

# NHS Wales Safeguarding Network

Annual Report 2020-21



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Upskilling a Competent Workforce

Regional Round Up

Future Activity

Leading throughout the Pandemic

Tools for Improvement

Communicating Change into Practice

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## About the National Safeguarding Team

The National Safeguarding Team (NST) is a team of specialist Doctors and Nurses, who work closely with Welsh Government, and the 7 Health Boards and 3 NHS Trusts, to improve safeguarding across NHS Wales.

The NST facilitates and co-chairs the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network (Network) to ensure that collaboration in safeguarding occurs between the Trust, Boards and key stakeholders.

The NST holds a unique position in the Network, as they provide a national lens to safeguarding activity occurring within the Trusts and Boards and externally across Wales.



The Network provides; specialist safeguarding support, learning from incidents, shared good safeguarding practice and collects information from current national issues by engaging with existing groups.

## About the National Network

The Network is a strategic NHS Wales group that meets quarterly and includes members from the Trusts and Boards, the NST, Welsh Government and other key stakeholders.

It was launched in 2012, and has in the past decade successfully linked local and national policy and supports the Trusts and Boards in discharging their responsibilities for safeguarding. The Network is fundamental in ensuring a collaborative safeguarding approach in Wales.

The Network provides specialist safeguarding support, learning from incidents, shares good safeguarding practice and collects information from current national issues by engaging with existing groups.

The Network is led Dr Aideen Naughton from the NST and co-chaired by Ann Hamlet from Aneurin Bevan Health Board, who both bring invaluable cooperative leadership and expertise.

The Network benefits service users across Wales, ensuring that that good practice and areas of development are shared with safeguarding leaders, and that adults and children across Wales benefit from good safeguarding provision.



Dr Aideen Naughton



# Chair's Introduction

## Welcome to the Annual Report of the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network.

**It is my pleasure as the Chair of the Network to demonstrate the valuable work that has been completed across Wales to keep children and adults safe.**

This report details our key achievements in 2020-2021, a year where the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network has been a fundamental resource in an extraordinary and challenging year. In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit the UK. It had complex and widespread impacts that continue as I am writing this introduction.

Safeguarding within a global pandemic has changed and shaped NHS Wales in ways that could not have been predicted. This report will share the ways in which the network has gathered key stakeholders to ensure that usual safeguarding care could be delivered, and that progress in safeguarding could still continue.

## Delivery Focused

The collaborative approach to safeguarding that the Network facilitates, has enabled the completion of the demanding deliverables required in 2020 and 2021, using the diverse expertise across the group.

Together we have developed specialist professional learning and support, shared safeguarding working practice and collated information on current national issues by engaging with existing groups.

## Sharing and Improving

The Network is committed to ensuring a sharing and improvement approach is embedded within safeguarding in Wales. The Network is mindful that it continuously improves by; capturing emerging themes, learning from incidents, learning from good practice, sharing challenges and strains and celebrating each other's successes. A key strength observed has been the willingness to share good practice across organisations – see 'Regional Round Up' section for examples of tailored local delivery.



Throughout our delivery the Network has been mindful to incorporate sustainability in all that we do, applying the principles from the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). By implementing the 'Five Ways of Working' we aim to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## Challenging Times

Since the release of our last report, the world around us has changed considerably –with new pressures and demands arising surprisingly quickly due to a global pandemic.

As we move through 2021, our challenge will be in continuing to deliver safeguarding excellence alongside the emergence of COVID-19. The impact on the Network has been apparent, with Network partners redeployed in a variety of ways to support the frontline COVID-19 response for Wales. The **Leadership** section of this report will give an insight into the adjustments made during the past year.

Due to the pandemic, the Network has been working at a significantly reduced capacity, which has impacted its ability to deliver objectives on the original 2020-2021 proposed Work Plan. The Work Plan has consequently been revised and reviewed by the Network and scaled to an achievable level due to the circumstances. Whilst work plan delivery scaled down, our leadership activity was scaled up – see the 'Leading throughout the Pandemic' section below for an insight into the range of operational and strategic actions we have been involved with.







## Conclusion

The NHS Wales Safeguarding Network has a shared ambition that the principles and duties of safeguarding should be holistically, consistently and effectively applied across NHS Wales. We believe that the desired benefits for vulnerable adults, young people and children cannot be realised or fulfilled in isolation.

The Network is a vital and vibrant resource in Wales, with cohort of modern, credible and valued system leaders in safeguarding who embed the vision of:

*'A Wales where the safety and wellbeing of everyone is of paramount importance'*

The Network's achievements over the last year have only been possible because of our close partnerships and high level of collaborative cooperation and co-creation. We are committed to ensuring that collaboration continues despite a challenging year behind us, and undoubtedly the years that come ahead.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the Network must support NHS Wales and external key stakeholders as they adjust services and consider the changes required to meet the post pandemic world. In doing so the Network will work to make sure quality is not sacrificed and that we learn from the innovative practice and outstanding clinical leadership that we have seen. The Network must also act as an advocate for the vulnerable service users in Wales, and ensure that changes meet their needs in a positive way.

The Network will need to be agile and flexible in our delivery ambitions and mechanisms for the years ahead and we are committed to ensure that we meet these demand.

*Thank you for your attention to this report -  
I appreciate your support during this challenging time.*

**Dr Aideen Naughton**

Chair of the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network



# Leading throughout the Pandemic



## Introduction

Over the last year, the NHS has faced its biggest challenge since its inception, with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. NHS colleagues at all levels have responded to this challenge in an extraordinary way by developing new ways of working to support our population.

During the pandemic we saw wonderful examples of high-quality care, including; the retraining and redeployment of staff to the COVID-19 response, effective team working, changing ways to communicate including the use of IT, development of virtual training packages, and above all arrangements centred on the new and changing needs of service users.

To meet the demands of effective safeguarding in a pandemic, the Network adapted in the following ways;

### Digital Communications

- National Network meetings continued using remote platforms. This continual engagement facilitated ongoing safeguarding leadership and practice sharing as the context changed for vulnerable people.
- Information sharing was stepped up via a fortnightly 'Network Communications' bulletin which was widely cascaded to relevant stakeholders. The bulletin collated Network achievements, policy, events, learning opportunities, good practice examples and other updates from both the Network and wider sector that are of relevance to safeguarding practice.
- Face to face events such as the Paediatrician's Masterclass and the Safeguarding Maturity Matrix Peer Review were moved online to virtual platforms that enabled engagement

### Advice and Engagement

- Provision of expert advice for Looked After Children at National and UK level – see next section
- Provision of expertise to Older Peoples Commissioner's action on elder abuse
- Engagement with Public Health Wales 'Young Ambassadors' to discuss the best ways to reach Children and Young People during the pandemic

The next sections of the report will detail the specific Network portfolios that have been actioned in 2020/21.





# Leading for Looked After Children

## Leadership Governance and Activity

The Network provides leadership for health professionals working with looked after children and young people across the health sector in Wales via the Looked After Children Steering Group.

The group aims to improve outcomes for looked after children by providing a vital bridge between strategies and arrangements at local level and national policy developments. Standard activity over the period has included:-

- Facilitation of quarterly meetings of lead looked after children health professionals, including information that cascades to all Looked After Children nurses and relevant paediatricians
- Collation and dissemination of information relating to: unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees, the National Adoption Service (NAS), and the National Fostering Framework (NFF) to ensure health professionals in the field are updated and informed.
- Going forward the group will focus on:-
  - Looking at the guidelines relating to looked after children Health professionals competences;
  - Reflections and lessons throughout the COVID 19 period
  - Developing client satisfaction tool for looked after children and young people.
- The NST Designated Doctor for Looked After Children and Adoption represented the NHS on the National Adoption Service (NAS) Advisory Group, the National Fostering Framework (NFF) Strategic Steering Group and the Improving Outcomes for Children Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG).



