PDF

[7 Minute Briefing CTMSB Business Unit](#)

PDF

Partner agencies also provide the Board with an annual report demonstrating their contribution and commitment to safeguarding. This is summarised below.

### **Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC)**

**MTCBC's Education Services** - The Education Department has consistently attended Board and relevant sub-group meetings throughout the year and contributed when required.

**MTCBC Adult Services** Post September 2024, Merthyr is providing representation to every appropriate forum and subgroup within the Boards region. This is an active participation committed to representing and demonstrating the Boards values and its thematic areas of priority.

Merthyr's Director of Social Services is the Chair of the Board and our Adult Services Lead Manager Chair's the Board's Adult Quality Assurance Panel.

**MTCBC's Children's Services** MTCBC attend the Safeguarding Board and relevant sub-groups including the CQAP, SUSR and MASH Executive Group. MTCBC provides data and information when required. We have been involved in developing the regional Exploitation Strategy have piloted the new work process for this. MTCBC has committed representatives to the designated SUSR training as reviewers, panel members and Chairs.

### **Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)**

**BCBC's Education, Early Years and Young People (EEYYP) Group** continue to demonstrate a strong and consistent commitment to the work of the Safeguarding Board. The group is actively represented at all levels of the Board, including core meetings and across all relevant subgroups. This ensures that multi-agency perspectives, particularly those relating to education and youth justice, are embedded in safeguarding decision-making and strategic planning.

The EEYYP Directorate have supported the board's three-year Strategic Plan and annual priorities focusing on exploitation, early intervention and prevention. Agencies have adapted to new ways of working including remote and hybrid models without compromising the quality or timeliness of safeguarding responses.

### **BCBC Adults and Children's Services**

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing for Bridgend is the senior lead officer who holds corporate responsibility for safeguarding. The Director and Heads of Service for Adults and Children's Social Care attend the CTM Safeguarding Board alongside Heads of Service from Education and Housing.

The Director and officers of the Council are active participants within the Board's sub-groups with representatives from both adults and children services having both chairing and vice chair responsibilities. The Director chairs the Exploitation sub-group and is a member, alongside the Head of Adult Social Care of the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Steering Group.

Representatives from the Directorate have attended workshops, planning days and team meetings which have contributed to the setting of actions to meet the boards priorities for its annual plan. There are regular reports to the Board and its sub-groups regarding safeguarding performance in Bridgend. Particularly, the Executive Steering group of the Board.

BCBC has also contributed fully to participating in SUSRs and the dissemination of learning from reviews.

## Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC)

**RCT Education Services** - We have representatives on each sub-group of the Safeguarding Board. Any significant safeguarding issues are placed on the SMT agenda for wider discussion. Information from the Board is fed down into schools via a termly Cluster Convenor Safeguarding meeting with escalation of concerns also possible in the opposite direction.

**RCT Adult Services** - The retirement of the Service Manager for Safeguarding in April 2024 has presented us with some challenges in maintaining our previously high levels of participation in Chairing/Vice-Chairing activities for the Board. The post was vacant until October 2024, by which time, discussions were underway for nominations for the new Board structure.

Despite these difficulties, Adult Services maintained representation at sub-group meetings this year. The Director of Social Services chaired the Joint Operational Committee during 2024-25. The Director of Social Services, Director of Adult Services and Head of Service for Safeguarding, Care and Support all attended Board this year. Adult Services have had a Panel member on all relevant Adult Practice, Domestic Homicide and Mental Health Homicide Reviews and since October 2024, SUSRs that have commenced under the new process.

