

THE MID AND WEST WALES SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & ADULTS BOARDS



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

An Overview of the Objectives and Achievements of the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Children & Adults Boards



Heddlu Police
DYFED-POWYS



GIG Cymru NHS WALES | Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales



GIG Cymru NHS WALES | Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Hywel Dda University Health Board



GIG Cymru NHS WALES | Ymddiriedolaeth GIG Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust



GIG Cymru NHS WALES | Bwrdd Iechyd Addysgu Powys Powys Teaching Health Board

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Introduction

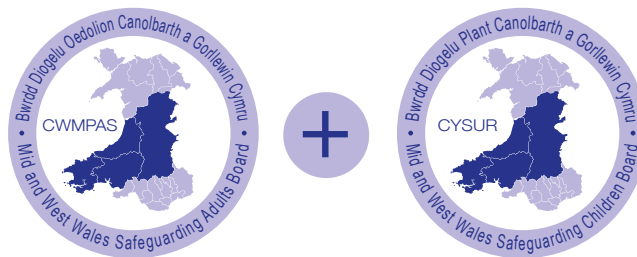
It gives us pleasure to jointly present the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards CYSUR and CWMPAS Annual Report.

This Annual Report outlines the progress we have made against the outcomes set by CYSUR and CWMPAS as part of our joint Annual Strategic Plan for the year 2023-24.

Significant investment and time has continued to be dedicated this year to supporting the development of the new Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) process, following the development of the draft statutory guidance published earlier this year.

We have continued work to develop a national training framework to support and accompany implementation of the new guidance, expected in the autumn of this year.

As we proceed to publication, we are delighted to report in-person training has been successfully delivered on behalf of the Welsh Government in all six of the Regional Safeguarding Boards in Wales.



Work will progress at pace in the coming year to complete this work and develop a suite of digital resources to accompany the training packages.

This year has seen the publication of several Practice Reviews. As a Board, we remain totally committed to embed any learning identified as part of these reviews into practice. This is complemented by a strong culture of learning that is at the heart of our work across the Mid and West Region.

The commitment of our multi-agency partners to work collaboratively to make a difference, and to improve the lives of children and adults at risk in Mid and West Wales, remains stronger than ever.

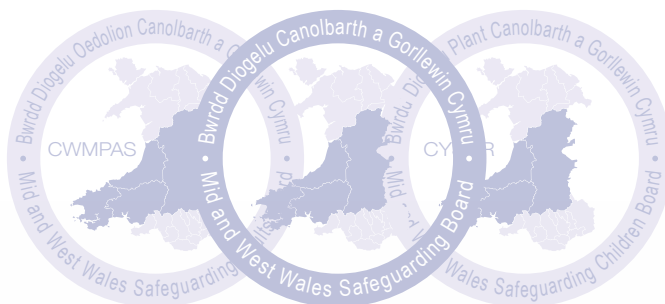
We would like to thank the members of the Boards and sub groups for their continued engagement, commitment and progress made in 2023-24, and we look forward to building upon this in the coming year.



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Michael Gray (CWMPAS Chair)

Director of Social Services, Housing and Public Protection
Pembrokeshire County Council



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Jake Morgan (CYSUR Chair)

Director of Community Services
Carmarthenshire County Council



Objectives of a Regional Safeguarding Board

The objectives of Regional Safeguarding Boards as outlined in the [Social Services and Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) are stated below.

The objectives of a **Safeguarding Children Board** are:

- to **protect** children within its area who are experiencing, or are at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm, and
- to **prevent** children within its area from becoming at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.

The objectives of a **Safeguarding Adults Board** are:

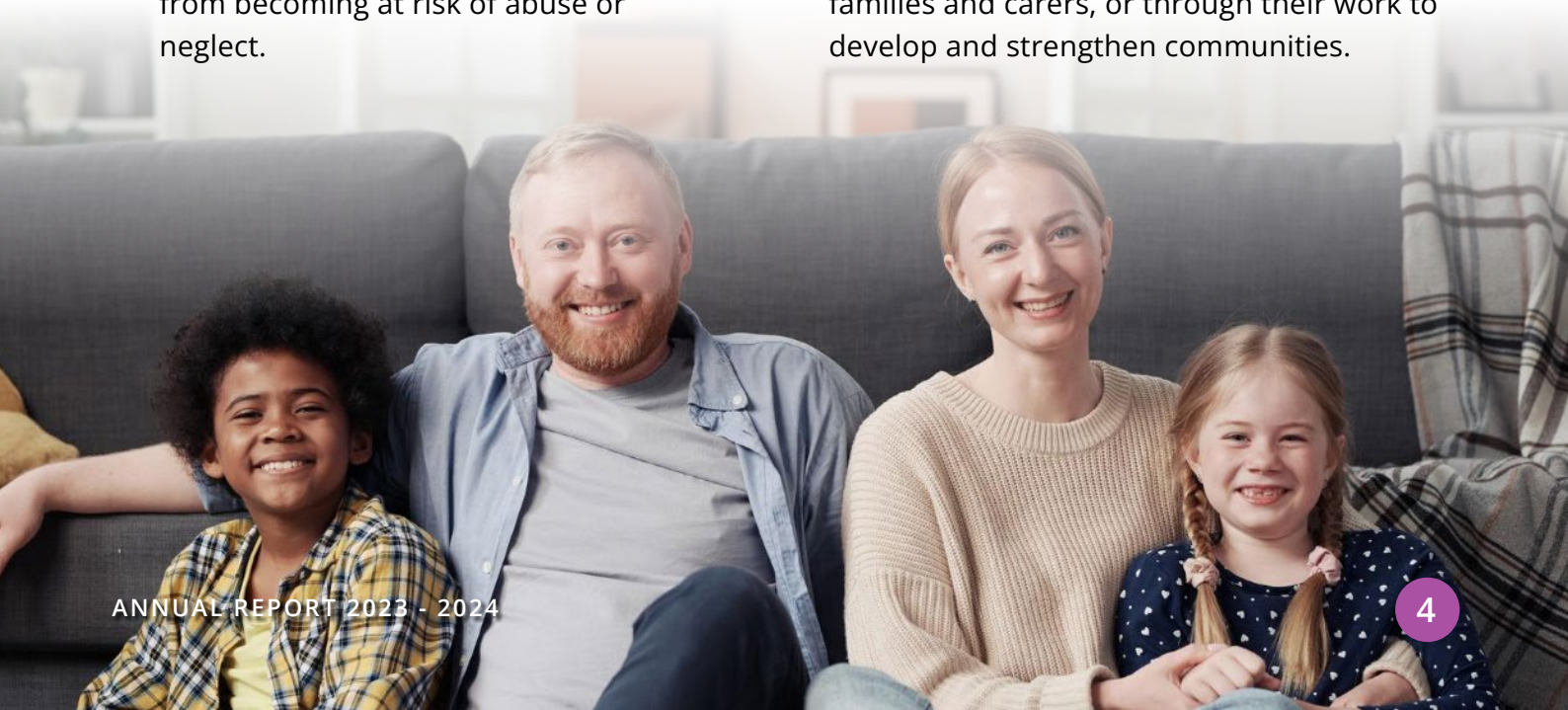
- to **protect** adults within its area who –
 1. have needs for care and support (whether or not a Local Authority is meeting any of those needs), and
 2. are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- to **prevent** those adults within its area from becoming at risk of abuse or neglect.

Guidance on the functions of Safeguarding Boards

The focus for Safeguarding Boards is twofold. It is both the **protection** of children and adults who are in need of care and support from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm, and the **prevention** of children and adults from becoming at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. These two objectives should inform the priorities of Safeguarding Boards when they are considering their work programmes and annual plans, and reviewing their performance.

Keeping children and adults who may have needs for care and support safe is everyone's responsibility. This means feeling safe and being safe with those with whom they live and who support and care for them, as well as being safe in environments outside the home where they may live, travel, play, learn, work or undertake sport, cultural, leisure and other activities. This responsibility lies primarily within the family or with carers and within the wider community.

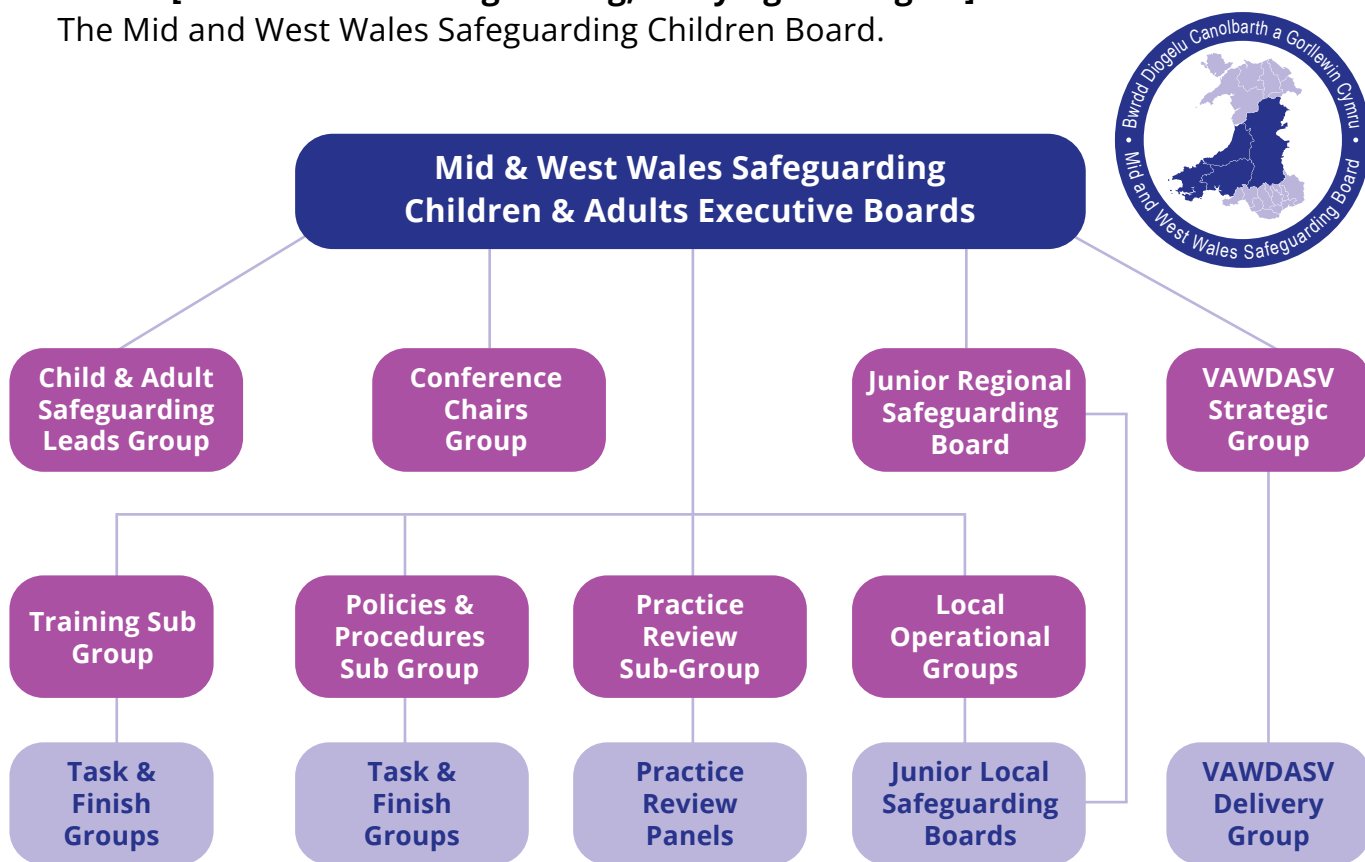
Many organisations have responsibility for safeguarding children and adults through the services they provide directly to them, through the help and support provided to families and carers, or through their work to develop and strengthen communities.



Board Structure

The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards serve the communities of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Powys, working collaboratively and in partnership within a multi-agency setting. The Boards’ aim is to raise awareness of safeguarding issues with members of the public and provide support, advice and guidance to professionals working in our local communities who deliver a range of voluntary and statutory services. Mid and West Wales is covered by two sister Safeguarding Boards:

- **CWMPAS [Collaborative Working & Maintaining Partnership in Adult Safeguarding]:** The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Adults Board, and;
- **CYSUR [Child & Youth Safeguarding, Unifying the Region]:** The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Children Board.



Executive Boards

The Executive Boards for CYSUR and CWMPAS work together as an overarching regional Board to monitor and improve regional safeguarding activity across Mid and West Wales. The Executive Boards consist of senior managers from all key statutory partners and agencies (see Section A).

The Executive Boards’ aim is to provide leadership and guidance to all its constituent agencies through the delivery of a series of strategic priorities for safeguarding activity and practice. The two Executive Boards support, guide and take advice from the regional sub groups.

Local Operational Groups

Each of the four Local Authorities within Mid and West Wales host Local Operational Groups (LOGs). The purpose, membership and structure of these LOGs mirror that of the Executive Boards. However, the primary objective of LOGs is to monitor and analyse safeguarding practice locally, rather than regionally. Membership consists of the Heads of Children’s and Adults’ Services, who chair the groups, and senior and middle managers from local statutory agencies, including Health, Police and Probation.

LOGs seek to improve practice locally by discussing local safeguarding activity in an open and transparent environment, sharing and analysing performance data and completing practice audits to inform practice improvements and identify risk. LOGs seek to share and acknowledge examples of good safeguarding practice; in addition, they will professionally challenge and hold agencies to account when safeguarding practice falls below expected standards.

Through-Age Practice Review Sub-Group

The Through-Age Practice Review Sub-Group considers referrals from agencies where a child or adult at risk has either died or suffered significant impairment of health and development as a result of abuse and/or neglect.

The regional Practice Review Sub-Group considers information against defined criteria within [‘Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 3 – Adult Practice Reviews’](#) and [‘Volume 2 – Child Practice Reviews’](#) and makes a recommendation to the relevant Executive Board Chair as to whether there are identified learning outcomes, and whether an Adult Practice Review (APR) or Child Practice Review (CPR) should be undertaken to learn lessons. Practice Reviews are undertaken by a multi-agency group of professionals who collectively analyse information and identify any practice themes and lessons to learn. The report is then published as a Child/Adult Practice Review on the Boards’ website.



Multi-agency learning is undertaken via a Multi-Agency Professional Forum (MAPF) from identified cases that have not met the threshold for a full concise or extended Child or Adult Practice Review. Responsibility for managing and overseeing MAPFs, as well as receiving referrals for new MAPFs, sits with the Practice Review Sub-Group, although a link to regional LOGs remains in place.

Regional Policies & Procedures Sub-Group

The Policies & Procedures Sub-Group operates collaboratively and in conjunction with the Executive Boards. The Group seeks to provide guidance to professionals via the development of regional safeguarding policy and procedure. The Boards now have a significant number of multi-agency through-age policies to support practitioners in their practice, which are published on the Boards’ [website](#) once ratified.