**The group aims to improve outcomes for looked after children by providing a vital bridge between strategies and arrangements at local level and national policy developments.**

- The Designated Doctor contributed to the Ministerial Advisory Group Corporate Parenting Task and Finish Group, working alongside care-experienced young people and multi-agency partners, to raise awareness and strengthen corporate parenting responsibilities of public bodies.
- Going forward the Designated Doctor will be working with paediatric colleagues to support greater understanding and raise awareness of impact of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) on looked after children and children adopted from care



## Stepping Up During the Pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, as expected, the most vulnerable in our society became the hardest hit. For children and young people in the care of the local authority, living in foster-care and residential units, away from family and friends. It was recognised that the pandemic reduced the usual support systems such as nursery/ school/ college, hobbies and visitation. Consequently these additional stressors held the potential for negative impact on vulnerable children's well-being.



With this in mind, Health professionals for looked after children/adoption were keen to work alongside their Local Authority colleagues to ensure services continued, albeit delivered in a different way.

The NST Designated Doctor was in an ideal position to support the coordination of these changes, due to their professional leadership role and strong links to multi-disciplinary and multi-agency colleagues. This gave them the ability to support, advise and collaborate on best practice and most significantly to contribute to necessary developments/ flexibilities in Regulations.

The Designated Doctor was able to provide guidance for health professionals which was updated regularly and made available via an open website for easy access. This has received extremely positive responses from those using them. Additionally, the Designated Doctor was involved in discussions with Welsh Government officials and with the NAS and Association for Fostering and

Adoption Cymru (AFACymru) around flexibilities and easements in regulations relating to adoption, fostering and looked after children. This has ensured that the Foster carers and adopter approval process continued with sufficient robustness to enable quality short and long term placement options for looked after Children and those with a plan for adoption. Consequently, adoption performance indicators across Wales show that the NAS has achieved pre-COVID-19 targets over the last year, which is remarkable considering the wider context.

The NST Designated Doctor has continued to provide support and advice in a meaningful way throughout the pandemic: facilitating online clinical groups; email discussions; facilitating peer support; collating best practice; engaging with/ providing expertise to multi-agency partners, local authorities and the judiciary around flexibilities and easements in Regulations, alternative arrangements and innovative ways of working. This has fed into UK-wide best practice promotion and advice for health professionals in the field.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, use of phone and video consultations have been trialled with looked after children, young people, foster-carers and social workers. This different mode of delivery has presented opportunities as well as challenges – indeed some children have preferred communicating digitally and have requested this as a preference in the future. This mode has also enabled some disclosures of historic child sexual abuse that may not have occurred with face to face health assessments. Looked after Children Reviews have been successfully carried out.

Much of the work in Adoption and Fostering for Medical Advisers has continued as usual, initially with virtual adoption medicals on children, moving to face-to-face fairly quickly. Adoption Panels, Fostering Panels and meetings with prospective adoptive parents have continued virtually and it is likely this will continue.

Moving towards the post pandemic period, all relevant learning will be collated and incorporated into practice to better meet the needs of this vulnerable group.





## Leading for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

### Coordinated Collaboration

The NHS Wales VAWDASV Steering Group works with the Trusts and Boards to ensure that governance processes are in place to collate, review and share good practice. Steering Group members collaborate to increase the knowledge relating to VAWDASV across NHS Wales whilst maintaining a health based voice and influence across policy makers.

### Achievements and Ongoing Activity

- Evaluation of NHS Wales Group 2 Ask and Act Training (see Ask and Act Training) and embed recommendations within the VAWDASV Work Plan.
- Participation in Welsh Government's national audit of Ask and Act training by Sheffield Hallam University
- Discussion and feedback regarding VAWDASV services and training across Wales in the context of the pandemic, focusing on the effect on victims and the adaptation of services e.g. virtual training
- National Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) created for information sharing between Health Visitors and Midwives that facilitates sharing of VAWDASV concerns and promotes good communication

- Review of the minimum standards of NHS Wales Routine Enquiry into Domestic Abuse for midwives and health visitors to ensure relevance with VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015
- Feedback to the National Strategy Working Group in relation to review of the National Indicators.
- Contribution to the review of the All Wales NHS Wales Clinical Pathway for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – a pathway utilised when FGM is identified within certain health settings.
- Hosting of guest speakers including:
  - Senior Policy Manager for VAWDASV, Welsh Government
  - Researcher for the Evaluation of Ask & Act Group 2 Training, Sheffield Hallam University,
  - Programme Manager, Violence Prevention Unit, Public Health Wales

### Planned Forward Activity

- Consider the implications of Domestic Abuse Bill on health services within Wales
- Map NHS Wales VAWDASV Strategic Work Plan against the revised National Strategy
- Collation of how Health Boards collate VAWDASV information within Emergency Departments.





# Tools for Improvement

The Network continue to develop innovative methods and products to improve practice, facilitating an assured NHS Wales wide standard for safeguarding.



# Safeguarding Maturity Matrix

Measuring the effectiveness and quality of safeguarding provision is an important part of the Networks role within NHS Wales.

Assurance of effective care verifies that fundamental safeguarding legislation such as United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights, underpins core safeguarding business. It is important that organisations across NHS Wales are able to demonstrate their capacity to fulfil their statutory duties and recognise current and potential safeguarding risks.

Measuring safeguarding assurance effectively however, can be complex. Effective safeguarding is built on working together arrangements with key stakeholders in the community, many whom are non NHS. This means a strong interdependence on other agencies with different thresholds, arrangements, policy and legislation and will vary across the country.

The Safeguarding Maturity Matrix (SMM) was developed by the Network to create a service benchmarking tool. The Matrix aims to provide assurance, share practice and drive improvement creating a consistent approach to safeguarding across Wales.

It is important that organisations across NHS Wales are able to demonstrate their capacity to fulfil their statutory duties and recognise current and potential safeguarding risks.

## Safeguarding Maturity Matrix 2020



### SMM Standards and Self-Assessment

The SMM is a self-assessment tool that Trusts and Boards complete and share with the NST to provide assurance. The SMM consists of a set of standards that underpin the self-assessment process. The standards expect the Trusts and Boards to demonstrate they have;

- 1 | Governance and a Rights Based Approaches
- 2 | Safe Care
- 3 | ACE Informed
- 4 | Learning Culture
- 5 | Multi Agency Partnership Working

Each standard includes several example indicators to assist organisations in establishing their self-assessment score. The scoring is out of 5 with 5 indicating a 'mature' organisation and 1 indicating 'basic progress' with improvements required.

The Trusts and Boards complete the SMM and the related Improvement Plans, including their self-assessment scores. These are then submitted to the NST to inform the national picture of safeguarding and are reported to Chief Nursing Officer in Welsh Government. A report is completed every year by the NST to collate the separate Improvement Plans into one inclusive document.

## Peer Review for Improvement

An annual peer review process has been used to identify and share examples of good practice and to collaborate for improvement. In 2020 representatives from ten NHS Wales organisations used Microsoft Teams to collaborate on three areas of work:-

- 1** The impact of COVID-19 on socio economic issues including: BAME, equality, diversity and other human rights concerns
- 2** NHS Wales arrangements for child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child sexual abuse (CSA).
- 3** The use of quality improvement plans to explore the barriers and enablers in term of service delivery.

Conducting a peer review over Microsoft Teams was a new experience and did not come without its challenges, however it was vital that collaborative approaches to safeguarding assurance were maintained despite the pandemic.