## RCT Children's Services

RCT Children's Services continues to provide a high level of contribution to the work of the Board through regular attendance at and participation in the work of all of the Subgroups. This includes:

- Continued to host the CTMSB Business Unit
- Supported the CTMSB to develop a new substructure and contributed to the revision of the Terms of Reference for each of the new subgroups.
- Chaired the Children's Quality Assurance Panel
- Undertaken a lead role in the development of the Exploitation Strategy and relevant practice guides and tools, chairing T&F groups and attendance at strategical meetings.
- Chaired the Engagement, Participation and Communication Group.
- Chaired the PPG in the absence of permanent chair/vice chair and contributed to the evaluation and revision of amended policies.
- Been a member of all other subgroups of the CTMSB.
- Contributed to the delivery of multi-agency training by facilitating Section 5, Professional Concerns Training
- Attended and contributed to Immediate Response Groups.
- Contributed to Adult and Children Practice Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and Offensive Weapons Homicide Review under the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR), MAPFs and other recommended audits such as the NAI audit.
- Contributed to delivery of the MASH Review workshop and the ongoing development of a modernised MASH, including attendance and contributions at MASH Executive Group
- RCT have also been a representative on behalf of the CTMSB in relation to national work, e.g., National Performance Framework, Pan-Wales Exploitation Group and the National Single Agency Referral Form and the Welsh Governments, Missing Children from home and care Steering group.

## Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB)

CTMUHB have organisational representatives that either chair or vice chair the Board's sub-groups. These include the Joint Review Group and Children's Quality and Performance Group. For 2025/26, in line with the Board's sub-structure restructure, CTM UHB colleagues have again put themselves forward to Chair groups and drive work and improvements through these groups. The Deputy Executive Director of Nursing is now Vice Chair for the Safeguarding Board.

Colleagues within health have led and participated in the development of joint policies and multi-agency training. The health board developed and facilitated multi-agency training with the support of partner agencies, this training included bruising and injuries in children, exploitation, Sexual Abuse Referral Center and fabricated illness.

The Health Board led on the revision of the Safe Sleep Policy, ensuring learning from PRUDiC (*Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood*) was included, a number of resources were also developed, including a 7-minute briefing and video. In addition, the Health Board have contributed to Board development days, audits, the Cwm Taf MASH review and the development of the regional Exploitation Strategy.

Attendance at the localised BCBC, Joint Operational Groups has ensured that partnership improvements have been embedded within Bridgend following the CIW JICPA (*Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements* [Overview Report: Joint Inspection of Child - Protection Arrangements 2019 – 2024](#))

### Probation Service

Safeguarding continues to be over and above a key statutory responsibility, at the very heart of the work undertaken by the Probation Service in Wales. We continue to embed safeguarding practices and responsibilities within all aspects of day-to-day activities, as evidenced by the now mandatory safeguarding enquiries which are completed both pre and post sentence. We wish to thank our CTM Safeguarding partners for the clear progress we have made in 2024/25 on information sharing in this area to drive better outcomes for our communities and vulnerable groups.

### Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST)

The Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust (WAST) is committed to supporting the work of Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board. WAST Safeguarding Team have engaged with the Board's safeguarding work streams and relevant agencies to ensure good outcomes for those who have had contact with our services within the Board region.

Our team have provided panel member representation on Practice Reviews commissioned by the Board and one of our Safeguarding Specialists is aligned to the Board area, for further representation on relevant Sub-Groups and collaborative multi-agency workstreams to improve safeguarding practice.

## South Wales Police (SWP)

South Wales Police remains fully committed to supporting the work of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board and is proud to have played a central role in delivering its aims over the past 12 months.

We regularly attend Board meetings and subgroups, not only as participants but also in leading roles, chairing and coordinating where appropriate. Our officers actively support the learning agenda of the Board through meaningful participation in Child and Adult Practice Reviews, Multi-Agency Professional Forums (MAPFs), and the role out of the new SUSR process.

Audit activity is another area where our contribution is consistent. We participate in multi-agency audits across all key safeguarding themes, offering data, case insights, and operational perspective. These audits help drive improvements in local practice and ensure accountability in protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

A significant area of work we lead on is the coordination and activation of the Incident Response Group (IRG) process. Over the past 12 months, we have invoked this process on multiple occasions following critical incidents. The IRG process ensures rapid multi-agency mobilisation, a shared response plan, and coordinated communications with the public and media.