Regional Training Sub-Group

The Training Sub-Group operates collaboratively and in conjunction with the Executive Boards. It seeks to support and guide the delivery of safeguarding training and learning across the four Local Authority areas and partner agency organisations. The Training Sub-Group works closely with partners' training departments to promote the quality and consistency of safeguarding training and delivery. The group can commission specialist, bespoke safeguarding training across the region and works closely with other sub groups, such as the Practice Review Sub-Group, to ensure any learning outcomes identified in Child/Adult Practice Reviews are disseminated to staff, and any identified specialist training is commissioned.

Other bespoke regional forums and groups support and are closely aligned to the Boards' annual strategic plan and priorities. These include regional multi-agency Adult and Children's Safeguarding Leads Groups, and a regional group for Child Protection Conference Chairs.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategic and Delivery Groups

VAWDASV incorporates all forms of violence against women, honour based violence, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation, and domestic abuse.

The VAWDASV Strategic Group is a multi-agency collaboration that is driving forward the requirements of the [VAWDASV Act](#), including the implementation of the new Mid and West Wales Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2023-27 (see section B).

The VAWDASV Delivery Group supports the Strategic Group on the progression and implementation of regional priorities, as well as maintaining key links with specialist providers.

CADW: Junior Regional Safeguarding Board

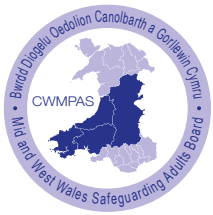
The CYSUR Board continues to commission Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Independent Advocacy Service to facilitate its regional Junior Safeguarding Board. The group continues to advise the Executive Boards on safeguarding matters and issues from a young persons' perspective via meetings, workshops and consultation events.

The CADW (Children taking Action Differently in Wales) Group meet quarterly and are complemented by three local junior safeguarding groups and a youth partnership, closely aligned to their respective Local Operational Groups.



CADW, Junior Safeguarding Board members

(a) Membership



CWMPAS (Safeguarding Adults Executive Board)

Michael Gray (Chair)

Director of Social Services, Housing and Public Protection, Pembrokeshire County Council

Vacant (Vice-Chair)

Vacant at time of publication

Jake Morgan

Director of Community Services, Carmarthenshire County Council

Audrey Somerton-Edwards

Director of Social Services, Ceredigion County Council

Nina Davies

Director of Social Services, Powys County Council

Sharon Daniel

Deputy Director of Nursing, Hywel Dda University Health Board

Claire Roche

Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Powys Teaching Health Board

Olwen Morgan

Assistant Director of Nursing, Assurance and Safeguarding Hywel Dda University Health Board

Ifan Charles

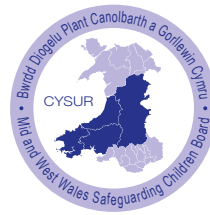
Assistant Chief Constable, Dyfed Powys Police

Avril Bracey

Head of Adult Social Care, Carmarthenshire County Council

Donna Pritchard

Deputy Director of Social Services and Corporate Lead Officer, Porth Gofal, Ceredigion County Council



CYSUR (Safeguarding Children Executive Board)

Jake Morgan (Chair)

Director of Community Services, Carmarthenshire County Council

Christine Harley (Vice-Chair)

Assistant Chief Executive, National Probation Service

Michael Gray

Director of Social Services, Housing and Public Protection, Pembrokeshire County Council

Audrey Somerton-Edwards

Director of Social Services, Ceredigion County Council

Nina Davies

Director of Social Services, Powys County Council

Sharon Daniel

Deputy Director of Nursing, Hywel Dda University Health Board

Claire Roche

Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Powys Teaching Health Board

Olwen Morgan

Assistant Director of Nursing, Assurance and Safeguarding Hywel Dda University Health Board

Ifan Charles

Assistant Chief Constable, Dyfed Powys Police

Wayne Bevan

Det Superintendent, Dyfed Powys Police

Jan Coles

Head of Children's Services, Carmarthenshire County Council

Mel Laidler

Head of Adults' Services,
Pembrokeshire County Council

Sharon Frewin

Head of Adults' Services,
Powys County Council

Christine Harley

Assistant Chief Executive,
National Probation Service

Mandy Nichols-Davies

Head of Safeguarding Adults & Children
(Named Nurse),
Hywel Dda University Health Board

Jayne Wheeler-Sexton

Assistant Director of Safeguarding
(Named Nurse),
Powys Teaching Health Board

Debbie Pachu

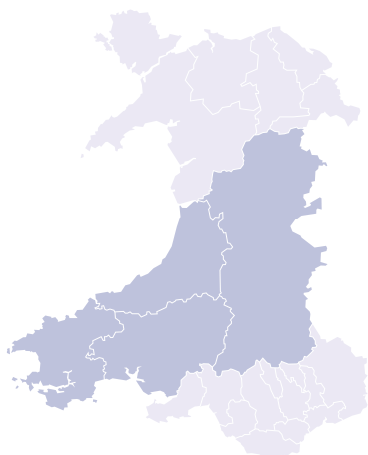
Designated Nurse, National Safeguarding
Team (NHS Wales), Public Health Wales

Vicky Maxwell

Head of Safeguarding,
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

Chris Harrison

Regional representative for Heads of
Commissioning



Donna Pritchard

Deputy Director of Social Services and
Corporate Lead Officer, Porth Gofal,
Ceredigion County Council

Darren Mutter

Head of Children's Services,
Pembrokeshire County Council

Sharon Powell

Head of Children's Services,
Powys County Council

Mandy Nichols-Davies

Head of Safeguarding Adults & Children
(Named Nurse),
Hywel Dda University Health Board

Jayne Wheeler-Sexton

Assistant Director of Safeguarding
(Named Nurse),
Powys Teaching Health Board

Debbie Pachu

Designated Nurse, National Safeguarding
Team (NHS Wales), Public Health Wales

Vicky Maxwell

Head of Safeguarding,
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

Gill Adams

Regional representative of Youth Justice
Managers

Regional Directors of Education

Rotating membership from Pembrokeshire,
Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Powys

Dr Ingrid Prosser

Named Doctor, Child Protection,
Powys Teaching Health Board

Dr Damitha Ratnasinghe

Named Doctor, Child Protection,
Hywel Dda University Health Board

Mid & West Wales Safeguarding Boards Business Unit

Julie Breckon

Strategic Regional Safeguarding Manager
for Children and Adults at Risk

Rebecca Reynolds

Practice Review Business Manager

Theresa Welch

Business Development Officer

Stuart Hicks

Business Development Officer

(b) Work, achievements and activity this year, to meet our outcomes and implement our strategic plan

Single Unified Safeguarding Review

The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to develop training materials and resources to support the development of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) Framework in Wales. This has been a key theme of the Boards’ work and priorities this year, working alongside Welsh Government colleagues, other Regional Safeguarding Boards and Community Safety Partnerships across Wales, to prepare to embed the new, unified model upon the publication of the new statutory guidance, and to ensure high-quality training is widely available to support this implementation.

Face to face training for panel members and Chairs and Reviewers has been successfully piloted nationally, with engagement from senior officers from statutory agencies from all Regional Safeguarding Boards (RSB) across Wales. This is now in the process of being delivered to all RSBs in Wales. The purpose is to equip those with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead or participate in a number of reviews which will now be encompassed within the SUSR model, including Child Practice Reviews (CPRs), Adult Practice Reviews (APRs), Mental Health Homicide Reviews (MHHRs), Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews (OWHRs).

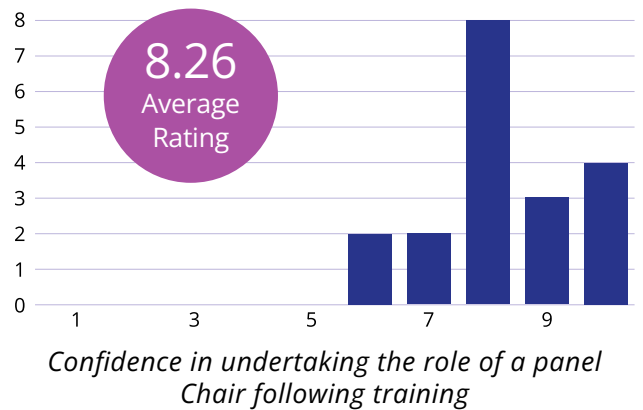
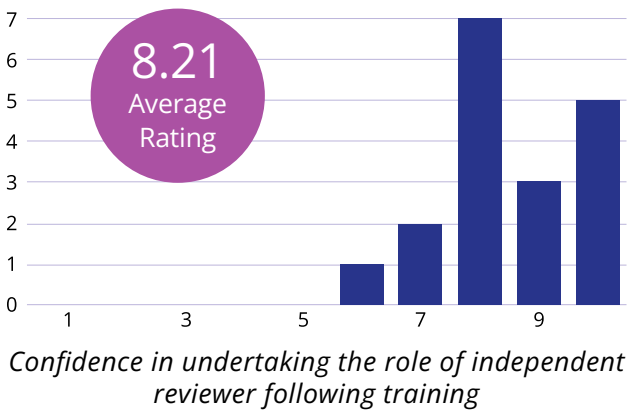


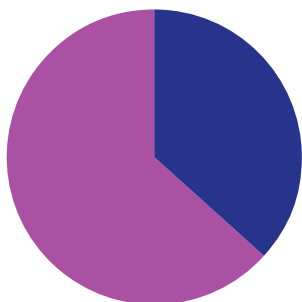
SUSR Training Attendee feedback:

This has been one of the most enjoyable and beneficial training I have attended.

The training provides the foundation for the process, key principles and practice values. Confidence will grow further when applying the learning to practice.

The CYSUR Board Chair, Strategic Regional Safeguarding Manager, Practice Review Business Manager and other sub group members have continued to contribute to national task and finish groups to progress this work. This sits alongside ongoing extensive investment committed locally to strengthen our regional work and to amalgamate our CPR, APR and MAPF sub-structures into one all-age sub group. Feedback on the delivery and quality of the pilot training from stakeholders via feedback questionnaires can be seen below.





This training covered a lot of knowledge / skills I already hold



This training did not explore the skills required to conduct an SUSR as much as I would have liked



This training was pitched at the right level for me



Images from Pilot SUSR Training in Cardiff, 2024



Images from regional SUSR Training in Llandoverly, 2024



Safeguarding Practitioner Award Ceremony

On 9th June 2023, the second Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards' Safeguarding Awards Ceremony took place at Dyfed Powys Police Headquarters, Carmarthen. This event followed on from the hugely successful ceremony that took place in 2022, when the Boards sought to identify opportunities to celebrate and share the excellent practice across agencies in the partnership.

The event recognised the contribution key workers from a variety of public sector agencies have played in keeping the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities safe. Practitioners recognised included health professionals and nurses, police officers, social workers, education professionals and care and nursing home workers and managers.



The ceremony was attended and addressed by the Chief Social Care Officer for Wales, Albert Heaney CBE, who said:

"As Chief Social Care Officer for Wales, I am delighted that we are all taking the time to recognise the vital work our safeguarding professionals are doing. Their dedication to providing support and protection for the most vulnerable individuals across Mid and West Wales is to be commended."

More information about the awards and the nominees can be found on our website at:

<https://cysur.wales/safeguarding-practice-awards-ceremony-2023/>

Award Categories

- ★ Exceptional Commitment and Dedication Demonstrated to the Safeguarding of Children
- ★ Exceptional Commitment and Dedication Demonstrated to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk
- ★ Achievement, Innovation and/or Improving Safeguarding Practice for Children
- ★ Achievement, Innovation and/or Improving Safeguarding Practice for Adults at Risk
- ★ Special Recognition Award
- ★ Participatory Practice/Co-production in the Safeguarding of Children, Families or Adults at Risk
- ★ Significant Wider Community Safeguarding – Practice That Has Had a Positive Impact on the
- ★ Community in the Safeguarding of Children or Adults
- ★ Exceptional Safeguarding Practice in a Residential Establishment for Children or Adults at Risk (this can include residential establishments for children, care homes for adults and nursing homes for adults)
- ★ Long Service Recognition/Lifetime Achievement Award for Contribution to Safeguarding
- ★ Practice and Development for Children or Adults at Risk
- ★ CADW Young People Group Award

Some collective photos from the MAWWSB Award Ceremony 2023



Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards' Safeguarding Awards Ceremony 2023, winners



Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards' Safeguarding Awards Ceremony 2023, winners



Noreen Jackman, Carmarthenshire County Council



Karen Panter, Pembrokeshire County Council

Long Service Recognition/ Lifetime Achievement Award for Contribution to Safeguarding Practice and Development for Children or Adults at Risk.



Cheryl Loughlin, Pembrokeshire County Council



Claire Williams, Powys County Council



Julie Cunningham, Pembrokeshire County Council



*Exceptional Commitment and Dedication Demonstrated to the Safeguarding of Children.
Rebecca Baker, Ceredigion County Council*



Achievement, Innovation and/or Improving Safeguarding Practice for Children. Powys Teaching Health Board Corporate Safeguarding Team



Exceptional Commitment and Dedication Demonstrated to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk. Lorna Milner, Carmarthenshire County Council



*Participatory Practice / Co-production in the Safeguarding of Children, Families or Adults at Risk.
Natalie Hancock, Regional VAWDASV Coordinator*



*Exceptional Commitment and Dedication Demonstrated to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk.
Mandy Nichols-Davies, Hywel Dda University Health Board*



*Significant Wider Community Safeguarding.
Gareth Tucker, Pembrokeshire County Council*

New Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy 2023-2027



Work has continued with rigour and pace across the region since the publication of [Building Happier, Safer, Stronger Lives, Mid and West Wales Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2023-2027](#) in 2023.

This regional strategy encompasses the experiences of key stakeholders alongside survivors' voices and individual experiences regarding the services they have received, and how these can be improved. It has been developed within the national context and the [Welsh Government's National Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2022-2026](#).

Key achievements and focus of work this year has included the creation of more accommodation for people with high and complex needs, via the development of dispersed accommodation options across the region. Work to address the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse and those who display violent and coercive and controlling behaviour has continued via the extension of the regional perpetrator intervention programme.

The current delivery plan, which is reflective of the experiences of those with lived experience of domestic abuse, has been enhanced further this year via the establishment of a regional survivor advisory panel. The panel is now well embedded and operational within existing regional structures, and its members regularly attend various regional and national meetings to share their experiences. Training has been undertaken with key members of the judiciary this year, informed by the lived experiences of the survivor panel and their reported poor experiences of the criminal justice process.

Activity across the region has been comprehensive and sustained, which includes communication and engagement work on post-separation abuse, and collaboration with the regional suicide and self-harm coordinator on suicide within a context of domestic abuse. Work undertaken with children and young people has focussed on the new curriculum and supporting education colleagues to develop age appropriate workshops for children and young people.