**Useful reflections were gathered on the events and these included;**

"I have used the [new] internal template, which is useful"

"I think COVID is having an impact on us all, we are being pulled into things that are outside of our usual safeguarding role"

"I thought that the Teams format was well structured and worked well"



Using the peer review, the Network improvement priorities were discussed and were subsequently translated into purposeful objectives for service and practice developments. These objectives have now formed the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network 2021/22 Work Plan.

## Going Forward

The SMM was launched in 2018- and is now 3 years old and requiring review. It is important that changes to legislation, procedure and also inevitable changes required due to the pandemic are incorporated into this review. The SMM Work Plan objectives for 2021/22 include;

- Reconvening a SMM steering group with Network members to ensure a collaborative review
- To revise and update the current standards and scoring of the SMM to provide relevant and consistent benchmarking against pertinent areas for 2022
- Facilitation of peer to peer assessment to encourage objectivity, dialogue and learning





# Health Assessment Framework for Looked After Children

## The Health of Looked After Children

As of 31st March 2020 there were over 7,000 looked after children in Wales. These are a mobile population of nearly 2,000 children entering care and more than 1,600 children leaving care during 2020. Although outcomes are improving, looked after children and young people have notably poorer outcomes in terms of education, social and health.

Children and young people who are looked after share many of the same health risks and problems of their peers, but often to a greater degree and in part due to the impact of poverty, poor parenting, social exclusion, chaotic lifestyles and abuse or neglect before they enter the care system.



The Health Assessment Framework for Looked After Children provides a statutory health assessment process which means all children and young people aged 0-18yrs who are in the care of a local authority are offered regular health assessments. A health assessment for a child or young person in care is a holistic assessment of their physical, emotional and behavioural needs. The assessment also includes aspects of health education and health promotion. It is not an isolated event, but part of a process of continuous care including monitoring and promoting the child's health.

In this context, a quality assessment provides a vital interface with a specialist health professional and the opportunity to identify and address health needs and have a positive impact on short and long term health outcomes.



The NHS Wales Health Assessment Framework for Looked After Children sets out standards of good practice for health professionals working with children who are currently looked after by the local authority, including those who are being twin tracked for adoption.

The framework has been professionally developed in collaboration with all Health Boards across Wales. It supports a consistent approach to the Health Assessment process and the quality of the health assessment and report for each looked after child or young person. The framework also supports the development of a toolkit to enable qualitative audits.



Going forward, the framework will be reviewed in 2022 by the Looked After Children Subgroup of the Network. A planned client satisfaction tool will work alongside this framework to ensure the voice of children and young people is heard.





# Communicating Change into Practice

## Changes to Deprivation of Liberty due to the Mental Capacity Amendment Act

The Network undertook a review across all Health Boards and Trusts to assess current approaches to the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005, and consider NHS Wales readiness for the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act (2019), incorporating Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS).



## Context

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005, covering England and Wales, provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future.

In some cases people lack the capacity to consent to particular treatment or care that is recognised by others as being in their best interests or which will protect them from harm. Where this care might involve depriving people of their liberty extra safeguards have been introduced in law, to put the person's rights and wishes at the centre of all decision-making.

Currently the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) are the model to safeguard and protect individuals. A Supreme Court ruling in March 2014 resulted in a very large increase in the number of applications for DoLS authorisations and all public bodies have since seen a constant increase in applications. The House of Lords published a scrutiny report (2014) of the MCA that concluded that DoLS were "not fit for purpose" and recommended they be replaced. In July 2018, the UK Government published a Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill, which became law in May 2019.

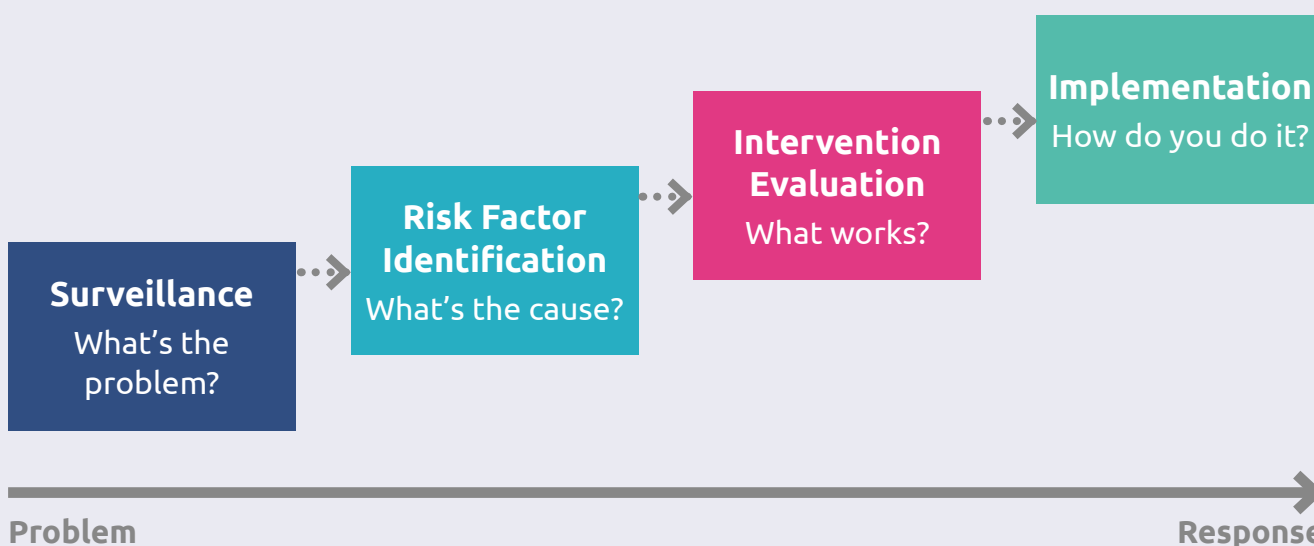
## The only constant in life is change

Heraclitus



As a consequence in April 2022 the LPS will replace DoLS. The aim of LPS is to simplify the process so that it will be quicker and less bureaucratic than DoLS so people will have better quality care with minimum restrictions. Amongst other changes it will offer greater involvement for families and extend the scope to include sixteen to seventeen year olds and those residing in domestic settings.

## Public Health Approach





## Activity and Output

The scope of Network activity was agreed by the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) of Wales and the Mental Health & Vulnerable Groups Division of Welsh Government.

An expert group, comprised of representatives from all NHS Wales Health Boards and Trusts and the Office of the Older People's Commissioner (OPC), was convened to carry out this exercise. The group was chaired by the lead GP of the NHS Wales National Safeguarding Team.

### Activity Included:

- Utilising the Public Health Approach and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Five Ways of Working
- Taking a 'Once for NHS Wales' approach, examining current practice and approaches to increasing the awareness of the MCA within a wider quality improvement arena - i.e. the promotion of an evidence-based approach towards safe, compassionate care and less restrictive practice for some of the most complex groups for whom the NHS provides care.
- A benchmarking exercise across NHS Wales Health Boards and Trusts to gain an overview of current operational models and approaches.
- Producing a report with recommendations which was discussed at the draft stage with the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network before finalising.

## Report Recommendations and Forward Activity

- 1 Mental Capacity Act Training is made mandatory for all NHS Wales staff and contracted services.
- 2 All Health Boards and Trusts to have a Mental Capacity Act Lead.
- 3 Additional resources are required for the transition period and the continuation of implementing the Safeguards.
- 4 The NHS Wales Safeguarding Network Task and finish group should continue in order to:
  - collate a collaborative Network response to the MCA Amendment Act Code of Practice consultation to feedback to the UK government
  - work with the Welsh Government LPS Implementation Steering Group and its work streams to co-ordinate the NHS Wales contribution
  - provide expert advice to the Once for Wales Concerns Management System (see section below) to ensure meaningful capture regarding LPS in the new patient safety system



# A Once for Wales Safeguarding Management System

## Keeping Patients Safe and Learning from Safeguarding Events

The Once for Wales Safeguarding Management System will enable each organisation to capture all safeguarding activity, to monitor and action safeguarding incidents, concerns and outcomes and identify key learning to drive forward local improvements and to share those insights across all health organisations across Wales. It will triangulate information relating to Patient Safety Incidents, including incidents relating to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and in future Liberty and Protection Safeguards. The system will also generate meaningful and comprehensive safeguarding reports to provide organisational safeguarding assurance and facilitate quality improvements to safeguard every individual accessing health services in Wales.