We continue to support the periodic review process and regularly liaise with Board partners to strengthen operational and strategic safeguarding.

## 9. Managing our Resources

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board uses the funding formula set out in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2016 statutory guidance. This allows us to assess and identify annual financial contributions from our statutory partner agencies.

This is calculated as follows:

Agency	% Split	% Split
Rhondda-Cynon-Taf CBC	60%	55%
Bridgend CBC		32%
Merthyr Tydfil CBC		13%
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB		25%
South Wales Police		10%
Probation Service		5%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>100%</b>

In 2024-2025 expenditure was as follows:

<b>Staff</b>	£400,318
<b>Premises</b>	£9,480
<b>Other</b>	£51,680
<b>WG Grant Income (SUSR)</b>	<b>-£ 42,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£419,478</b>

Training costs are not included as this sits outside the Board budget.

## Other Board Activities

### Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs)

Adult Protection and Support Orders have been available since the 2016 implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 but have been used rarely. There were no APSO applications APSOs in 2024-2025.

### Guidance and Advice received from Welsh Ministers and/or National Board

The Board continues to work closely with Welsh Government and the National Safeguarding Board and responds promptly to requests for information or support. A good relationship has been established with both in terms of the work of the Safeguarding Board with both the Chair of the Board and the CTMSB Business Manager contributing to national meetings as required. In addition, Board partners support various national work streams on behalf of the region. The Board has worked pro-actively with these as key stakeholders with other regional Safeguarding Boards to support the effective implementation of the All Wales Single Unified Safeguarding Review framework.

### Section 137 requests for information

Section 137(1) of the Act provides a Safeguarding Board with the power to request specified information from a qualifying person or body provided that the purpose of the request is to enable or assist the Board to perform its functions under the Act.

In 2024-2025 the Board did not use its Section 137 powers to access information.