The new strategy continues to build upon existing successes and continues to strengthen preventative and support services for children and young people, survivors and perpetrators across the Mid and West Wales region.

Work to Implement the National Training Standards and Framework

Following the launch of the National Training Framework in November 2022, and the Standards the preceding year, work has taken place this year to work with partners to embed this framework and standards into the commissioning, development and delivery of safeguarding training at a local agency level and via the promotion of regional multi-agency training.

A separate task and finish group has been developed to oversee this work, and a mapping exercise of existing training and how this aligns with the new framework is underway. The outcome will inform future regional training and will lay the foundations for a comprehensive reporting mechanism to the Executive Board on the quality and delivery of multi-agency training.



Development Day

On 9th February 2024, the Executive Board came together to hold their Annual Development Day in Llandovery. This standing annual event provides an essential opportunity for colleagues to consider as a collaborative the outcomes and successes of the previous year's Annual Plan, and to use this reflection to look forward to the key aims to be included in the plan for the coming year.

This day provided an opportunity for partners to come together to reflect on the year's achievements and set new priorities for the year ahead, aligned with the refreshed overarching strategic priorities set the previous year. The day consisted of a series of structured exercises and also considered and took into consideration the findings of the Rapid review Of Child Protection Arrangements in Wales undertaken by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Estyn and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and the Thematic Review of Child Practice Reviews in Wales undertaken by the National Independent Safeguarding Board.

Partners narrowed work and priorities for the year ahead down to 4 key overarching areas:

- Quality assurance
- Multi-agency training
- Lived experience/voice of children, young people and adults at risk
- Prevention

To view the full annual plan for the coming year click [here](#)



Images from MAWWSB Development Day 2024



Facilitation of Practice Review and Multi-Agency Professional Forum (MAPF) Learning Events

Alongside the development of the new Single Unified Safeguarding Review, the Boards continue to oversee numerous ongoing Child and Adult Practice Reviews, as well as Multi-Agency Professional Forums. This year, four Practice Review Learning Events have been held (three Child Practice Reviews and one Hybrid Practice Review), and several MAPF learning events are scheduled to take place in the coming months. In addition to this, the Board has published three Practice Reviews in total this reporting year.

Learning Events have returned to in-person facilitation this year, post the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite virtual events having worked effectively when utilised, and having facilitated the continued provision of Learning Events for Practice Reviews and MAPFs undertaken during the pandemic, the ability to promote safe and open communication is felt strongly to be more greatly supported when practitioners are able to engage in discussions and reflection in person.

A variety of models have been used for Learning Events undertaken during the year, each with a broad objective of exploring good practice and identifying learning and improvements to systems and practice.

A positive, well-established culture of learning in a safe, non-blame space is at the heart of regional review processes, and is the foundation of all Learning Events held in Mid and West Wales. As a result, professionals have contributed richly to discussions, and provided excellent feedback in respect of all events.

“ Learning Event Attendee feedback:

The reviewer delivered skilfully a subject that was incredibly emotive – it was respectful to all.

.....

Excellent. Very well facilitated. Very sensitively handled and guided. Thoughtfully challenging.

.....

Open conversations and honesty across services ”

Completion and Publication of Regional Strategies and Policies

A number of key projects were completed in 2023-24, culminating in the update, development and publication of numerous key regional policies and pathways. New policies, materials and guidance developed and published this year include:

- [Multi-Agency Practice Guidance for Dealing with Cases of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence to Safeguard Adults with Care and Support Needs](#)
- [Safeguarding Allegations Concerns about Practitioners and Those in Positions of Trust](#)
- [Materials to support Child Protection Conferences across the region](#)

All of these projects have been completed within the Boards’ various groups and sub groups. Extensive support has been provided by all partner agencies to the development of these policies. All resources provide guidance to staff, and seek to support and improve professional safeguarding practice, closely aligned to the Boards’ strategic priorities.

Information to Support 5 Key Elements of Safeguarding Effectiveness



Bwrdd Diogelu Annibynnol
Cenedlaethol Cymru

National Independent
Safeguarding Board Wales

The following supplementary specific information is provided to support the 5 domains of effective safeguarding, as requested by the National Independent Safeguarding Board this year:

NISB - 5 Key Elements to Safeguarding Effectiveness



The Safeguarding Process

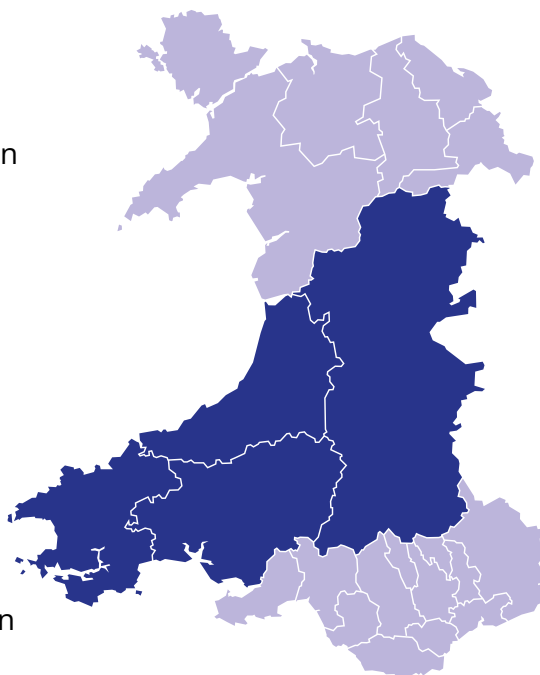
(How is the Board assured that arrangements are effective in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns? What are the outcomes of regional processes and interventions?)

The Boards' structures support a clear and accountable governance process for agencies to report on a regular basis their safeguarding activity and performance to the Regional Safeguarding Executive Board. This is supported by a well-established regional performance and quality assurance framework that provides quarterly performance data which is interrogated and analysed, supported by a regional audit programme. The Boards' Local Operational Groups are key local multi-agency fora that meet regularly to discuss local multi-agency safeguarding operational practice and strategic issues. The four Local Authority areas within the Mid and West Wales region host the Local Operational Groups, which are chaired by a Head of Children's or Adults' Services.

Each Local Operational Group is required to provide a quarterly summary report to the Regional Executive Safeguarding Board on local safeguarding activity and performance, as well as wider safeguarding activity and information such as training, safeguarding in schools and education, Practice Reviews and MAPFs including the monitoring of action plans, and commissioning information in relation to care nursing homes. The report also has a section dedicated to the outcome of any local inspections.

An annual programme of reports is provided to the Board by specific agencies on a rotational basis. For example, Dyfed-Powys Police provide a summary of the outcome of their annual inspection undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and any information relevant to safeguarding. Hywel Dda University Health Board and Powys Teaching Health Board provide an annual report on the outcome of their yearly self-assessment in respect of the Safeguarding Maturity Matrix. This is a tool for Health Boards that provides assurance, shares practice and drives improvements towards a consistent approach to safeguarding practice within health across Wales.

Assurance on safeguarding practice in schools is provided via the submission of an annual Section 175 report to the Regional Executive Board. This is a comprehensive assessment of all safeguarding systems and processes within Education across the region, and includes an assessment of partnerships and working relationships, training and the management of allegations against staff. Commissioning reports are provided to the Boards on a regular basis. This area of work has seen extensive activity this year and workstreams have focused on strengthening pre-placement agreements for care and nursing homes in respect of their safeguarding obligations, and in particular, their duty to support and engage in any Practice Reviews and MAPFs undertaken. Further work has been undertaken on the alignment of Escalating Concerns Protocols across the region to support a more consistent regional approach.

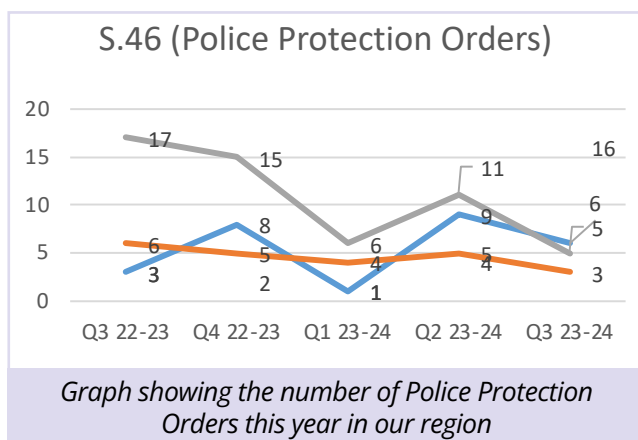


Multi-Agency Safeguarding Activity and Data

(How does the Board assure itself that existing protocols between agencies are effective, when individuals are at risk of harm? What data is collected in respect of this, how is this shared and what evidence has emerged in the period?)

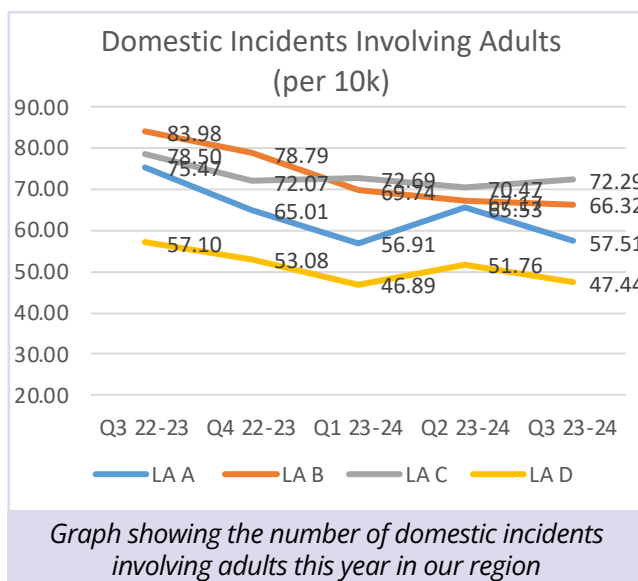
Supporting effective challenge and professional accountability in the delivery of safeguarding practice

The Boards' Quality Assurance and Reporting Framework referenced above includes a comprehensive dataset. A new framework has been implemented this year following a comprehensive review and update in the preceding year.



This aids the Boards' understanding of professional safeguarding practice within a multi-agency context across the region, and data now aligns with the new updated Welsh Government performance indicators. As well as information provided by the Local Authority, the Police and Health Board provide data on key measures related to their safeguarding activity and practice.

Examples of data submitted across agencies includes information in relation to children at risk, section 47 investigations, children on the child protection register, looked after children (LAC), exploitation and modern day slavery and hospital admissions as a result of self-harm. For adults at risk, information is provided in respect of, for example, 126 enquiries and the 7 day enquiry, domestic abuse and provider performance. The data and information reported covers all key areas of safeguarding activity and practice, and are measured using formulae which take into account the population of each area to facilitate a truer reflection of local and regional trends.



A report with analysis is produced by the Regional Safeguarding Manager and Business Unit staff, highlighting any key trends. This is discussed at length at the Executive Board, and local data is explored at Local Operational Groups. New data linked to practice areas of common interest in the region include professional concerns and those in a position of trust. Escalating Concerns has also been introduced in the preceding year. This continues to support the Regional Executive Board's robust helicopter view of high-level multi-agency safeguarding practice across the region, via the scrutiny of quarterly overview reports containing analysis of key regional and local trends. This supports the Boards in their commitment to effective challenge and holding agencies to account when safeguarding practice and service delivery falls below expected standards.

Thematic Hotspots

(What key Thematic Sources of Harm which require a safeguarding response of harm locally are evidenced in the Board data? What steps have been taken to respond to this thematic evidence?)

The processes outlined in the two sections above support seamless identification of key thematic trends across the multi-agency partnership and region. Over the years, since the existence of the current Mid and West Wales All Age Safeguarding Boards and partnership, a number of thematic trends and hotspots have been identified through these processes that have resulted in more in-depth pieces of work being undertaken in the form of deep-dive exercises, independent reviews of practice and research. Examples of themes explored through this work include: suicide, elective home education, thresholds, domestic homicides and the workforce. The outcome of these pieces of work have influenced the Boards' strategic priorities, reflected in its published annual plans and accompanying workstreams.

The most recent data submitted has identified trends and practice in respect of numbers of children on the register and looked after children, which differ within the region, however assurance is provided that overall trends in the region sit well below the national average figure. Practice in relation to adults at risk is broadly similar in respect of responses to Section 126 enquiries and the 7 day timescale in three out of the four Local Authorities, with known reporting and recording differences in Pembrokeshire which accounts for the regional disparity in data. Multi-agency workstreams are ongoing to further interrogate practice locally within the context of adult safeguarding.

An example of an exception trend identified via our regional reporting mechanisms this year is a notable peak in the number of section 46 Police powers being executed in Pembrokeshire. This has resulted in a deep-dive exercise being undertaken jointly by the Local Authority and Police, with a detailed analysis of practice having informed the identification of recommendations. As a result, more recent figures and data reflect a significant decrease in this area, and align more closely with the ethos and spirit of the legislation (Children Act 1989).

The introduction of a regional multi-agency risk register this year into QA reporting mechanisms has enhanced and supported existing processes, to highlight patterns and trends across the region that have a multi-agency impact on the delivery of safeguarding services.

Service User Feedback

(What are the RSB's objectives regarding gathering service user feedback in relation to directing safeguarding activity? What do the metrics that capture this feedback tell the Board? How does the Board plan to respond to this evidence and over what time?)

Although there is no one overarching holistic framework or process for gathering consistent service user feedback, a number of arrangements are in place at a local agency level that influence safeguarding work, response and activity across the region. This is in addition to our Junior Safeguarding Boards and their work, which is fully referenced in section (h) and the work of the Survivors Panel, linked to our regional domestic abuse work, referenced in section (b).

The work of the Junior Board in developing a [safeguarding animation and training resource](#), which is fully referenced in last year's annual report, has directly influenced safeguarding training across the region within the context of how best to communicate with children in difficult and challenging circumstances. The work of the Survivors Panel in the region has directly influenced training delivered to the Judiciary as a result of reported poor experiences and understanding within this arena of the lived experience of victims. Their voice and experiences are actively embedded into the Boards' wider structures and are actively influencing the shaping of services across the region for survivors of domestic abuse. A number of other initiatives are in place to ensure the voice and lived experience of the person shapes safeguarding practice and responses. Ceredigion Safeguarding Adults Team have developed a Quality Assurance questionnaire which concentrates on what has changed for people as the result of safeguarding intervention. Further innovative work has been developed this year, via the launch of a new Quality Assurance framework aligned to a Through Age Well-Being model. This has developed questionnaires to capture qualitative feedback from service users and their families, as well as for professionals from partner agencies.