The system will provide key intelligence to facilitate organisational learning from previous safeguarding incidents and reviews to reduce future harm and drive forward safeguarding improvements across NHS Wales. Heads of Safeguarding will be able to receive timely safeguarding alerts to ensure they are aware of all concerns within their organisation. They can also review actions taken by others to ensure any reporting to Local Authorities is in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

## Network Activity

The Network are leading the development of a safeguarding module, comprising of a safeguarding management and reporting system, within the wider organisational concerns management system. A subgroup of the Network members are instrumental in driving forward this key objective on behalf of NHS Wales, regularly consulting across the Network to ensure a system that is fit for purpose.

## Going Forward

Over the next year, planned work includes:

- Ongoing development of the safeguarding module and interaction with the wider systems work stream and technical leads
- Continued engagement with key stakeholders including National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB), Regional Safeguarding Board (RSB) Chairs and Welsh Government to share the vision and pilot the All Wales Safeguarding Report produced by the system.





# Upskilling a Competent Workforce

NHS Wales have a duty to provide their employees with access to child and adult safeguarding training. This ensures that they have the ability to develop the knowledge and skills required to undertake their roles and competently, safeguard children and adults at risk.

The Network has supported this aim by developing a Safeguarding Training Framework incorporating the range of CPD requirements across the sector. The framework informs training package development by laying out core competences and connecting them with learning methodologies and frequency of learning activity.







**Network specific training deliverables achieved are set out as below:-**

## E-learning

As a follow on from Level 1 Safeguarding People Training, the Level 2 e-learning packages Safeguarding Adults at Risk Level and Safeguarding Children have been released.

## Ask and Act Training

### Background

The Network adapted the existing Welsh Government Group 2 Ask and Act training package. This was to ensure relevance within health settings, and to ensure that service users affected by VAWDASV were appropriately supported. The training covers the organisational duty to encourage relevant professionals to “Ask” potential victims, in certain circumstances (targeted enquiry) and to “Act” to increase identification of those experiencing VAWDASV in order to offer referrals and interventions for those identified at the earliest opportunity.

The training upskills professionals to:

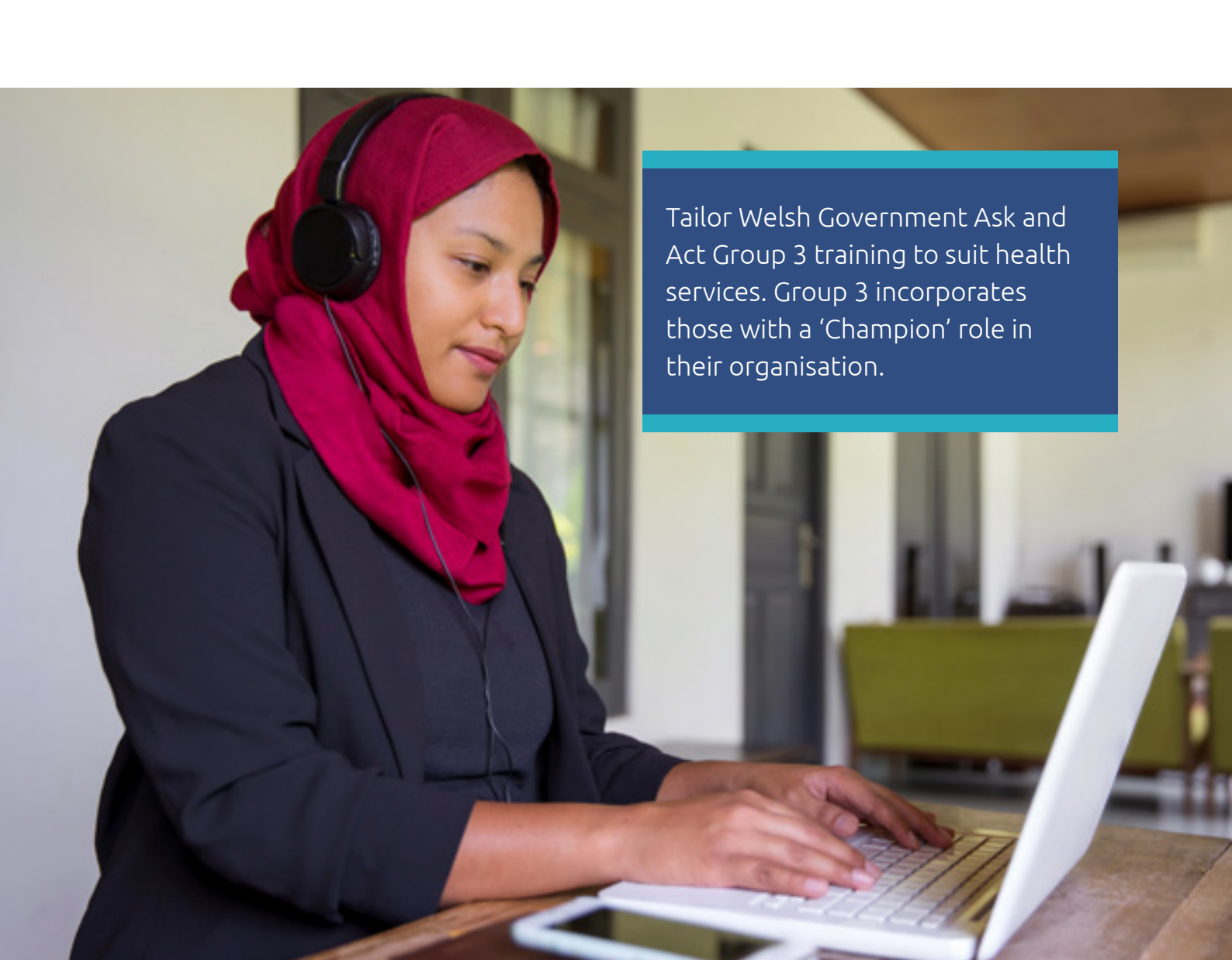
- recognise the signs that someone is being abused
- talk to that person sensitively (if appropriate)
- offer options and services to them quickly and efficiently

### Evaluation

During the last quarter the adapted NHS Ask and Act Group 2 training package was evaluated to establish if this delivery of training captures all the key aspects of Ask and Act, and to align, where possible, with Welsh Government’s evaluation.

The organisations that took part in this audit demonstrated the high priority they have given to the delivery of Ask and Act, describing how local evaluation processes are contributing to developing the training to meet regional and local priorities. The majority of organisations have continued to progress roll out despite the pressures to internal resources posed by COVID-19.





Tailor Welsh Government Ask and Act Group 3 training to suit health services. Group 3 incorporates those with a 'Champion' role in their organisation.

**Going forward, the Network will work together to action the following report recommendations:-**

- Review the current NHS Ask and Act Group 2 training package, to ensure training is up to date and consistent with any new evidence, national priorities and legislation changes.
- Tailor Welsh Government Ask and Act Group 3 training to suit health services. Group 3 incorporates those with a 'Champion' role in their organisation.
- Consider how to ensure a consistent evaluation process is used for delivery of Ask and Act training throughout all the Health Boards and Trusts in Wales.
- Review how VAWDASV is recorded within all NHS organisations, including documentation within emergency settings, mental health services, primary care and inpatient records.
- Consider how to measure the impact of delivering Ask and Act training on those that disclose VAWDASV within health settings.
- Identify more effective ways of capturing the survivor's voice within evaluation and audit to ensure continued improvement in responding to VAWDASV.