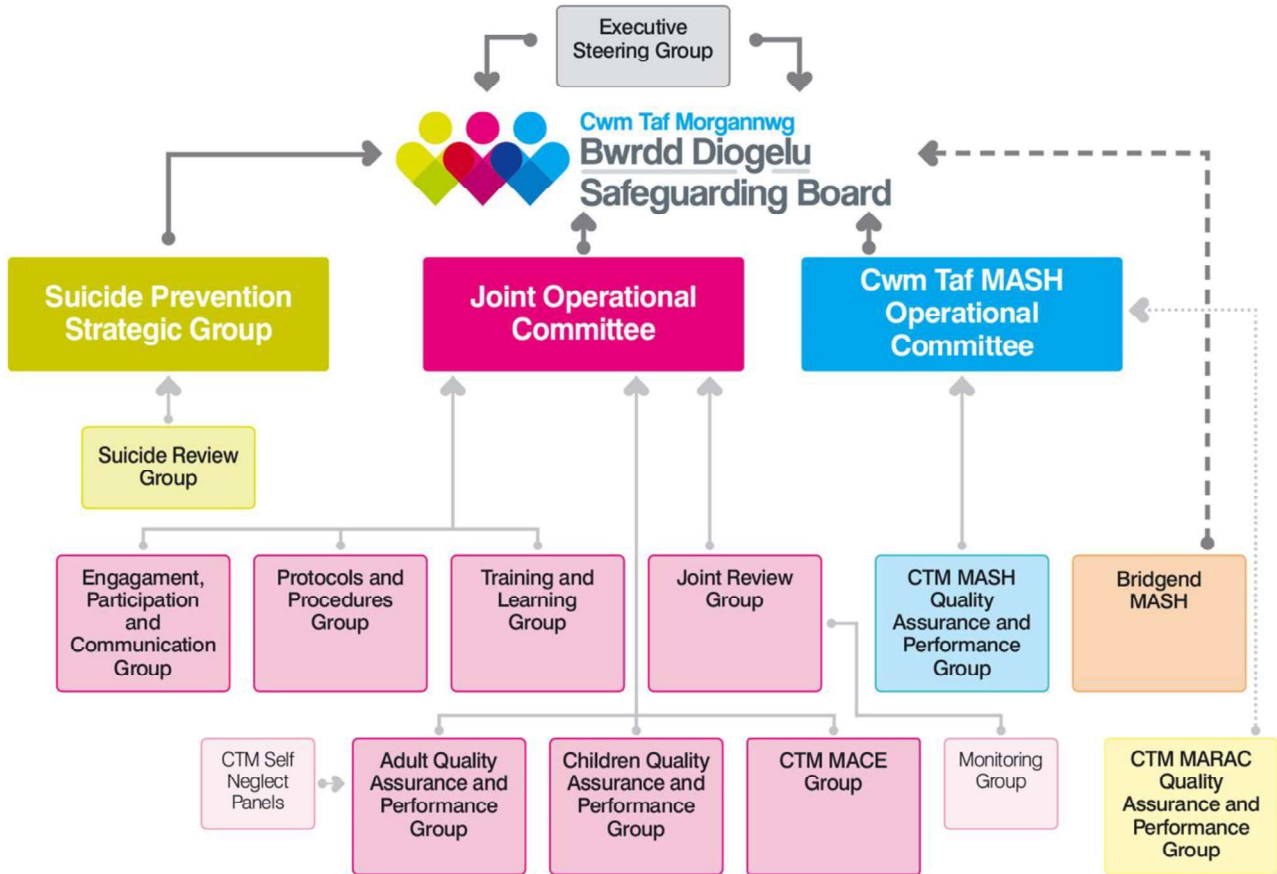
## APPENDIX 1 - BOARD MEMBERSHIP

TITLE	AGENCY
Director of Social Services (Chair)	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Bridgend County Borough Council
Director of Social Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Head of Safeguarding (Adults)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Director Public Health	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Head of Safeguarding (Children)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Service Director Children Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Head of Legal - Community Care and Children	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Prison Director	Parc Prison
Head of Safeguarding	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Named Doctor	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Deputy Executive Nurse Director	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Head of Service	Cwm Taf Youth Justice Service
Head of Service	Youth Justice Service, Bridgend
Named Lead for Safeguarding	Public Health Wales
Designated Nurse (National Safeguarding Team)	Public Health Wales
Head of Probation	Probation Service
Director of Education	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Head of Public Protection	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Head of Adult Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council



<b>Principal Safeguarding Manager</b>	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
<b>Head of Children Services</b>	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
<b>Head of Adult Social Care</b>	Bridgend County Borough Council
<b>Head of Children's Social Care</b>	Bridgend County Borough Council
<b>Head of Education and Family Services</b>	Bridgend County Borough Council
<b>Group Manager</b>	Bridgend County Borough Council
<b>Head of Public Protection</b>	Bridgend County Borough Council
<b>Head of Adult Safeguarding and Secure Estate</b>	Bridgend County Borough Council
<b>Superintendent</b>	South Wales Police
<b>Head of Protecting Vulnerable Persons</b>	South Wales Police
<b>Assistant Director Quality, Safety &amp; Patient Experience</b>	Welsh Ambulance Service Trust
<b>NISB Member</b>	National Independent Safeguarding Board
<b>Safeguarding Lead Officer</b>	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

## APPENDIX 2 – BOARD STRUCTURE 2024/2025



## Glossary of Terms

### Single Unified Safeguarding Review

Is a single review process incorporating all reviews in Wales which came into being on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. The Safeguarding Board must commission an SUSR where the following criteria is met:

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

### Adult Practice Review

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission an Adult Practice Review in cases where an adult at risk has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

### Child Practice Review

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission a Child Practice Review in cases where a child has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

### Domestic Homicide Review

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a locally conducted multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by: a person to whom he or she was related, or with whom he or she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship; or a member of the same household as himself or herself.

### Mental Health Homicide Review (MHHR)

MHHR's take place when a homicide is committed and the alleged perpetrator has been in contact with primary, secondary or tertiary mental health services within the last year.