Going forward, the feedback will be gathered from service users/families through face to face meetings. This will be supported by quarterly reports. Quarterly practitioners' forums will also be run, to provide reflection and learning from the themes that emerge from the quality assurance process. It is intended the messages and feedback will shape services and practice going forward. Within our Regional Commissioning Structures, the Most Significant Change Model (developed with Nick Andrews, Swansea University) is being reenergised in Pembrokeshire. This puts a spotlight on what is the most important thing from the person with lived experience's perspective and how we can learn and change services for the better. The work has involved user/carer engagement to shape services within the region, an example of which includes the recommissioning of VAWDASV services in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, where user voice was captured to shape the recommissioning of service. Agreement has been reached this year to invite an adult with lived experience of safeguarding services onto the Regional Executive Safeguarding Board, to enhance the perspective and understanding of the service user into the Board's discussion and work. Recruitment will take place in the coming year.

Workforce Information

- *(What is known about the profile of the safeguarding workforce?)*
- *How is recruitment and retention affecting the delivery of safeguarding duties?*
- *To what extent is multi-agency training provided to and taken up by the safeguarding workforce?*
- *What evidence is available to assure the Board that agencies understand and respond to the wellbeing and support of the safeguarding workforce?)*

Commissioned Review and Analysis of Children and Adults Safeguarding Workforce Risk Factors

The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board has a full and clear understanding of the regional social care workforce. As outlined in last year's report, independent consultants were commissioned by the Boards to undertake a full review and profile of its workforce and to review and identify workforce risk factors in children's and adults' social care teams across the region. The work was jointly commissioned by the Regional Safeguarding Boards and the West Wales Regional Partnership Board as a collaborative endeavour. This followed previous work carried out in 2018 by the Regional Safeguarding Boards.

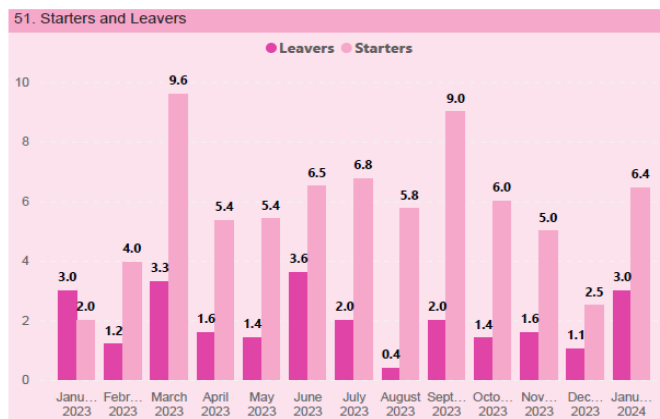
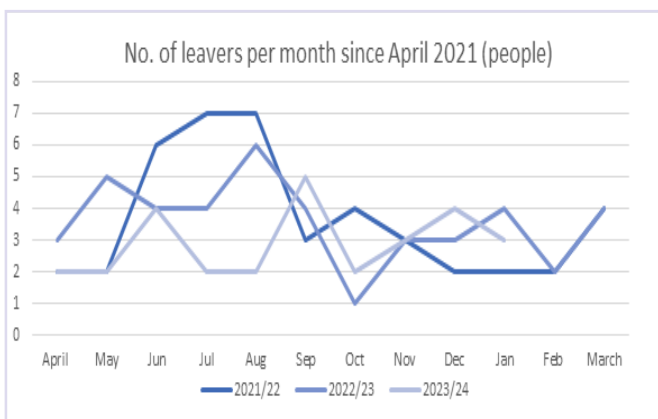
In the main, key messages and findings from the review at the time mirrored the acknowledged national picture in relation to the significant challenges all social care and wider public sector services are experiencing in the recruitment and retention of staff into key positions. This was identified as one of the biggest risk factors to the safe delivery of services to the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities. Although the picture remains variable across our region, themes identified include high vacancy levels and difficulties recruiting to key safeguarding positions. Vacancies generally are noted to be higher in Mid and West Wales than in 2018. Challenges were identified in securing a sufficient supply of social workers at all stages of their careers, especially in roles which involve specialist skills, alongside increasing demand for services and rising workload levels. Although key statutory functions and services have been delivered and maintained on the whole, this has required a high level of tenacity and investment to counteract high staff turnovers and increasing reliance on agency workers.

A number of recommendations were made and have been progressed where appropriate in the past year. Particular investment and focus has been dedicated to a "Grow Your Own" approach across three of the four Local Authority areas within the region. This has involved investment in the creation of paid traineeships for qualified social work positions, to mitigate against the trends and risks identified within recruitment and retention of staff.

In the last year, a more positive picture has emerged in parts of the region and a real and sustained change to workforce stability has been seen within Powys. Strategies including improvements to advertising processes and job descriptions, alongside focussed recruitment events, have supported a more stable workforce in comparison to previous years. Although children's services in particular have required significant investment in agency social work and expenditure, the numbers of agency workers are reducing, primarily due to the success of the Grow Your Own project.

The data available illustrates that workforce trends are starting to change, and the workforce is stabilising to some extent. Data available on the leaver rates across the years highlight that the rate of employees leaving children services has reduced significantly in the 2023/24 financial year. Within the previous 12 months, monthly figures also show that the starter rate is now significantly surpassing the leaver rate on a month-by-month basis.

Financial year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
No. leavers (people)	44	43	29



Work with Welsh Government and Social Care Wales to develop a whole-Wales approach to workforce challenges continues alongside bespoke, targeted regional actions.

In addition, the Board has oversight of the challenges within the Care, Nursing Home and Domiciliary Care sector. Assurance is provided via regional robust reporting mechanisms to the Board. Reports this year reflected on market instability following a number of care homes closures and domiciliary care pressures. Further residential care home closures in the region continue to present significant challenges to the delivery of services to adults. However, the market in recent months appears to be more stable, due to the gradual reduction in the number of people waiting for packages of care.

Staffing challenges have been identified within the Health Visiting service in one of the two Health Boards in the region, and action taken to mitigate risk as part of Board reporting mechanisms. High staffing vacancies are partly as a result of workforce demographics and age profiles, with a high proportion of health visitors being over the age of 51, as well as the inability to recruit in some rural areas. Long-term sickness and maternity leave have compounded existing pressures. Assurance has been provided to the Board via reports that a plan is in place to address the challenges, including actions within the context of workforce planning, risk assessment processes to identify those most in need, and the use of bank staff and weekend clinic services.

The Regional Training Sub Group has oversight of all safeguarding training delivered by statutory agencies, most of which is delivered on a single agency basis. The Regional Board commissions and facilitates bespoke multi-agency training on pertinent themes and practice, often linked directly to the outcomes of Child and Adult Practice Reviews. Every year, National Safeguarding Week comprises of a comprehensive programme of multi-agency training, including an in-person regional conference.

More information on this year’s programme can be found under section (j). This year, significant investment and time has been dedicated to the rollout of professional curiosity training, and a high-quality suite of training and resources has been developed. It includes three key elements:

- A Through-Age Multi-Agency Training Package, which includes options for both a full-day and half-day training session.
- A Resource Pack which can be accessed virtually at any time by practitioners across the region, providing an introduction to professional curiosity, including a detailed overview of how to exercise professional curiosity and judgement, supported by case studies.
- A Training Video in which the Lead LAC (Looked After Children) Nurse from Hywel Dda University Health Board explains what it means to be professionally curious, and the questions which practitioners can ask themselves and the families they work with to exercise professional curiosity in practice.

This suite of training provides numerous avenues through which professionals can access information on this topic, which continues to feature in ongoing and completed Child and Adult Practice Reviews regionally and nationally. Training was initially rolled out on a multi-agency basis facilitated by the Regional Training Sub Group. In the last year, agencies have continued to roll this out locally, and a significant number of staff across all partner agencies have now undertaken the training, with excellent feedback received. Work is underway to embed the National Safeguarding Training Standards and Framework across the region. It is hoped this will provide an opportunity to provide more multi-agency training and regional collaboration, particularly for the higher tier groups of C and above. The Board does not have a specific overarching strategy in place for staff well-being, however pockets of excellent practice do exist within the region on an individual agency basis. Powys Local Authority has invested heavily in staff well-being initiatives in recent years, as part of their broader workforce strategy.

The support and systems in place featured as one of the workshops at the Boards’ conference this year during National Safeguarding Week. As part of this, Schwartz rounds are promoted and open to all staff in children’s services. The aim of the round is to provide a safe, confidential structured forum, where staff can come together to discuss the emotional and social impact of working in children’s services. The in-house Psychologist is available as part of this process to support staff working in challenging and difficult cases, and this resource has been used to provide additional support to staff in regional practice review learning events, with support available to staff throughout the day, as well as the option of a debriefing and grounding at the conclusion of the event. The staff who run this project were nominated for a Social Care accolade award this year and were highly commended as runners up.

“ Powys Children Services, Schwartz Rounds attendee

Listening to the storyteller gave me a chance to reflect on my own past experiences, some of which I had locked away for years. ”



Social Care Awards accolades award



Schwartz Round Flyer



(c) How we have collaborated with other bodies engaged in activities relating to the Boards' objectives

Welsh Government

The Boards have continued to work closely with Welsh Government this year. The Strategic Regional Safeguarding Manager and staff in the Board Business Unit attend national briefing meetings and bespoke events to support the development of national safeguarding work and policy. The Board Chairs continue to attend and engage in regular meetings with senior Welsh Government officials and the National Independent Safeguarding Board



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Much of the Boards' focus this year has been on supporting the development of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review as fully outlined in section (b).

Children's Commissioner for Wales

The Boards have continued to work with the Children's Commissioner's Office. The Chair of CYSUR met regularly with the Children's Commissioner for Wales throughout the year on matters of regional and national importance. This has included discussions associated with ongoing national workstreams and areas of mutual interest, together with themes and learning arising from regional Child Practice Reviews.

The Boards look forward to continuing to build upon the strong lines of communication established with the Children's Commissioner's Office in the coming year, and to the outcomes that this can yield to support the safeguarding of children in our communities.

Police and Crime Commissioner

The Boards' existing positive relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner has been sustained this year via continued attendance and contribution to Regional Safeguarding Executive Board meetings. Through this avenue, the Boards have received frequent, in-depth updates in



respect of the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty since its commencement on 31st January 2023. The findings of the Strategic Needs Assessment undertaken for the purposes of informing a regional Delivery Plan have been shared with the Executive Boards, which highlighted domestic abuse and sexual violence as the most prevalent serious violent crimes, as well as identifying a high proportion of victims and perpetrators under the age of 25. This assessment enables the identification of key priorities for agencies across the partnership, resulting in an informed multi-agency plan to be delivered in the coming year.

Other Regional Safeguarding Boards across Wales

Regional Safeguarding Board Managers across Wales continue to meet regularly to share good practice, discuss areas of development and identify emerging national safeguarding trends.

The ongoing implementation of the SUSR Learning and Development Framework by Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards on behalf of the Welsh Government is overseen by a Training Steering Group which features representatives from all Regional Safeguarding Boards in Wales, thus allowing a collaborative approach to training development and delivery.

The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards also meet frequently with other Boards across Wales to plan National Safeguarding Week, discussing ideas and sharing regional plans to allow good practice to be shared.

Regional West Wales Partnership Board

Strong links and communication established with the West Wales Partnership Board have been consolidated this year, with whom Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards collaborate on specific areas of mutual interest and importance.



We have collaborated this year of the promotion and facilitation of Safer Recruitment, Safer Employment Roadshows across the region to promote workforce development and national training standards.



Safer Recruitment Event, 2024

Social Care Wales

Following the successful launch last year during National Safeguarding Week of the Safeguarding Framework to support the delivery of multi-agency safeguarding training across Wales, work has continued this year to implement the framework via the Regional Training Sub Group.



The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards have continued to be represented on the national development group leading on the implementation of this work, and remain actively engaged in this project.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

The Boards continue to respond to and provide information when requested by CIW. A focus of work this year has been the regional response to the Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements published in September 2023. In addition to this specific workstream undertaken during the year, the Boards have supported and provided information in respect of ongoing inspections where appropriate, and CIW are routinely offered a designated slot at all regional Executive Board meetings.



Community Safety Partnerships

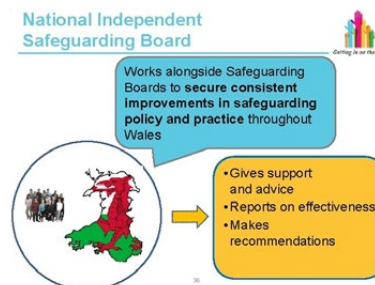
The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards continue to maintain strong links with Community Safety Partnerships in the region. As publication of the SUSR Statutory Guidance nears, constructive discussions have continued in relation to future collaboration to support the regional implementation of the new model once launched.



The Boards also receive frequent updates in relation to ongoing and published Domestic Homicide Reviews, with processes embedded to facilitate the sharing of relevant learning with the Boards.

National Independent Safeguarding Board

The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards continue to enjoy a constructive relationship with the National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB), and members regularly attend and contribute to Regional Executive Board meetings. Discussions and dialogue with Welsh Government and the NISB continue to take place regularly via Board Manager Meetings, as well as supplementary meetings with Board Chairs.



The outcome of the national review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements currently being led by the NISB remains an area of collaboration and discussion between the Boards and NISB colleagues. In addition, the finding of the thematic analysis of Child Practice Reviews in Wales was a focus of the Boards' Development Day this year.

Public Health Wales

The Strategic Regional Safeguarding Manager and other Board members directly contributed to the the review and update of the national PRUDiC guidance published in April 2023. Work has continued to take place to advocate for better information and messaging for parents in relation to safe sleep, due to the number of Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood (PRUDiC)-related deaths in the region and across Wales. A national rapid review is to take place in the coming year in relation to this, led by Public Health Wales.



(d) Requests made to qualifying persons under sec 137(1) and whether they were complied with

For the purpose of enabling or assisting the Boards to perform its functions, Section 137 of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 allows Safeguarding Boards to ask a qualifying person or body to supply specific information.

The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards made no such specific requests this year.



(e) To what extent have agencies contributed to the Boards' effectiveness

Hywel Dda University Health Board



Hywel Dda University Health Board continues to be a consistent member of the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Boards of CYSUR and CWMPAS, providing representation at Executive Board level, as well as on multiple Board sub groups and each county's Local Operational Group. The Assistant Director of Nursing Assurance and Safeguarding Corporate Nursing continues to hold the role of Vice Chair of the CYSUR Executive Board.

Hywel Dda have continued to contribute richly to all aspects of Board work. The Named Nurse and Lead Safeguarding Children Practitioner is a member of the Heads of Children's Services meetings, and has proactively contributed to the review of the regional threshold guidance. Hywel Dda have continued to actively participate in regional Child and Adult Practice Reviews, particularly in the role of panel chair to several processes. The University Health Board are active members of the three Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings, and operational staff attend Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) strategy meetings. Hywel Dda continue to lead the pilot of a Once for NHS Wales Safeguarding Management System on behalf of NHS Wales, supporting an improved quality of data collection systems and analysis across Wales. In preparation for the change in practice regarding the submission of safeguarding reports via the Once for Wales System, both adults' and children's safeguarding practitioners were involved in delivering training for the new system on a daily basis. The new process went live at the beginning of November 2023.