# Safeguarding Children's Masterclass for Paediatricians

## Move to Digital Delivery

In November 2020, the NST delivered a Safeguarding Masterclass for Paediatricians. The event gives Consultant Paediatricians and Senior Paediatric trainees from across NHS Wales an opportunity to update their knowledge at Level 3 standard, with information disseminated to practitioners in a way that will potentially benefit their practice.

In previous years the event was venue-based with professionals travelling to listen to speakers and network. Due to the restrictions of the pandemic the event was delivered via a webinar platform. This mode of delivery facilitated audience interaction with speakers via a chat function and had a record attendance of 80 professionals.

**Hosted by Dr Claire Thomas, Designated Doctor (NST), key topics covered:-**

- Difficult Cases in Court and Court Skills
- Therapies with Evidence Based Interventions for Attachment Difficulties
- Dental Neglect
- COVID-19 and The Impact on our Children

## Positive Learning

Attendees were asked for feedback and topic suggestions for future sessions. A selection of attendee feedback from the event, as below:-

"Excellent presentations, all very experienced clinicians and good presentation style. Useful content, presented at the right level for the audience."

"The court skills session was phenomenal and I'll be bearing much of the advice given there in mind should I ever be called to court."

"The update from the dental perspective was excellent and something I hadn't really considered as much before."

"I work with LAC/adopted children too and found the talk on attachment gripping. This would really help this line of work in understanding the difficulties these children and carers face. I wanted to hear more!"

## Future Plans

Thanks to the success of the event, another Masterclass for paediatricians via webinar is planned for June 2021. Planned sessions include:-

- Perplexing Presentations (PP) or Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) in children
- Supporting Sudden Death in Children and Young Adults
- Safeguarding and Dermatology
- A Year of Reflection: what changed for looked after children and adoption in 2020







# Regional Round Up

In the spirit of collaboration and innovation, Network members regularly share effective safeguarding practice. This allows them to highlight what works in their area, build effective partnerships and expand their ideas of what good practice looks like.

During the pandemic, corporate safeguarding teams across NHS Wales found new ways to respond to the rise in safeguarding concerns whilst maintaining high standards and progressing planned improvement work.



Below are some examples of organisation-based practice and innovations over the last period:-



## Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) made a significant and highly valued contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic health response across the country. The surge in coronavirus-related demand was felt acutely by the Trust at the start of the outbreak, with pressure increasing rapidly on 999 and NHS 111 services.

Despite these increasing pressures on services, WAST successfully transitioned to an all Wales digital safeguarding reporting system and upskilled an expanding workforce.

### Digital System

The Trust achieved the successful implementation of an electronic safeguarding reporting system, enabling staff to directly report concerns from any location via their personal issue iPad, desktops computers etc. to the relevant Local Authority. The pan Wales system was rolled out mid-pandemic with attendant challenges. However, resulting figures have revealed that safeguarding reporting rates have increased significantly.



### Training

The Trust continued to provide access to high quality, on-going training, and regular continuous professional development opportunities to support effective safeguarding.

Over the last period training requests increased by 65% which reflected the need for all “called to arms” temporary staff to receive safeguarding training regardless of their role. As one of the few agencies that could enter properties and/or speak directly to service users, temporary staff needed to be able to identify safeguarding concerns alongside permanent staff. The Trust achieved this aim by implementing core business (as per the safeguarding business continuity plan) and ensuring the safeguarding team were not deployed elsewhere so essential resource was not depleted.



The surge in coronavirus-related demand was felt acutely by the Trust at the start of the outbreak, with pressure increasing rapidly on 999 and NHS 111 services.





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Velindre NHS Trust

## Velindre University NHS Trust

Velindre University NHS Trust (VUNHST) has continued its commitment to supporting staff to ensure that safeguarding remains everybody's business, whilst services coped with the emerging COVID -19 pandemic.

### Service Continuity

Commitment to maintaining a quality safeguarding service is evidenced by the following activity:-

- Strategic safeguarding meetings continued with frequency adjusted according to risk levels
- Safeguarding supervision and advice was accessed from both the Cancer Centre and Welsh Blood Service.
- Safeguarding training continued to be delivered virtually and via eLearning, including 'Ask and Act' trainer the trainer programme
- Safeguarding guidance was developed and disseminated in response to emerging issues during the pandemic including vaccinations.
- A safeguarding newsletter was disseminated across the organisation to ensure key messages were communicated
- Time was redirected to support the Vaccination programme to ensure that safeguarding was considered in the Trust planning.

**Strategic safeguarding meetings continued with frequency adjusted according to risk levels**



### Improvement

The Trust continued to deliver on the 2 key safeguarding improvement actions set out below, despite challenging resource constraints.

#### 1 Embed the principles of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures across the Trust.

- Trust Safeguarding and Public Protection policy and guidance have been amended to reflect the changes in national policy.
- The Procedures have been promoted across the Trust via the Safeguarding Public Protection Newsletter and on display screens in public areas.

#### 2 Monitor the Trust safeguarding and public protection compliance training improvement plan.

- Compliance was monitored by the Education and Training Department and reported to senior level.
- A Safeguarding Training Improvement Plan was created.
- A Safeguarding and Public Prospectus was developed, identifying learning outcomes and relevant staff groups for each level of training





## Hywel Dda University Health Board

Throughout the pandemic Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDDUHB) employed different ways of working to deliver consistent, quality safeguarding services. A selection of activity and achievements is set out below.

### Training and Communications

- Transition of safeguarding training to online platforms saw an increase in uptake particularly in Adult safeguarding Level 2 and Group 2 Ask and Act training.
- Redesign of a corporate safeguarding intranet page for which the design team were awarded the Chair's Team of the Month.
- Quarterly newsletters, a COVID -19 safeguarding newsletter and global staff emails reminding staff to make every contact count in identifying and responding to concerns and disclosures of abuse and neglect.

### Regional Collaboration

- Regular COVID 19 response meetings with regional partners were established to safeguard people at risk of abuse and neglect and share good practice.
- The Named Doctor and Lead Nurse for Safeguarding Children led on the development of a Regional Procedure for the Management of Non Mobile Children.
- The UHB supported the facilitation of a virtual learning event for a Child Practice Review with positive feedback.
- A Specialist Nurse for Safeguarding Children led on the evaluation of Ask and Act training across NHS Wales and presented this high profile work to the NHS VAWDASV Steering Group and NHS Safeguarding Network.

## Supporting Looked After Children in Residential Homes

A Looked After Children Nurse for Residential Homes was appointed, the first post of its kind in Wales.

During lockdown, contact was made with all the residential children homes to establish new lines of communication with the children and young people through interactive virtual platforms. Online clinics offered this vulnerable group an opportunity to 'check in' with any health or other concerns they had during this uncertain period.



### Feedback on the virtual clinics:-

#### From a young person

'I know that I need to keep myself healthy and keep taking my medication.'

#### From a manager

'Great for a point of contact perfect for building relationships and giving advice to the staff and young people.'

## Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) has responded to the pandemic in a variety of ways in order continue safeguarding delivery, uphold standards alongside improving their services. The Corporate Safeguarding have shown they can respond quickly and innovatively to a crisis whilst continuing to work with partners; ensuring safeguarding and public protection remains at the forefront of their work.