### Offensive Weapons Homicide Review (OWHR)

An OWHR takes place when the death of a person aged 18 or over occurs using an offensive weapon.

### Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

### Children Looked After

A child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a Council's Children's Services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.

### **Community Safety Partnership**

Statutory partnership to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment.

### **Exploitation**

Exploitation is a type of abuse. Exploitation involves being groomed, forced or coerced into doing something that you don't want to do for someone else's gain.

### **Immediate Response Groups (IRG)**

A group which is convened to provide a rapid, multi-agency response to managing the consequences of a critical incidents, such as the unexpected death of an adult and is led by the Police Superintendent (or a suitable deputy).

### **MARAC**

A weekly risk management meeting where professionals share information in respect of high risk cases of domestic violence and abuse and put in place a risk management plan.

### **Modern Slavery**

The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. It covers a wide range of abuse and exploitation including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, criminal exploitation and organ harvesting.

### **Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum (MAPF)**

Multi-agency professional forums are a mechanism for producing organisational learning, improving the quality of work with families and strengthening the ability of services to keep children safe. They utilise case information, findings from child protection audits, inspections and reviews to develop and disseminate learning to improve local knowledge and practice and to inform the Board's future audit and training priorities.

### **Public Protection Notice (PPN)**

The forms have two main purposes. One is for police officers to make referrals to partner agencies when they have concerns about vulnerable people. The PPN is also used as a risk assessment tool for victims of domestic abuse and stalking and harassment (DASH).

### **Prevent**

Prevent is about safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism.

### **PRUDiC**

This procedure sets a minimum standard for a response to unexpected deaths in infancy and childhood. It describes the process of communication, collaborative action and information sharing following the unexpected death of a child.

### **Quality Assurance and Performance Groups**

Two separate groups for adults and children whose objectives are to monitor the effectiveness of agencies' practice within the processes of safeguarding and encourage high standards of practice by all those involved in safeguarding work, promoting agency and individual accountability through the monitoring and evaluation of performance.

### **Self-Neglect**

Self-neglect is a general term used to describe a vulnerable adult living in a way that puts his or her health, safety, or well-being at risk.



### **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is the law for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

### **Strategy Discussion / Meeting**

A meeting for social workers and other professionals to discuss risks against an adult or child and to discuss how any risks will be addressed to protect someone from harm.

### **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)**

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 focusses on the prevention of these issues, the protection of victims and support for those affected by such issues.

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## Are You Concerned About Someone?

If you suspect that a **child or young person** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed, then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about children are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425006  
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000  
In Bridgend: 01656 642320

Opening Hours:  
Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

If you suspect that an **adult** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed, then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about vulnerable adults at risk are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425003  
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000  
In Bridgend: 01656 642477

Opening Hours:  
Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

To contact **Children or Adults Services outside office hours, at weekends and bank holidays**, ring the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Emergency Duty Team on 01443 743665 or 01443 657225.

If you suspect that a child, young person or an adult is at immediate risk of harm call 999 and speak to the Police.

Further information on how to report any concerns relating to a child or adult at risk is available here:

### Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough:

**RCT Children:** [Reporting a concern about a Child | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council](#)

**RCT Adults:** [Report a concern about someone at risk | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council](#)

### Bridgend County Borough:

**Bridgend Children:** [Child protection](#)

**Bridgend Adults:** [Safeguarding adults at risk](#)

### Merthyr Tydfil County Borough:

**Merthyr Children:** [How to report a child/young person you believe is at risk of/experiencing abuse and neglect | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council](#)

**Merthyr Adults:** [Adults at Risk of Abuse or Neglect | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council](#)

If you would like to report a non-urgent incident, or have a problem or general query, you can call 101, the 24 hour non-emergency number for the police. **Use 101 when the incident is less urgent than 999.**

**Remember - safeguarding is everybody's business!** For more information and advice visit: [About Us | Safeguarding, Cwm Taf Morgannwg](#)