The University Health Board's Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service were nominated for the Consultant Connect Awards 2023 within the Mental Health Category, and was selected as the winner. Implemented in November 2022, the Perinatal Mental Health line connects healthcare visitors, community midwives and GPs with the Perinatal Mental Health Team. The Perinatal Mental Health Consultant Connect project has led to improved knowledge of available and appropriate pathways, shifting to a patient-centric approach to care. The Perinatal Mental Health Team reviews cases before referral, creating more bespoke patient management plans.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

Hywel Dda University Health Board
Mental Health services have established the Bro Myrddin Wellbeing HWB Alternative to Admission, the first 24/7 hub in Wales, which provides accessible and responsive advice and support if young people express suicidal or self-harm thoughts, or are highly distressed without a plan to manage this in a therapeutic environment.

This year, Hywel Dda have implemented a Foster Carers Handbook, which acts as a comprehensive guide for foster carers on a number of aspects of children and young people's health, such as immunisation, GP registration, healthy eating and pathways for training and support.

Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB)



Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) continue to contribute fully to the CYSUR and CWMPAS Boards. PTHB provide representation at the Executive Boards and at all Board sub groups, including the Safeguarding Leads Group, Training and Development and Policy and Procedure Sub Groups.

Health Board staff work in close partnership with their multi-agency partners in all areas of the safeguarding agenda including VAWDASV, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), MACE, Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood (PRUDIC), Corporate Parenting, Practice Reviews, DHRs and multi-agency audits. PTHB fulfils its statutory responsibility as a member of the Powys Youth Justice Board as well as continuing to second a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) nurse into the Youth Justice Service.

PTHB continues to actively engage in numerous Board workstreams, including the regional Rapid Response to Incidents of Suspected Suicide pilot and the task and finish group focussed on the Section 5 process. They have also worked closely with Powys County Council as part of task and finish groups centred on harmful sexualised behaviour, as well as on the development of a tool to support in identifying and responding to neglectful home conditions.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

*A survivor of VAWDASV attended **Powys Teaching Health Board's** Strategic Safeguarding Group meeting, to share her voice and experience and allow this to inform discussions and decision-making within the group. This individual also attended an Ask and Act training session.*

Following attendance at a Restorative Supervision Training Course, PTHB's Safeguarding Lead Practitioners have been reviewing their processes in relation to safeguarding supervision, such as developing scenarios from CPRs, APRs and DHRs for use in group supervision. This enables the process of learning from sharing cases and situations to be demonstrated, whilst also sharing lessons learnt from reviews.

The inception of a bespoke CAMHS LAC Practitioner Role has been a further safeguarding achievement within Powys this year, as has the rollout of the routine enquiry into minor injury units and sexual health.

Public Health Wales (National Safeguarding Team)

Public Health Wales' National Safeguarding Team works closely with Welsh Government, Health Boards and NHS Trusts to improve safeguarding across NHS Wales.



They have this year worked closely with individual agencies on specific pieces of work related to key identified themes, such as suicide prevention and safer sleep, supporting the multi-agency approach to responding to these issues.

Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST)

The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) continue to be represented at the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Executive Board.



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Ymddiriedolaeth GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwllans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
NHS Trust

The Head of Safeguarding and Senior Safeguarding Specialists take responsibility for Executive Board level engagement, and the relevant Safeguarding Specialists aligned to the Board region engage with the work of the sub groups and Local Operational Groups as needed.

This reporting year has seen the continued expansion of WAST's digitalised safeguarding reporting process (DocWorks) to colleagues across the organisation. A digitalised referral pathway to Live Fear Free is also in place for concerns relating to VAWDASV, and to Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue Service for fire safety concerns such as hoarding. The All Wales PREVENT Partners referral form has also been digitalised, which is used to share information with partners regarding radicalisation concerns. These developments all serve to support the collaborative working relationships between key agencies across the Safeguarding Board, by facilitating robust mechanisms for the sharing of concerns with the agencies best placed to support the child or adult at risk.

The WAST Safeguarding Conference 2023 theme was 'Trauma Informed Workforce', which included presentations on safeguarding all age groups and impactful survivor stories. Attended by internal and external colleagues, many provided positive feedback stating the day was interesting, engaging, and informative. On Child Sexual Exploitation Day in March 2023, WAST launched new virtual CPD training. Colleague feedback states it raised their awareness, is a useful refresher on CSE indicators and reinforced the importance of professional curiosity.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

*The **Welsh Ambulance Service Trust** have developed a new bespoke referral pathway to Dementia Connect (part of Alzheimer's Society) for any dementia related concern (confusion, memory loss or issues with communication or daily routine). Carers who may need additional support can also be referred.*



Dyfed-Powys Police

Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) have maintained their commitment to the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Boards this year across all sub groups and workstreams.



The DPP Superintendent Board representative has until recently held the position of Vice Chair of the CWMPAS Board for a number of years, and DPP officers are represented at all Board levels, including the Executive Boards, Local Operational Groups and all sub groups. Panel Chairs for numerous Child and Adult Practice Reviews in the region continue to be provided by Dyfed-Powys Police, and the newly merged Through-Age Practice Review Sub Group is chaired by a DPP Detective Chief Inspector.

Dyfed-Powys Police have responsibility for the chairing of PRUDiC meetings and for instigating the Rapid Response to Incidents of Suspected Suicide meetings, which have been piloted this year. DPP continue to support regional events, meetings and training via the provision of estate, including the provision of a venue for the Boards' quarterly Executive meetings. This year, the Boards' Safeguarding Awards Ceremony was hosted at DPP facilities in the region, and the Boards are immensely grateful to Dyfed-Powys Police for their hospitality and support.

DPP have commissioned an independent review by the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) into their response to VAWDASV. This was carried out in February 2023, the report from the VKPP was provided towards the end of May 2023, and work has been ongoing since then to implement recommended improvements. This has assisted to identify both good practice and areas for improvement.

The implementation of Right Care, Right Person has been a key focus for DPP this year. Right Care Right Person (RCRP) involves the Police working with partners to identify the most appropriate agency to give vulnerable people the care and support they need. It is accepted that while some 'concern for welfare' incidents do require Police attendance, there are a significant amount that do not involve an immediate safety risk or reported crime.

This is due to be rolled out in phases from October 2024. DPP provide comprehensive and frequent updates to the Boards on the progress of this work, in an effort to ensure processes are in place across partner organisations prior to delivery, so that the members of our community are safeguarded post changes.

This year, a multi-agency review panel has been introduced to assess the quality of risk grading being applied by both frontline officers and specialist officers within the Secondary Risk Assessment Unit.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

Dyfed-Powys Police has commenced work on embedding a Perpetrator Prioritisation Tool, to identify those offenders suspected of VAWDASV offences who present the greatest risk of harm and imminence. This is based on academic and analytical research using severity, recency, repeat and gravity indexes to identify the risk.

A Task and Finish Group has been established to identify and implement management processes across a variety of policing business areas in respect of those highlighted by the tool.

Dyfed-Powys Youth Justice Service (YJS)

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) contribute to the Safeguarding Boards via regular and consistent attendance at the Executive Boards and active membership of all Local Operational Groups and sub groups.



Youth Justice Services are themselves a multi-agency partnership, with statutory input from Police, Probation, Education, Health and Social Services. They feed into regional Child Practice Reviews and Multi-Agency Professional Fora when required, and review incidents under the Community Safeguarding and Serious Incidents Policy when the relevant criteria are met.

YJS also contribute towards Channel Panel, with some members of the service holding Chair or Vice Chair roles, either directly or through representation at team manager level. Local Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meetings are also attended by YJS, supporting an agile and timely response to any specific issues arising.

YJS have worked closely with the Safeguarding Boards this year to develop and refine a regional Youth Justice dataset, which provides relevant safeguarding information for partners as well as giving an indication of performance over time. This has supported a better understanding of shared challenges, and a more collaborative approach to the use of resources. HMI Probation have inspected Powys and Carmarthenshire Youth Justice teams. They rated Powys as “good” and Carmarthenshire as “outstanding”, with actions taken to promote the safety of children deemed “impressive” in Carmarthenshire.

The National Probation Service (NPS)

The National Probation Service (NPS) is represented on the Executive Boards, Local Operational Groups and some sub groups.



NPS work collaboratively with partner agencies in a number of fora, such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Serious Violence and Organised Crime (SVOC), Integrated Offender Management (IOM), PREVENT and the Criminal Justice Board. The Executive Board member has recently assumed the role of Vice Chair of the CYSUR Board.

NPS are also members of the Through-Age Practice Review Sub Group, and have this year provided an Independent Reviewer to an Adult Practice Review currently ongoing in the region, who holds a wealth of experience and knowledge on some of the key issues relevant to the review.

This year, NPS cite the facilitation of mandatory checks at court for electronic monitoring and prison requests for home detention curfews as being a key achievement within the service, as well as the appointment of a Quality Development Officer to provide face-to-face training on risk.

This supports staff groups to recommend outcomes to the court or prison which are informed by thorough consideration of the risk that may be presented to adults or children in the community.

Carmarthenshire County Council

Carmarthenshire County Council's Statutory Director of Social Services continues to chair the CYSUR Board and has fulfilled this role for a number of years, providing consistent strategic leadership to the Executive Board and its Local Operational Groups and sub groups.



Carmarthenshire staff make regular and valid contributions to the work of all Regional Safeguarding Board sub groups. Carmarthenshire continue to actively support regional Child and Adult Practice Review Processes, having provided support to numerous ongoing CPRs this year via provision of panel chair and second reviewer roles. The Boards are extremely grateful to all regional colleagues who support regional review mechanisms by dedicating their time to these processes, and contributing their wealth of expertise and experience to regional CPRs and APRs.

The Regional VAWDASV Advisor and Coordinator posts continue to be hosted by Carmarthenshire Local Authority, which are integral to the development and delivery of the VAWDASV Strategy and its objectives. Carmarthenshire Adults' Services' Senior Manager continues to chair the regional VAWDASV Delivery Group.

Collaboration with regional colleagues has resulted in the delivery of key developments within Carmarthenshire this year. For example, a case resolution meeting has been established with Dyfed-Powys Police and Hywel Dda University Health Board, to address delays in responding to and concluding criminal matters. Carmarthenshire have also worked closely with regional colleagues this year to develop a streamlined approach to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

Carmarthenshire report challenges arising this year stemming from increased demand and complexity of presenting needs and risk. This is a recurring theme reported by agencies this year and has been outlined throughout this report. The Local Operational Group has been reviewed this year in terms of membership and agenda, in order to improve its effectiveness, efficiency and attendance. This work remains ongoing at the time of writing. A further development to note within Carmarthenshire this year is the re-established Corporate Safeguarding structure, resulting in refreshed priorities within the service.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

*This year, **Carmarthenshire Adults Services** have led on a specific workstream to improve multi-agency responses to supporting those affected by suspected suicide, via the piloting of a Rapid Response to incidents of Suspected Suicide process.*

The pilot is being reviewed this coming year to inform long-term implementation of the process, which supports in identifying and providing support to individuals who may be impacted by an instance of suspected suicide via a timely multi-agency meeting to explore family, peer and community networks.

Pembrokeshire County Council

Pembrokeshire County Council continues to be the regional host authority for the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards, and to facilitate the Regional Safeguarding Boards' Business Unit. The Director of Social Services and Housing is the Chair of the CWMPAS Board.



Pembrokeshire are active members of all Board sub groups and workstreams, and have supported the review of the regional Multi-Agency Professional Forum (MAPF) framework, which now provides a greater level of support to local MAPF programmes, utilising a well-established format culminated within Pembrokeshire.

Pembrokeshire have an Integrated Safeguarding Team which combines both children and adult safeguarding strategic work into one unified service. Their Local Operational Group is multi-agency with a combined, through-age agenda which facilitates effective and integrated meetings which are well-attended and engaged in by all agencies. This year, guest speakers at the LOG have included the Regional VAWDASV Coordinator, the Suicide and Self Harm Regional Coordinator, Specialist CAMHS and Community Safety Partnerships.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

*A young person's representative attends **Pembrokeshire County Council's** Corporate Parenting Board, enabling the forum to hear the perspective and views of young people, and for this to influence discussions and decision-making.*

Challenges in respect of recruitment and retention of staff continue in Pembrokeshire, with a significant noted increase in demand for both children's and adults statutory services also presenting challenges. There is also a lack of placements for young people looked after (YPLA), and Pembrokeshire have developed a place of safety model for high-risk young people awaiting placements in an effort to respond to this risk area. In addition, a schedule is in place for a whole-authority self-evaluation risk assessment of safeguarding practices.

Practice audits (focusing on evidence, outcomes and impact) and file audits (focusing on compliance in recording and adherence to legislative and local timeframes) form part of Pembrokeshire's regular programme, implemented in April 2023, which includes mechanisms for re-auditing and monitoring actions, as a means of continuous quality assurance of safeguarding practice. The reporting year has seen the completion of audits on key focus areas which include monitoring of Statutory Visiting (Children and Young People Looked After), Permanency Panel, Additional Safety Plans and MACE, Advocacy and Mental Capacity.



Powys County Council

Powys County Council's contribution to the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards and their workstreams has remained steady and consistent in the last year.



Powys Children's Services Senior Manager continues to chair the Regional Training sub group, and Powys Children's and Adults' Services have each provided valuable contributions to ongoing practice reviews this year by way of chair and reviewer roles.

Powys Children's Services have placed a focus this year on engagement with children and young people. For example, young people have been engaged in Powys' work in relation to a Child Poverty Taskforce, and have met with Powys' Child Exploitation Team to discuss awareness raising in schools on healthy relationships and exploitation. Care experienced and Child Protection Registered young people have led interview panels for several posts including: social workers, Personal Advisors, Head of Children's Services, Director of Social Services, and the Head of Corporate Parenting. Care Leavers were also consulted on One-Page Profiles and Life Story work. In addition, the Children's Services Participation Strategy itself was co-produced by care experienced young people.

Safeguarding Fora were relaunched in Powys in 2023, utilised as a means by which key issues related to current safeguarding practice could be highlighted and explored. For example, the Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) event shared the findings of the multi-agency HSB audit, and a social work academic also delivered a presentation at the forum. A Safe Sleep Forum was also held in 2023, and the Neglect Toolkit launch took place in April 2024, to be featured in next year's Annual Report. Events held to date have been well attended and received positive feedback.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

Powys County Council held a "Your Powys" event this year, where young people with lived experience of involvement with Children's Services met with Heads of Education, Powys Teaching Health Board colleagues, Recreation, Housing, Climate, Income and Work and Democratic Services, to raise their voice about anything in relation to the subject.