### Information, Communication and Engagement

- Bronze and Silver safeguarding board communication meetings established throughout the first wave.
- Production of 'Safeguarding Guidance during COVID' giving staff easy access to timely information, enabling them to uphold a safeguarding focus throughout their practice.
- Fortnightly virtual coffee and chat for UHB Quality, Safety and Safeguarding colleagues to support well-being, maintain connectivity, provide organisational updates and respond to any concerns or queries.

### Innovative Delivery and Upholding Standards

- Strategic and operational work has continued to focus on the prevention of suicide and self-harm.
- The principles of the Mental Capacity Act, safeguarding and awareness of domestic abuse, have been embedded in Standard Operating Procedures relating to population testing, and practice guides relating to population testing. A strong safeguarding focus has been established in End of Life principles/Do Not Attempt to Resuscitate/ethical decision making.



- Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS) are authorised virtually with a regular cycle of peer audit of quality, safety and effectiveness.
- Health visiting hubs developed to continue with critical visits. An initial telephone triage establishes whether a face-to-face meeting is essential, or whether work can be carried out via a different mode.

### Innovation

- A Child Protection Medical Hub was established as a centre of excellence for Child Protection medicals and advice.
- In response to the increase in domestic abuse reporting during the pandemic, a business case has been developed for two health based Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs). The posts aim to improve safety planning, increase Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) referral and improve signposting for domestic abuse support.



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Cardiff and Vale  
University Health Board

## Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

### Continuing Activity

The Corporate Safeguarding Team at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (C&V UHB) continued with a variety of innovative safeguarding activity throughout the last period, including:-

- Introduction of Domestic Abuse Routine Enquiry for all adults attending EU from April 2020. As a result, disclosures have markedly increased which necessitated additional Health Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services.
- Delivery of safeguarding training and supervision has transitioned to virtual platforms to ensure continuity of service and standards throughout the pandemic.
- A COVID-19 booklet was collated detailing the current service provision from all organisational service groups and has been shared regularly with UHB and multi-agency partners.
- The integrated Corporate Safeguarding Team aligned with each Clinical Board, allowing a named safeguarding nurse advisor to support each board with safeguarding information
- The further development of a C&V UHB Violence Prevention Unit

Delivery of safeguarding training and supervision has transitioned to virtual platforms to ensure continuity of service and standards throughout the pandemic.

### Hosting for Development

A variety of hosting activities have taken place that have facilitated upskilling of future and current practitioners:-

- Hosted nursing students for a safeguarding specific placements
- Hosted 4th year medical students to complete a safeguarding audit to upskill their safeguarding knowledge and provide valuable intelligence for the organisation.
- Hosted 2 qualified nurses from EU who were shielding. This facilitated the development of their safeguarding knowledge that they will share with their teams in the EU upon their return.

### Collaborative Working

- Continuing development of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) process to work towards a more centralised, proactive, structured approach to facilitate learning from reviews of fatal incidents







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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

## Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

The Corporate Safeguarding Team at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) have continued to work with partners and innovate their practice. Key activity as follows:-

### Engaging with Partners

- BCUHB worked with Conwy Local Authority and North Wales Police on the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Practice Leads Programme delivered by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (a multi-disciplinary organisation funded by the Home Office). The expert training has increased organisational knowledge and confidence in identifying and responding to CSA, and there are plans to cascade learning across the Health Board.
- Corporate Safeguarding have been in consultation with higher education providers to establish post graduate nursing student placements within the service; offering students an opportunity to engage with local, regional and national safeguarding developments to inform their future professional practice.



### Improving Practice

- The Corporate Safeguarding Team have reviewed learning from Child Practice Reviews and benchmarked it against their own practice, leading to two new initiatives:-

- 1 Weekly multi professional safeguarding meetings in all Emergency Departments to review attendances of children under one year old, presenting with a head injury and/or burn and attendances of children under the age of two years old presenting with a fracture.
  - 2 The development of a Level 3 Learning Disability Training Package to support practitioners in caring for pregnant women/partners with a learning disability which has potential to affect parenting capacity.
- A dedicated Single Point of Contact (SPoC) Safeguarding Specialist was allocated as an interim measure to an organisational division. This presence enabled Individual, Group and Ad hoc Adult supervision and offered support to staff completing risk reports, risk assessment and protection plans. The SPoC was also able to support key governance meetings, and triangulate data when early safeguarding concerns were reported. The service outcome was evidenced by the improvement in reporting quality, acknowledged as best practice by the Local Authority, Health Inspectorate Wales and North Wales Safeguarding Adult Board.
  - Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) is now in its second phase. A full evaluation has taken place in 2020-2021 with good positive outcomes. A further 8 TRiM Practitioners are being trained in 2021-2022.





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Health Board

## Powys Teaching Health Board

Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) stepped up their care for looked after children and young people during the pandemic, particularly those in residential settings. At the organisational level, upscaled communication and training activities strengthened safeguarding services to reflect a shifting context.

### Residential Children's Homes

- Multi-agency meetings were instigated at the onset of lockdown to focus on the needs of children in residential homes. Looked After children's nurses provided a strong communication link for this group.
- The group were kept informed of level of COVID-19 cases were able to prepare young people for testing.

### Prioritising Looked After Children

- Swift COVID-19 lockdown measures had an immediate impact on the Board's Looked after Children Team, initiating a rapid response to ensure staff they could work safely from home alongside interim measures to promote the safety and well-being of looked after children remotely.
- Looked after children nurses continued to support professionals and children via telephone or interactive virtual platforms. Services included health assessments, reviews, Pathway Plans for the 16+, strategy meetings and acting as a point of support for the child.
- A risk assessment tool was developed to allow some health assessments to be completed in person, outside and by maintaining social distancing.

Impact of  
Lock down from  
a Looked After  
Child's perspective

"I was upset I may never have the opportunity to do simple things again like go to Primark or something again."

"It is very difficult spending ten weeks completely on your own in a care home."

"I was scared."

"Contact with family has completely stopped."

"I didn't know what was going to happen if staff got sick."

"I was worried my mental health would spiral."

"Everything has completely changed."

"It's not a family situation."

"I do think that people have been very irresponsible. It makes me feel upset and frustrated."

"If I wasn't in lockdown I'd be in work by now."

"I was talking to people a lot on line but then eventually I just kind of stopped."

"The only thing I'm allowed to do is go to the garage."

### Communications

- Themed monthly Safeguarding Newsletters covering topics such as: supervision, consent, child sexual abuse and professional responsibilities.
- Monthly Safeguarding briefings to the Strategic Group collating key issues, guidance and updates.

### Training

A blended learning approach was taken, including:-

- Delivery via Microsoft Teams for: Safeguarding Adults and Children Level 3, VAWDASV Group 2 Ask and Act, Mental Capacity Act, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and Looked after Children.
- Introduction of the 'Modular Learning' platform, providing flexible access to training materials.
- An updated PTHB Competency Training Passport including an exemplar passport.



## Swansea Bay University Health Board

Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) Corporate Safeguarding Team have continued to progress innovative work in the last year demonstrating that safeguarding continues to be a priority.

### Focus on Contextual Safeguarding

SBUHB are a key member in the University of Bedfordshire and Swansea Local Authority Contextual Safeguarding Programme, which explores system changes in children's services, the nature of and responses to extra familial harm, contextual interventions in peers, schools and communities, and sector engagement.

Working with multi-agency partners, a child protection legislative framework has been used to focus on community safety, to develop responses to extra familial harm.

Attendance at Contextual, Missing, Exploitation and Trafficking (CMET) meetings has led to information being shared with emergency departments, sexual health, school nursing, looked after children and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to increase awareness around contextual safeguarding risks.

### Extension of Duty Desk

The Corporate Safeguarding Team "Duty Desk" hours have been extended to meet the increased demand from staff for Safeguarding advice and support. The desk connects to the Consultant Connect Telephone Advice & Guidance service providing Primary Care and Secondary Care staff easy access.