Powys Adults' Services have placed a focus this year on collaborative working with its front door, to deliver information and advice relating to safeguarding where the threshold for enquiry is not met. Daily screening meetings are also embedded to consider and allocate referrals. In the context of the challenge of increasing complexity of cases, and the difficulty this can bring in terms of appropriate assessment of risk and delivery of proportionate interventions, these practices help to support a focused and collaborative approach across the service to referrals of adults suspected to be at risk.

Ceredigion County Council

Ceredigion County Council attend and contribute to all Executive Board Meetings, sub groups and all task and finish groups associated with the work which emanates from the Boards. Members of staff from Ceredigion contribute to Adult/Child Practice Reviews, and have once again provided support to an Adult Practice Review this year via a senior officer undertaking the role of second reviewer and Panel Chair.



Ceredigion work collaboratively with other bodies and organisations, and have in particular needed to work collaboratively with Hywel Dda University Health Board this year in relation to the termination of a contract with a provider. The close working relation between the agencies enabled an effective, timely transfer of residents to other care provisions, particularly as residents were required to be moved within the short timeframe of one week rather than within the 28 day notice period. Work with other agencies has also continued this year in relation to developing and embedding a Children’s Triage Team.

The recruitment of social workers into the Planned Care and Children Looked After Team of Children’s Services remains a challenge within the authority, who are currently commissioning an external Managed Team to support with the management of caseloads in this area. Ceredigion work closely with this managed team to ensure the highest quality of care is provided to children and families in the Ceredigion area. Increases in referrals in respect of adults suspected to be at risk, particularly referrals under Part 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, and an increase in the number of children looked after have presented further challenges to the Local Authority, mirroring the experiences of other agencies across the region as outlined throughout this section.

They have developed and consolidated their Local Operational Group Meeting Process, in terms of having a more focussed agenda which balances the need to share the more strategic information from the Executive Safeguarding Board with ensuring that there is multi-agency discussion and analysis about operational practice on a local level.



Safeguarding Practice Highlight

Ceredigion County Council have reviewed their LOG membership and as a result of a MAPF that was completed locally, a representative from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) now attends and actively participates in LOG meetings, and has provided updates on how their agency have referred to and worked with other agencies in relation to safeguarding issues that the DWP have identified.



Regional Directors of Education

Education Services across the region work closely with other partners including Health, Police, Youth Services, Probation Services, and Youth Offending Teams. They attend Rapid Response meetings, engage in regional CPR/APRs and MAPFs, and are a key partner in the development of the MACE plan. Education also attend VAWDASV meetings, as well as the Daily Discussion meetings as part of the MARAC. Education also participate in a high number of Channel Panel meetings and provide information and feedback to schools to ensure children's safety and appropriate safeguarding.

Pembrokeshire's Statutory Director of Education has been the primary representative of regional Education Services at the Executive Board level this year, attending quarterly Board meetings as well as the annual Development Day. Arrangements for representation of regional Education Services at Board is to be reviewed in the coming year, to explore opportunities to further engage with services across the region on key areas related to safeguarding in Mid and West Wales.

Regional Further Education (FE)

Further Education (FE) colleges within the region are represented on the sub groups of the Boards by the Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding at Pembrokeshire College, who is the regional designated Board link for FE Colleges. In this way, FE have contributed to all levels of the Boards this year, engaging in active participation within sub groups and key work streams. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has supported CPR/APR processes in the region by acting as second reviewer for an APR completed during the year, and has actively engaged in the Single Unified Safeguarding Review workstreams and processes.

The regional FE Colleges were pleased to be able to launch the five FE Keeping Learners Safe Modules this year, which will deliver a consistent safeguarding training model across the sector. The resources are also available on Hwb. FE colleges across the region have also continued their partnership work related to the mental health and wellbeing of young people and have been successful in securing funding from Welsh Government up to 2025 to support well-being services and support for children, young people and staff in the FE Colleges in the Boards' region, including provision that offers counselling service input 24/7, 365 days of the year.

Within all the FE Colleges, strong and proactive safeguarding teams have been further developed this year, which have played a pivotal role in multi-agency partnership working. They are also providing post-16 support to the work of all agencies involved in safeguarding, and are participating in the regional and local suicide prevention forums.

The Colleges have this year been implementing the recommendations from the Estyn thematic report published in 2023 regarding peer-on-peer abuse, and are implementing the [Welsh Government's Peer on Peer Sexual harassment in education settings: action plan](#). Presentations have taken place at the LOGs and in local working groups

Regional Commissioning Representative

The Mid and West Wales Commissioning Partnership is represented on the Executive Boards and supports a strong West Wales collaborative approach to commissioning. It has been identified however that links with the Powys Commissioning Partnership could be strengthened, which is being taken forward in the coming year.

Collaborative working was integral to the completion and publication of the Market Stability Report for West Wales, which identified a number of key risks across all regulated activities (in respect of adults and children), with recommendations to mitigate market failure and develop alternative services linked to the Population Needs Assessment.

From a safeguarding perspective, this supports in efforts to avoid such risks as inappropriate placements, unregulated placements, and mitigation to market failure. Several priority areas have been progressed in response to the report, including the establishment of a regional specialist children's commissioning programme to meet the health and care needs of children and young people.

A feasibility study has also been undertaken for the delivery of public sector nursing care homes provision in the region, as well as an options appraisal to assess and make recommendations on creating and enhancing regional strategic commissioning capacity. These developments will contribute to the objective of achieving sufficient supply which is of a quality to meet presenting need.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) requires Local Authorities to commission Independent Professional Advocacy and to promote access to a range of advocacy provision. Advocacy underpins the wider requirements of the Act in terms of well-being, safeguarding and prevention, and can greatly assist people to express their views and make informed choices, thereby ensuring they have access to relevant services.

In recognition of this, the [Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy for West Wales 2023-2027](#) was prepared to help shape commissioning arrangements and ensure that good quality advocacy is readily and equitably available to those who require and/or wish to access such services across West Wales.



(f) An assessment of how the Boards use their resources

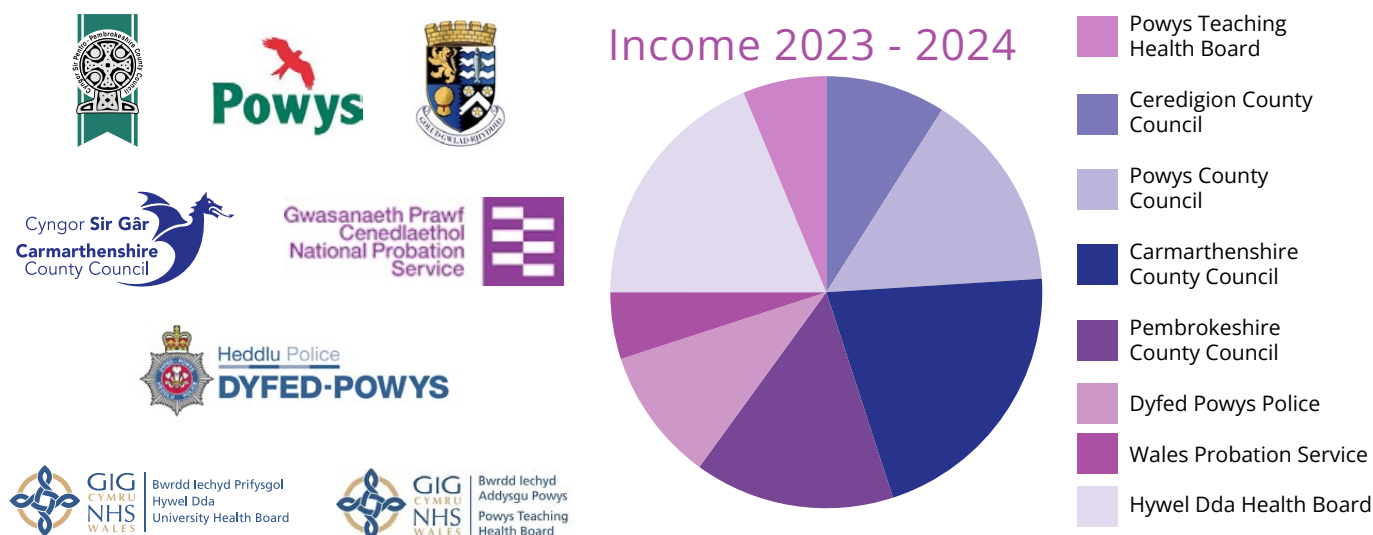
The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards use the national funding formula to assess and identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies. The graphs and charts below illustrate how the Boards have made use of their financial resources within the context of income, expenditure and partner contributions in the preceding financial year.

Resources used to support the work of the Regional Safeguarding Boards are not confined or restricted to financial contributions from statutory partner agencies. The Regional Safeguarding Board Chairs, Executive Board Members, Sub-Group Chairs and members provide a significant amount of their time to support the Boards and their work.

The variable and diverse nature of the Boards' work makes this difficult to report on within a quantifiable and measurable resource context, and is not always overtly visible to other professionals and agencies outside of the Board. The process, management and publication of Child and Adult Practice Reviews, the development of regional

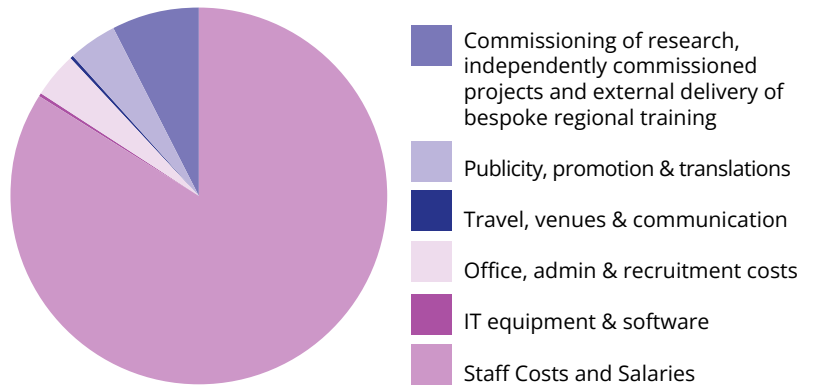
protocols and policies, as well as projects that require high levels of professional input, knowledge and expertise are just some examples of Board work. This is often in addition to their professional roles and day-to-day responsibilities and the Boards remain sincerely grateful for this continued support from colleagues across agencies in the region. All statutory partners of the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards contribute financially to the running of the Boards, with the exception of Public Health Wales. This contribution is based on population areas within the region across the varied organisations. The total income into the Safeguarding Boards this year excluding grant funding was £195,493.

In 2023-24, the majority of the Boards' expenditure was dedicated to general running costs, including staffing the Business Unit (84%). The commissioning of services and training constituted 8% of Board expenditure, which includes facilitation of the Junior Safeguarding Board, as well as significant legal fees incurred during the year.



This year, the Boards have continued to incur additional expenditure and costs to fund legal counsel in respect of a judicial review application made against the CYSUR Board. This is a continuation of the legal challenges which were outlined in last year's annual report. As a result of this additional, unavoidable expenditure, the Boards' expenditure exceeded its income during the year 2023-24.

Expenditure 2023 - 2024



Consideration is therefore needed as to how any similar future costs should be funded. Office, admin and recruitment costs totalled 4%, in keeping with the previous reporting year.

Expenditure in respect of publicity, promotion and translation costs have increased by approximately a third in comparison to the year 2022-23, and represent 4% of expenditure in the year 2023-24. This reflects the increased output of the Boards in recent years, which has led to a subsequent increase in the generation of resources and information for practitioners across agencies in the region.

Travel, venues and communication constituted a marginal portion of expenditure this year, comprising less than 1% of overall spend and reflecting the increase in use of virtual means to collaborate with partners across the vast geographical area which comprises the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards.



(g) Underlying themes in the way the Safeguarding Boards have exercised their functions

Capacity and Demand

The capacity to respond to increasing and complex need, against a backdrop of high demand and lean resources, is a common feature that has emerged across a number of the Boards' sub groups and workstreams this year.

Examples that have emerged include reported inadequate staffing levels, rising numbers of reports of children at adults at risk, ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, rising numbers of looked after children, increases in the number of professional concerns meetings, rising numbers of Channel Panel meetings, pressures within foster placement capacity and availability and challenges with mental capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) processes.

Understanding Lived Experience

This year has seen a commitment by the Regional Executive Board to ensure understanding the lived experience of children and adults at risk is firmly embedded into Board business and at the core of discussions and accompanying workstreams and plans. The introduction of service user case studies at the start of each Board meeting, and the agreement to appoint an adult who has experience of safeguarding services onto the Board in the year ahead, are some examples of the Boards' commitment to this.

Legal Challenges

Legal challenges made against the CYSUR Children's Board were fully outlined in last year's report, and the legal processes that accompany this have continued into this reporting year. The circumstances are complex and relate to a historical Serious Case Review decision by a Local Authority within the region, and decisions made by a Coroner in relation to a child subject to a pending inquest.

The judicial process in respect of both cases has been at significant financial cost to the Boards, with a necessity to use a significant portion of Board reserves to fund this. The cost of funding legal hearings of this nature, should they continue, has the potential to exceed the Boards' budget and agency contributions, which can be seen in section (f) of this year's report.

A process for funding any further legal challenges remains unclear, and requires further discussion and agreement regionally and nationally.

Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Practice Development

The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Boards are fortunate to have a strong and committed group of multi-agency senior managers and strategic leads who have continued to work together collaboratively this year to strengthen and improve safeguarding practice and intervention across the region for adults at risk. The group meets regularly with a focus to establish consistent practice across the four Local Authority areas of Mid and West Wales.

Projects the group have collaborated on this year include work to strengthen the approach taken in respect of Safeguarding Allegations/Concerns about Practitioners and those in a Positions of Trust. This work has aimed to support practice where there are gaps, and more clarity is needed regarding Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. This work has supported a national workstream being led by the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, and will help influence national review of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures in the coming year.

The multi-agency group have continued to support bespoke safeguarding training for Dyfed-Powys Police and the Specialist Child Abuse Investigators: Development Programme (SCAIDP) training course for Police Officers.

Serious Violence Duty 2023

Along with strengthened relationships with the Police and Crime Commissioner established in the preceding year, this year has seen the Boards' commitment to support the development of the Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment, Regional Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan now published.

Identified priorities include:

- Focusing on the online threat, supporting children and young people, parents, and teachers to increase knowledge and resilience.
- Focusing on a more preventative response, specifically reducing risk of Adverse Childhood Experiences, substance abuse and mental health.
- Focusing on violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence, particularly working to improve community education, reporting of VAWDASV, and partnership data sharing.
- Focusing on the night-time economy, particularly gaining further insight into alcohol-related serious violence locally, and embedding existing projects and education initiatives.