### Strengthening Communication

- Launch of Safeguarding SharePoint with easy access for all staff to access useful information.
- A Guide to Safeguarding Processes during the COVID-19 outbreak has been developed and disseminated
- Ongoing work with respective partner agencies to respond to Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse concerns.
- Corporate Safeguarding Team attendance at Medically Fit for Discharge hospital meetings to highlight safeguarding considerations.

IRIS (a general practice-based Domestic Violence and Abuse programme) has been introduced in the Neath and Neath Valley GP cluster areas.

### Training

- Level 3 Safeguarding People Training and Ask and Act Training continues to be delivered in a blended format (virtual platform and face to face).
- A Deprivation of Liberty Standards for 16 and 17-year-old webinar has been developed.

### Strengthening Activity

- The Corporate Safeguarding Team and the Mental Health & Learning Disability Service Group contribute to the regional Rapid Response to Adult Suicide Meetings led by Local Authority, providing safeguarding expertise.
- Safeguarding Ward Assurance audits have been implemented across the UHB, strengthening ward to board assurances.





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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Aneurin Bevan  
University Health Board

## Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABHUB) ensured continuity of safeguarding throughout the pandemic using a hub approach.

### Continually Learning

Activity in the learning space maintained momentum, including:-

- Train the trainer sessions to facilitate Ask and Act Group 2 training.
- Implementation of a Level 3 Safeguarding Adults Competency Learning Record
- Update of the Level 3 Safeguarding Children Competency Learning Record.
- Short topic competence based training sessions for practitioners to meet their role requirements
- Launch of an education webpage and relaunch of internal safeguarding Newsletter

### Other Achievements

- ABUHB became the first Health Board in Wales to receive National Children and Young People's Participation Standards Kitemark award. The award, endorsed by Welsh Government, demonstrates children and young people's active participation in organisational decision-making.
- Delivered an upskilling session to senior Gwent Police staff in relation to responding to unexpected deaths in Children (PRUDiC)

## Safeguarding Hubs Across Local Authorities

ABUHB worked with the Early Action Together Programme in Gwent to implement various partnership initiatives to strengthen service integration, safeguarding, early intervention and prevention to improve outcomes for children and families. This took the form of establishing Safeguarding Hubs in each of the Local Authority areas.

The Corporate Safeguarding team have been instrumental in supporting this work through:

### Information Sharing

To support the multi-agency front door arrangements information sharing, Single Points of Contact (SPOC) were established in the following services;

- Health Visiting
- District Nursing
- Mental Health (Older People's Mental Health and Adult Mental Health)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) consultation line including emergency arrangements.

### Decision making

- The Corporate Safeguarding Team Hub supported timely, multi-agency decision making in relation to safeguarding by providing strategic advice.

### Benefits

The benefits of this model include: earlier information sharing; timely, multi-agency decision making; better use of resources; improved, integrated safeguarding responses all of which will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children, adults and their families



## Public Health Wales

### Safeguarding Staff and Providing Expertise

As the key public health agency for Wales, Public Health Wales (PHW) had significant responsibilities throughout all stages of the pandemic. The organisation quickly established a National Contact Centre (NCC), which handled high volumes of calls from the public and professionals from the health and care sector and local authorities. Staff had to deal with a diverse range of queries, sometimes from vulnerable members of the public. Wellbeing support was made available for those who had received traumatic calls and were signposted to mental health agencies for further support. Additionally, de-briefing sessions were introduced at the end of call centre shifts.

### Upskilling for the Pandemic

PHW developed a Safeguarding training module, as part of bespoke COVID-19 training package. The training was for all PHW staff and was used by NHS and Local Authority staff deployed into the regional Test Trace and Protect teams.

Furthermore, contact centre staff received additional upskilling when new safeguarding issues emerged e.g. callers with suicidal ideation, domestic abuse and care home managers dealing with liberty issues etc.

### Partnership working

PHW developed standing operating procedures for:

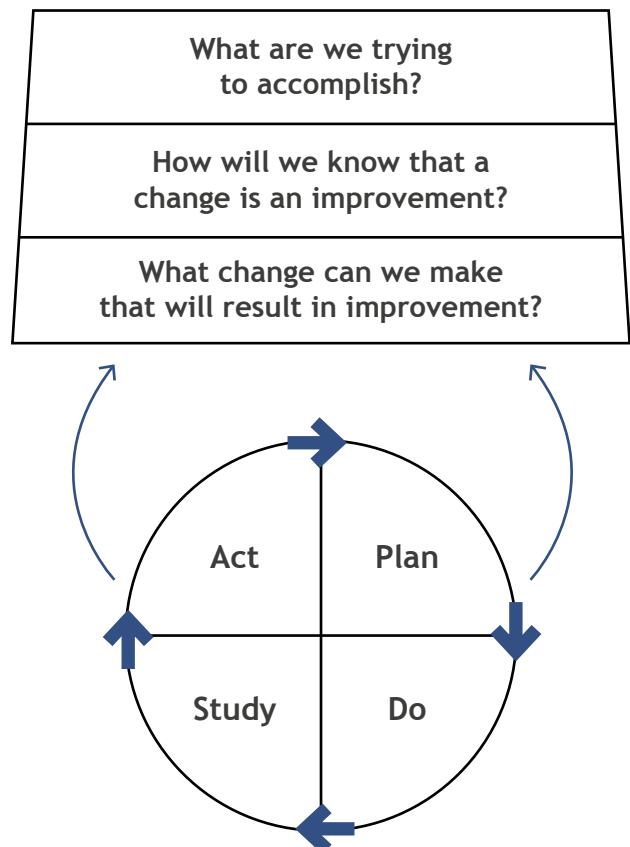
- Covid 19 self-testing (in particular children and those within care homes who may lack capacity)
- Drive through testing units within Wales

PHW supported the Cardiff City Stadium Drive through testing unit with the Named Lead Safeguarding deployed to support the operation.

### Rethinking Consent for Screening

PHW commenced a review of the organisation's approach to gaining and recording consent to treatment within screening services. The review was initiated by concerns from families and considered the position of non-registered health care workers as decision makers. Processes were initially reviewed to ensure compliance with the Mental Capacity Act. PHW then worked alongside Welsh Risk Pool and Welsh Health Legal to review options to pilot a novel approach to address this issue.

### Model for Improvement





# Future Activity

## Looking Backwards and Forwards

Looking to 2021/22, it is important for the Network to consider the future of safeguarding, particular when the year behind us has been so challenging.

We must ensure that good progress is maintained, and that the adaptations that were made are robustly evaluated and continued or terminated, dependent on the benefit to NHS Wales service users.

The Network plans to continue with the improvements detailed in this report. Many of the areas of the current Work Plan will continue into 2021/22 as work is ongoing, namely: SMM, VAWDASV, Mental Capacity Amendment Act, Once for Wales, safeguarding upskilling, and Looked After Children Health Assessment Framework. Future annual reports will report on the progress of these longitudinal topics.





# Horizon Scanning

There are also a number of priorities that the Network have decided to incorporate into horizon scanning for the next year. Key areas are set out as follows:-

## COVID-19 Recovery - NHS Wales

As we progress through the pandemic, the Network must consider the needs of the Trusts and Boards as they begin to recover from a year of working at crisis point. We can anticipate that enhanced support and guidance will be required in statutory safeguarding areas such as training and supervision.

Additionally we must ensure that support is provided as staff transition from supporting the COVID response back to substantive roles. This will be a time of change for many NHS Wales colleagues, and we should work to ensure that the skills, confidence and competence of colleagues are nurtured through this period. This commitment will ensure that the emotional impacts of the transition back to 'normal' safeguarding business are considered.

We will also make sure that changes to Network ways of working that have been successful are continued; such as virtual meetings, informal supervision and virtual training. Those that have been challenging, for example peer evaluation sessions and learning days, will be constantly evaluated to understand how and when safe changes can be made.

We recognise that the COVID-19 recovery will not be a linear process, and we cannot predict if there will be additional outbreaks and lockdowns in the future. Consequently, we will continue the flexible and agile approach to safeguarding support that we have delivered in 2020/21.



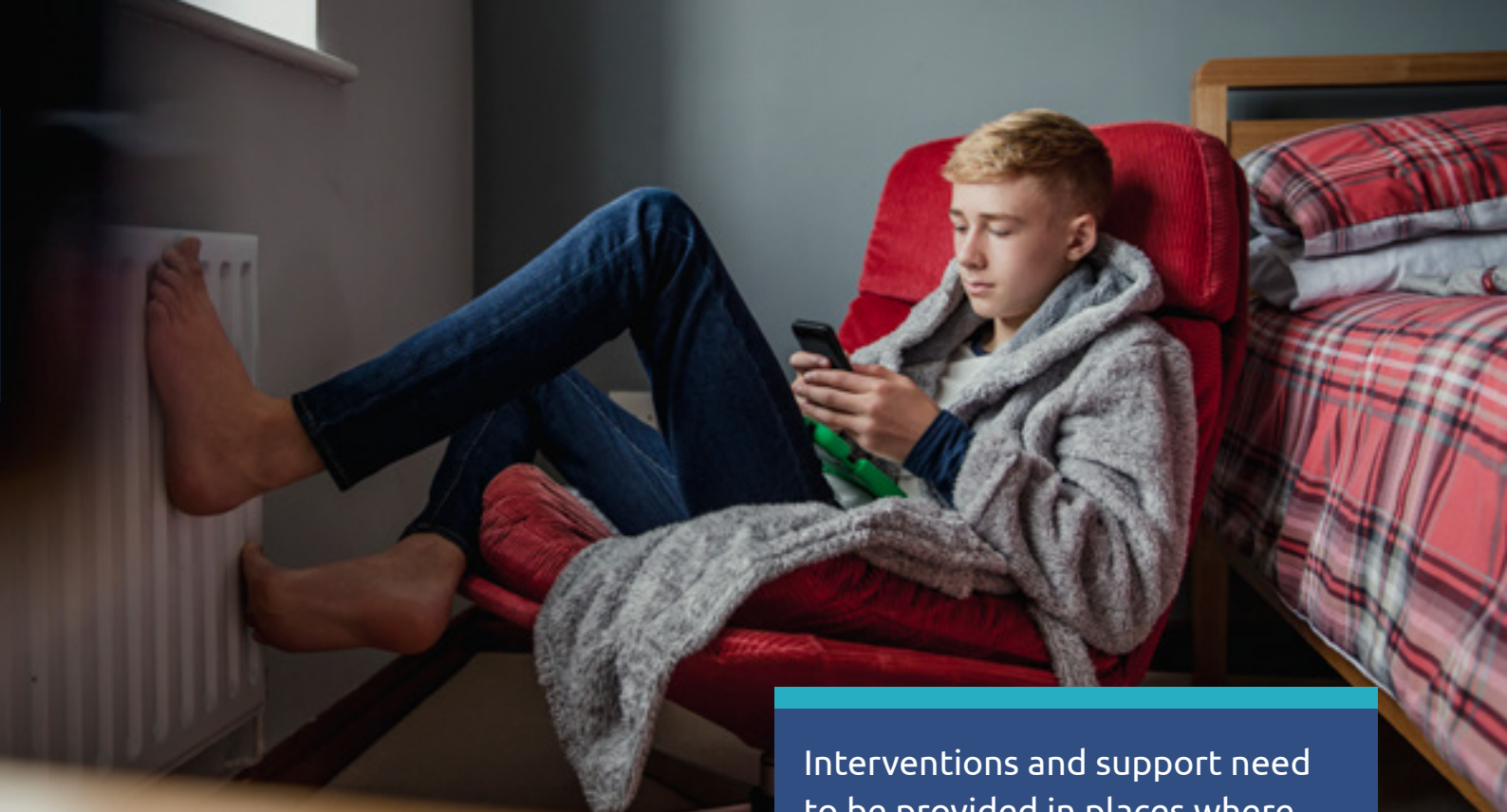
## COVID-19 Recovery - Service Users

The needs of service users are at the heart of the Network. As we progress through the pandemic, the impacts of COVID-19, and the subsequent needs of our communities must be incorporated into Network plans.

We know that there have been significant implications for those already living in fragile environments, and for those where the pandemic has exacerbated issues due to unemployment, isolation and stress. In particular, issues around domestic abuse, mental health and child abuse have seen rises in disclosure rates to helplines and NHS services. We must acknowledge that home was not a safe place for many adults and children, and that frontline NHS colleagues will have been, and will continue to see the impacts of 'Hidden Harms' after the pandemic.

The Network will continue to facilitate the sharing of safeguarding research, projects and plans relating to service users and the pandemic recovery across NHS Wales. As a collaborative, multi-disciplinary group the Network is best placed to lead on learning and innovation pertaining to safeguarding, enabling service users across Wales gain the benefit of improvement in the years ahead.





## Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding recognises that the relationships young people form external to their families, in communities, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. This can also include internal trafficking, seen in the criminal and sexual exploitation of children. In order to properly understand the safety of young people, and consequently protect them if relationships become harmful, relationships external to the home and family must be included in safeguarding considerations. Interventions and support need to be provided in places where children spend time and socialise, whether this is a tangible location - or on smart phones, social media and the internet.

To provide assurance that a holistic approach to safeguarding young people is embedded in NHS Wales, the Network is committed to ensuring that Contextual Safeguarding is embedded across its work streams, linking into areas such as VAWDASV, Violence Prevention, LAC/ adoption, training, and the SMM. Via the Network we can aim to raise awareness across NHW Wales which will enable staff to detect community concerns, and can consequently better safeguard young people.

Interventions and support need to be provided in places where children spend time and socialise, whether this is a tangible location - or on smart phones, social media and the internet.

## Violence Prevention

The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) was established in 2019 to tackle violence in South Wales as part of Home Office funding. Violence in the VPU includes; domestic abuse, sexual violence and exploitation, criminal, serious youth violence and modern slavery.

In recent years, the Unit has extended its reach across the whole of Wales. Consequently, the National Safeguarding Team has made the decision to align closely with the Unit to ensure that NHS Wales and the Network is involved in violence prevention work.

This will support embedding the Violence Prevention Unit agenda across healthcare settings, benefitting the wellbeing of both service users and health care professionals across NHS Wales.



# Conclusion

In conclusion, the years 2020 and 2021 have been like no other in healthcare due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Adults, young people and children globally have been impacted by the strains of the pandemic, and safeguarding issues in particular have seen unprecedented demands.



Homes that functioned well prior to the pandemic have been shaken by isolation, unemployment, poverty, illness, bereavement and stress. Homes that already faced challenges such as domestic abuse, mental health issues, and child abuse exacerbated, with helplines such as Welsh Women's Aid and Childline facing surges in calls from children and adults in crisis.

The productivity of the Network has remained consistent despite a challenging year due to the pandemic, which this report demonstrates. There has been innovation and momentum for important activity to ensure that national safeguarding high standards have been maintained.

We commend the resilience of the Trusts and Boards in demonstrating agility in the face of unprecedented adversity. Although pragmatic about the challenges that are ahead of us, the Network feels that the horizon of safeguarding in Wales looks positive. The necessary changes that have already been started, and those that will be developed in the next twelve months and beyond look positive for the service users of Wales.

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Thank you for attention to the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network Annual Report 2020/2021; we wish you good health for the coming year.

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