Mental Capacity

A need for improved understanding and knowledge of the key principles of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) has featured in published practice reviews, MAPFs and referrals for reviews this year. It has been established this is more prevalent in roles that fall outside of front-facing safeguarding positions, as opposed to social care and health practitioners that deliver key statutory safeguarding functions.

An audit undertaken has identified training is widely available across agencies, but key principles of the Act are not always implemented in practice, particularly in challenging or complex situations.

Further work will be dedicated to improving this in the coming year.

Professional Curiosity

The need for professionals to exercise more robust and better professional curiosity when intervening into the lives of children or adults who may be at risk of harm has continued to be a theme in CPRs/APRs and MAPFs across the region. This is not unique to the Mid and West Wales region, and we are aware this consistently features in reviews in other Boards in Wales, and in UK-wide published safeguarding reviews.

As such, considerable investment has continued by the Regional Training Sub Group to the rollout of the bespoke all-age multi-agency training package and accompanying practitioner resources this year, with a significant number of staff undertaking this training across the region.

Rapid Response Model Pilot

Following significant planning and work undertaken in the previous year, an 18-month pilot of a rapid response model in respect of suspected suicides for both children and adults has concluded. The purpose is to provide targeted, rapid support to family members, peers and the community when incidents of suspected suicide occur. This forms part of the Boards' broader mental health, suicide and self-harm work. The outcome of the pilot is in the process of being evaluated. This will include assessing its impact from a support and prevention perspective, and if and how the process should be implemented permanently going forward.



Safe Sleep

Continuing and rising numbers of preventable deaths related to babies co-sleeping with parents have continued to feature in the PRUDiCs across the region this year, as well as Child Practice Reviews. We are aware this trend is not unique to the Mid and West Wales region and features in other Boards in Wales.

Health partners have communicated concerns to the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, and as a direct result, Public Health Wales have agreed to undertake a rapid review of safe sleep related PRUDiCs across Wales in the coming year.

This will establish if there is any immediate action needed or clear lessons to learn. Localised literature, including a standard operating procedure, has been developed by health partners, and shared and promoted widely with partners across the region. Identifying ways in which agencies can work together with parents to better avoid highly preventable deaths will be a key workstream for the Boards this year as part of a published Child Practice Review action plan.

Practice Reviews and MAPFs

A number of Practice Reviews remain ongoing, and three have concluded during the year. This is alongside an active MAPF programme, with several ongoing and concluded this year.

Themes identified for consideration as a result of these reviews, in addition to the themes highlighted above include:

- Engagement with fathers
- Consideration of accumulative risk factors in assessments
- Foster Placement Capacity for looked after children
- Suicide prevention
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- The need for better information sharing between agencies



(h) When and how children and adults have had an opportunity to participate in the Boards' work

Junior Regional Safeguarding Board

The Junior Regional Safeguarding Children Board is also known as CADW (Children taking Action Differently in Wales). CADW was set up in the summer of 2014 and is made up of young people from Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys.

The previous two years' work have been dedicated to the development and subsequent launch of the safeguarding training animation titled "The Do's and Don'ts of Caring". This resource has been widely implemented into training for safeguarding professionals and practitioners across agencies in the region.

Since the establishment of the group in 2014, many of the young people who have provided such rich contributions to this work have now moved on to new adventures such as college, University and employment. The Boards wish to thank both the departing and continuing CADW members for the significant contribution and achievements they have made to date.

CADW is therefore looking forward to a renewed and reflective approach to its work. A review of the current model, in which the four local junior groups feed into an overarching regional Board, will take place in the coming year, with the view to embarking on new workstreams which continue to reflect the priorities of its members, as well as seeking opportunities to engage more young people into the Junior Board and its programme of work.



CADW Residential 2023

The CADW Board were thrilled to come together for an in-person Residential in Elan Valley, Powys on 12th and 13th April 2023. In light of the size of the groups decreasing this year, and in recognition of the changes in membership since the conception of CADW, this year's Residential was a chance for reflection for existing members on how the group should move forward.

Seven young people attended the Residential this year, in which the young people conducted their Annual General Meeting (AGM), discussing "what is safeguarding" and also what helps young people feel safe.

This was followed by an evening making pizzas, playing tag games, card games and karaoke. The group also discussed whether the Junior Regional Safeguarding Children Board name of "CADW" and CADW logo should be updated to reflect the priorities of the group today, in recognition of the decade which has passed since the group was named.



New logo ideas shared by CADW during this year's Residential in Elan Valley, Powys

Name suggestions put forward included words linked with protection, Tarian (shield) & Amddiffyn (defence). Potential logo images to represent safeguarding included a shield, an umbrella, a hearth or campfire, a torch, holding hands and sunshine.

The young people were also asked to write down what they thought were key issues today in the safeguarding of young people and how these could be addressed, with most answers fitted into a theme of "Falling through the net", which one young person illustrated in their answer.

There has been lots of activity this year in both Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, with less activity taking place in Ceredigion and currently no functioning local junior safeguarding group currently in Powys. This will be considered and reflected in the forthcoming review of the existing structure, to consider opportunities for children and young people across the region to engage with the Regional Junior Safeguarding Board, whilst local arrangements are concurrently reviewed.

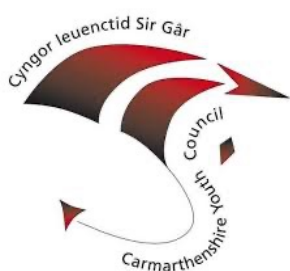


Powys Ambassadors of Youth Safeguarding (PAYS) Powys do not currently have a local junior safeguarding group, and are in the process of recruiting to their Children's Services Youth led Strategy Committee, with the focus being on their service and what is important to their young people.



Ceredigion 'Sêr Saff' and Ceredigion Youth Service have experienced membership challenges, with several long-standing members moving on to pastures new after numerous years of dedicated engagement with both the local and regional groups.

As a result, Ceredigion 'Sêr Saff' currently have no active members, despite having historically comprised the largest proportion of CADW membership in recent years. Ceredigion 'Sêr Saff' also saw a change of Participation Officer last year, who is commencing in role with a focus on recruitment. At the time of writing, events are scheduled which are aimed to promote CADW and attract new membership to ensure continued stability and regional representation within the Junior Board.



Carmarthenshire Council do not commission a local Junior Board, and young people's safeguarding matters and issues are captured via **Carmarthenshire Youth Council (CYC)**, who continue to run the Children's Rights Community Ambassadors scheme. Their main role as Ambassadors is to promote the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), act as a voice for local young people and pass on their opinions to the Children's Rights Commissioner in Wales.

CYC has been working with several services and partners on a bilingual Docudrama which aims to raise awareness of domestic violence, specifically looking at the key stages after reporting domestic abuse. Young people took part in a training session on filming skills to prepare for the creation of the 'Never Silence the Violence' Docudrama, and have been actively involved in starring roles, filming, and interviewing professionals from Dyfed-Powys Police, Children's Services and CarmDas for the Project. The Docudrama is anticipated to be launched in the summer of 2024.



'Never Silence the Violence' Docudrama which aims to raise awareness of domestic violence

This year, 7 young people have completed their accredited Local Councillor Shadowing Award. This provides a unique opportunity for the young people to engage with councillors face to face, and to gain knowledge and skills which will facilitate their involvement in the democratic process and help them to influence decision-making.

The Youth Council have also celebrated 20 years of the CYC by planning, organising and delivering their annual youth conference, "Rights Together". The aim of the conference was to empower young people by raising awareness of their rights, to help equip them to navigate challenges and support themselves.





The development of the **Pembrokeshire Junior Safeguardians** group has continued into 2023-2024 with work around recruitment and the identity of the group. Throughout this time, they have maintained strong links with a range of services in Pembrokeshire County Council who ensure that children and young people have a voice and influence services who support them.

A key workstream undertaken this year was the young people's 'Day of Action!' where the group successfully applied for funding and arranged a day conference for the majority of secondary schools in Pembrokeshire. The day conference included a variety of workshops on a number of issues that the young people believed they should receive information on, including Empowerment, Healthy Relationships and Consent.

A member of the group took part in the 2023 Great Council Bake Off, an event which provides an opportunity for young people and decision makers to work together and break down barriers.



Pembrokeshire Junior Safeguarding 2023-24

(i) Applications for Adult Protection and Support Orders

There have been no applications for an Adult Protection & Support Order (APSOs) in Mid and West Wales during 2023-24, and there has only been one application in this region since the introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

The Boards are aware this trend mirrors activity in other areas in Wales and welcomes any observations from Welsh Government as to the likely reasons for this.



(j) Information or learning the Boards have disseminated and training recommended or provided

Website

The Boards' website continues to serve as a central hub of valuable information, including guidance on reporting concerns and a repository for regional policies, procedures, and Practice Review reports.

This year, the Business Unit revamped the website, removing historical and superseded information and links, restructuring content, and adding newly revised material.

Changes to the training framework section now include links to both the National Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Standards and the National Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Framework. Additionally, there has been increased activity in sharing details of seminars, workshops, conferences, and other training opportunities, making learning and development opportunities more accessible.



The resource hub continues to expand, offering subject-specific resources that support safeguarding. Efforts are also underway to revise the policies and procedures page to make it easier for users to find the necessary documents promptly.

Training

As outlined in Part 7 of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, Regional Safeguarding Boards should ensure practitioners in their area have access to and receive the training they need in child and adult protection work. In addition, the National Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Framework provides comprehensive guidelines and standards for safeguarding training, and ensures consistency in the quality and delivery of training across organisations, helping professionals develop the necessary skills and knowledge to protect vulnerable individuals.

This regulatory framework continues to support the Boards’ strategic priorities, as well as providing assurance on the quality and availability of safeguarding training to practitioners and managers across the partnership. The Boards are assured all agencies provide good quality safeguarding training to their staff, and this has continued throughout the period. A wealth of safeguarding training has been delivered across Mid and West Wales this year, in face to face and virtual formats.

National Safeguarding Week

National Safeguarding Week took place from 13th to 19th November 2023, with the theme of “Safeguarding in Rural Communities”. Under this broad heading, a programme was designed that aimed to respond to some of the challenges that emerge in rural areas such as those found in Mid and West Wales.

Throughout the week, both in-person and online events were held, in the form of conferences and webinars that sought to raise awareness and highlight issues that currently affect children and adults at risk. The regional programme was also supported by national events taking place across the whole of Wales. This included the launch of the new multi-agency training standards framework being led by Social Care Wales, and a Thematic Review of Child Practice Reviews event hosted by the National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB) Wales in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University.

Regional Conference: Safeguarding in Rural Communities with a focus on Mental Health

The flagship event for the week was a Regional Conference: Safeguarding in Rural Communities with a focus on Mental Health. This in-person event was hosted and organised by Powys Local Authority and held at the Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells. It included workshops that covered a variety of themes and offered a breadth of engaging content focussing on Mental Health. Opening and closing addresses were delivered by Jake Morgan (CYSUR Chair) and Michael Gray (CWMPAS Chair), who commended regional safeguarding practitioners on their excellent work, and underscored the importance of coming together for National Safeguarding Week to collaborate on key safeguarding themes.

Presentations focussed on the themes of safeguarding Gypsy Roma and Traveller children and young people in Wales, the work of the Infant and Parent Foundation and a talk from the Older People’s Commissioner of Wales Office. Workshops included Child Sexual Abuse Recovery across the Life Course, a review of ‘The Man Box’ and an update on current Powys staff wellbeing initiatives.

Feedback from practitioners in attendance noted the importance of working together, with particular emphasis on attempting to develop improved involvement with the Gypsy Roma Traveller community. Reference to ensuring Ask and Act was not just a tick box exercise was noted, and the need to break any cycles of violence was also noted in delegate feedback. Delegates expressed in their feedback that it was a wonderful day, and that they welcomed the opportunity to meet in person to network, participate in interactive workshops and meet new colleagues.



Counter Terrorism Policing Wales (Dyfed-Powys Police)

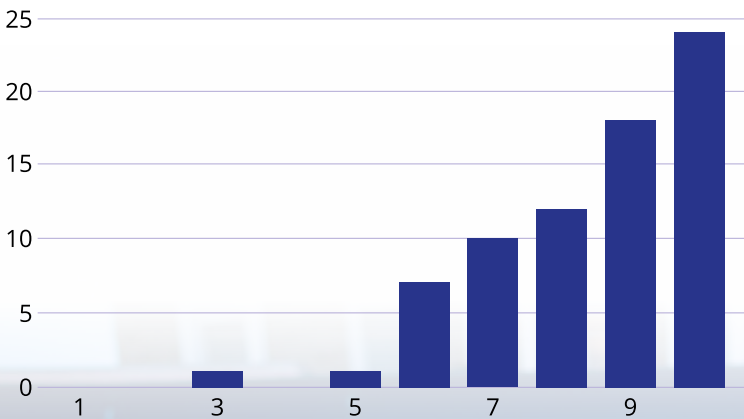
Dyfed-Powys Police hosted a very successful multi-agency webinar led by Jane Carter, PREVENT Manager, Counter Terrorism Policing Wales. The session offered an outline of what PREVENT is, the emerging ideologies which vulnerable people can become exposed to and what Dyfed-Powys Police do to support people through Channel.

A number of related resources were also shared online to support further learning. These offered additional information around radicalisation and the internet, understanding the signs of extremism, guidance for parents and carers within PREVENT for autism support and intervention, and links to the PREVENT duty training service.

The event feedback was positive, with attendees feeling better equipped to identify risk indicators and signs of radicalisation, including subtle ones that could exist in computer games. They emphasised the importance of asking direct questions, evaluating their children’s online activities, and sharing knowledge with colleagues. Operational managers found the session insightful and a good refresher. Many participants suggested extending the session, possibly over two meetings, to better absorb the information, highlighting the session’s value and their interest in the topic.

Attendee feedback:

I am more aware of the less obvious tools that can be used for radicalisation e.g. Minecraft. I wouldn't have thought that something that simple could begin to plant those ideas in children.



8.47
Average Rating

In feedback, attendees scored an average rating of 8.47 from a possible 10 when asked to what extent what they have learned will influence their practice





VAWDASV Strategy 2023-27 Launch
 Natalie Hancock

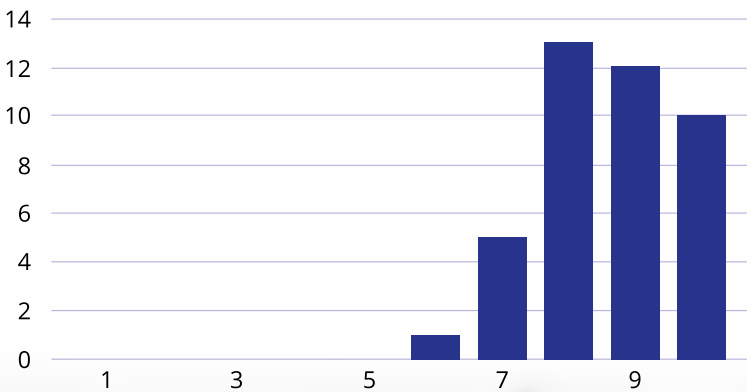
VAWDASV Strategy Launch

This webinar focused on the launch of the new VAWDASV strategy. Featuring a number of key presenters, it offered an outline of the new strategy and also shared information in relation to regional work around Perpetrator Intervention, IDVA service provision, regional awareness raising campaigns and the findings of a thematic review of our regional Domestic Homicide Reviews.

The webinar also offered delegates an opportunity to hear from survivors, practitioners, and providers who shared their experiences.

The feedback was positive, with participants planning to encourage foster carers to access similar training to support young people. They noted the importance of signposting to the right services and increased awareness of domestic abuse among older adults, especially from spouses and informal carers. The session also highlighted the need to support carers to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed and addressed barriers older people face in seeking support.

Evaluations praised the session’s insightfulness and comfortable atmosphere, suggesting more regular sessions or email updates and emphasising the importance of including survivors’ voices in these events.



8.61
 Average
 Rating

In feedback the event was rated highly with attendees scoring an average rating of 8.61 from a possible 10 when asked to what extent what they have learned will influence their practice.





Managing Risk and Trauma after Online Sexual Offending

This regional webinar provided participants with an overview of the key themes and messages contained within the new practice resource “Managing risk and trauma after online sexual offending: A whole-family safeguarding guide”.

The webinar took participants through the detail of the resource, to support professionals working with families with the delicate task of both assessing risk while providing emotional and practical support. The event was facilitated by one of the report’s authors Dr Natasha Sabin, Practice Improvement Advisor at the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). In the session, she described what is known about the risks posed by those who access, possess, or share child sexual abuse material for considerations in assessment, advice on providing effective support and how professionals can look after their own wellbeing.

The feedback highlighted the importance of being mindful of increased suicide risk and the need to utilise the CSA template. Attendees valued the reminder to show empathy towards non-offending parents and to thoroughly analyse risks during assessments. The CSA template was seen as a useful tool, with additional insights on the impact on other family members. Participants noted the importance of signposting to appropriate support services and felt that the session informed their practice in supporting families affected by online sexual abuse.

Attendee feedback:

This has informed my practice when supporting families that are going through the aftermath of online sexual abuse.

The webinar was attended by 138 participants from across the region and received positive feedback, with those present noting that the content was delivered effectively, encouraged interaction and was easy to access. It was also observed that the session fit a lot of information into a short time and a longer session or extended training time on this subject would be useful.



Other National Safeguarding Week events

Two additional webinars were offered during the week that were hosted by local authorities and opened up to Local Authority employees across the Mid and West Wales region.

These included:

- A webinar focussed on Suicide Prevention in Young People was hosted by Pembrokeshire County Council and delivered by PAPYRUS (Prevention of Young Suicide). This aimed to consider the attitudes, myths, and stigma that surround suicide, explore the ‘signs’ that may indicate someone is having thoughts of suicide and support a safety plan with someone thinking of suicide.
- Ceredigion County Council ran a live Zoom Seminar “Safeguarding our farming communities and their families”. Delivered by Tir Dewi charity, this focussed on the risks facing our farming communities, and how best we can support them and their families.

Online activity

We ran an active social media campaign throughout the week inviting people to follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for safeguarding updates and information. Colleagues in partner organisations also shared communications on behalf of the Boards, thus amplifying the messages being shared.

To extend learning opportunities, we also created a series of webpages for all events that ran throughout the week, and used these for sharing speakers’ presentations, training resources, videos and links from the events.

These will remain accessible from our [National Safeguarding Week 2023 page](#). It is intended that these pages will continue to be a source of further guidance and support for learning in their respective subject areas.



Ongoing training projects

VAWDASV

The MWW VAWDASV Regional Training Sub Group, consistent of all four Local Authorities and both Health Boards, continues to meet and oversee the Regional Training Plan to deliver Groups 1-3 and 6 of the National Training Framework. The region has committed to a joint delivery plan and reporting framework directly into Welsh Government for national oversight.

Other agency training

Carmarthenshire Local Authority continued to deliver training that covered Safeguarding Group A, B, C and VAWDASV level 1 - 6. They also have plans to deliver training in accordance with National Training Framework, to include professional curiosity training and VAWDASV-focused training.

Ceredigion Local Authority delivered a comprehensive programme throughout the year, covering topics such as risk assessment and management of serious harm, safeguarding practice supervision, and safeguarding various communities including farming and care homes. Their programme also included training on professional curiosity, section 47 investigations, stalking awareness, modern slavery, human trafficking, PREVENT Awareness/WRAP, refugee and asylum seeker awareness, Signs of Safety, caring for sexually abused children, chemical restraint, eating disorders, hoarding, suicide interventions/preventions, youth and adolescent mental health first aid, self-harm among young people, public law outline and court expectations, advocacy, and hate crime.

Key priorities identified for future training include child exploitation, child sexual abuse, and specialised Channel Panel/PREVENT training for panel members.

Key safeguarding training provided to **Pembrokeshire Local Authority staff** included quarterly courses on managing allegations against adults, child protection processes and procedures, and mental health and suicide prevention for children.

Throughout the year, facilitated sessions covered Achieving Best Evidence with Children for initial contact and investigative interviewing, VAWDASV legislation under Ask & Act (Group 3 and Group 2), working with adolescents displaying harmful sexual behaviours, joint working in adult safeguarding and substance misuse, child safeguarding and substance misuse, professional curiosity, self-harm awareness, Signs of Safety, and sexual violence against older people.

Pembrokeshire offers various eLearning modules accessible to all staff, covering topics such as safeguarding children, young people and adults, modern slavery, suicide prevention, self-harm, county lines, child exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour-based violence, forced marriage, radicalisation (PREVENT), violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence, as well as safer recruitment practices. Online resources are available to all social care staff, providing extensive material related to safeguarding.



Powys Local Authority is currently prioritising the dissemination of Wales Safeguarding procedures and promoting professional curiosity through training. Other training has included child protection and Wales Safeguarding Procedures, section 47, joint investigation, Safeguarding Fora – harmful sexual behaviour audit (NSPCC Framework), safeguarding children with disabilities, professional curiosity, child sexual exploitation, child sexual abuse, child exploitation, deprivation of liberty safeguards children and young people, safeguarding conference 2023, unaccompanied asylum seeking children and Young People, Neglect: effective responses to the neglect of children, Learning from Powys Child Practice Review, understanding child sexual abuse perpetrators, child criminal exploitation and the flying child.

Current key priorities for Powys in relation to safeguarding training are Wales Safeguarding Procedures, the Mental Capacity Act and professional curiosity. This is in addition to providing training and guidance to staff members involved in safeguarding referrals to help ensure a shared understanding of criteria for decision-making and promote consistency in approach. Their training administrator has created a book creator to ensure staff can easily access this year's training brochure, and this document has received very positive feedback.

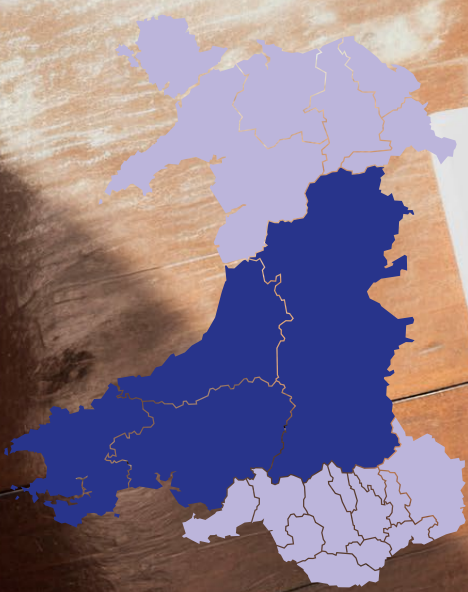
Extensive training was delivered by other agencies throughout the year as follows. The Welsh **Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST)** delivered various training events for Groups 1 – 3 including sessions on safeguarding children, safeguarding adults, violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence, PREVENT, safeguarding audit and Child Sexual Exploitation. In addition they launched a new virtual child exploitation (CSE) CPD training, attracting positive feedback from colleagues who noted that it raised their awareness, is a useful refresher on CSE indicators and reinforced the importance of professional curiosity.

During the year, **Youth Justice Services'** key training delivered continued to be aligned with Local Authority training, with expectations parallel to children's services and education settings.

Both **Hywel Dda University Health Board** and **Powys Teaching Health Board** continue to offer comprehensive training to staff which aligns with the National Training Standards and Framework and their own internal intercollegiate training model. Programmes have included the delivery of safeguarding children training, safeguarding adults, Ask and Act, MCA/DoLS, MARAC/DASHRIC, professional curiosity training, childhood injury training and Primary Care training. In addition, group 2 VAWDASV Ask and Act training has commenced, along with group 6 VAWDASV training delivered to strategic leaders, Fabricated and Induced Illness training, PRUDiC and a broad range of other multi-agency training events.

Within **further education**, all safeguarding induction and refresher training has continued to be delivered to staff alongside termly faculty briefings. Regional further education colleges were delighted to be able to launch the five 'Further Education Keeping Learners Safe Modules' which will deliver a consistent safeguarding training model across the sector. During the period, Dyfed-Powys Police delivered The RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) investigator Skills Development Programme. Professional curiosity training and voice of the child training was made available, and autism training in the form of e-learning became mandatory for all staff.

Some collective photos from National Safeguarding Week Conference 2023

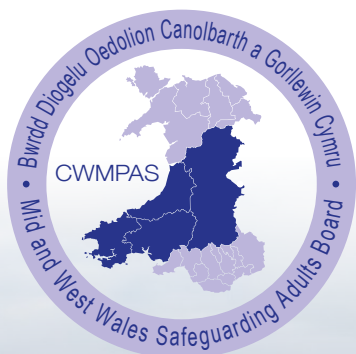




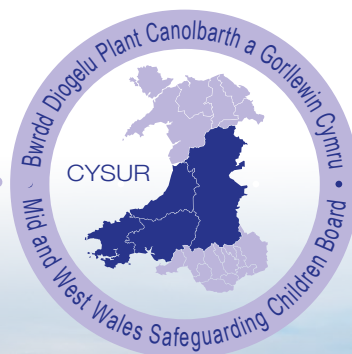
(k) How the Safeguarding Boards have implemented advice from Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board

The Chairs of CYSUR and CWMPAS and the Regional Safeguarding Manager and team continue to work closely with senior WG officials and the National Independent Safeguarding Board on areas of mutual interest and where it is identified improvements can be made to professional safeguarding practice. The CYSUR Board Chair acts as the Regional Safeguarding Board Chairs representative at regular meetings that take place with Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board.

This year has focused upon the development the Single Unified Safeguarding Review process and work to support development of a national quality and performance framework across Wales being led by the National Independent Safeguarding Board. Both these projects have been fully outlined throughout this report.

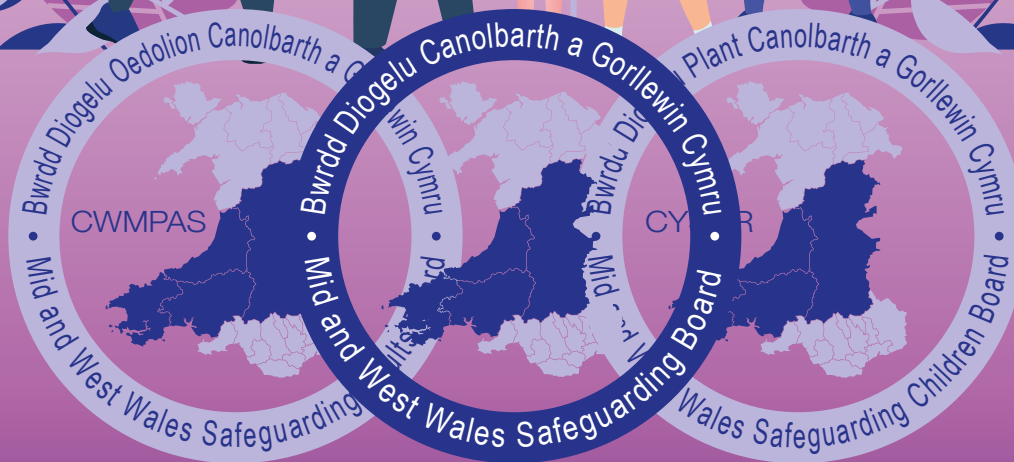


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Glossary

- **APR/CPR** – Adult Practice Review/Child Practice Review
- **MAPF** – Multi-Agency Professional Forum
- **VAWDASV** – Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- **MACE/CSE** – Multi-Agency Child Exploitation/ Child Sexual Exploitation
- **LOG** – Local Operational Group
- **NSGW** – National Safeguarding Week
- **ERW** – Education Regional Working
- **EHE** – Elective Home Education
- **RASSO** – Rape and Serious Sexual Offences
- **FGM** – Female Genital Mutilation
- **NISB** – National Independent Safeguarding Board
- **DoLS** – Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- **CIW** – Care Inspectorate Wales
- **IICSA** – Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse
- **PRUDiC** – Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood
- **ACEs** – Adverse Childhood Experiences
- **PTHB** – Powys Teaching Health Board
- **CYPP** – Children and Young People Partnership
- **CAMHS** – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- **MARAC** – Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- **MAPPA** – Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
- **PHW** – Public Health Wales
- **NST** – National Safeguarding Team
- **WAST** – Welsh Ambulance Service Trust
- **DPP** – Dyfed-Powys Police
- **YJS** – Youth Justice Service
- **NPS** – National Probation Service
- **CRC** – Community Rehabilitation Company
- **SoS** – Signs of Safety
- **PSE** – Personal & Social Education
- **ADEW** – Association of Directors of Education in Wales
- **DBS** – Disclosure and Barring Service
- **MARF** – Multi-Agency Referral Form
- **DHR** – Domestic Homicide Review
- **DA** – Domestic Abuse
- **SARC** – Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- **BAME** – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
- **CSPPI** – Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents
- **YJB** – Youth Justice Board
- **UNCRC** – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- **CSA/CSE** – Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation
- **CCE** – Child Criminal Exploitation
- **IRISI** – Social enterprise established to promote and improve the healthcare response to gender-based violence
- **DSP** – Designated Safeguarding Person
- **SUSR** – Single Unified Safeguarding Review
- **IDVA** – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
- **ISVA** – Independent Sexual Violence Advisor
- **NSPCC** – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- **CPD** – Continuing Professional Development
- **MCA** – Mental Capacity Act
- **DASH RIC** – Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour-based Abuse Risk Identification Checklist



THE MID AND WEST WALES SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & ADULTS BOARDS ANNUAL REPORT

Produced by the Mid & West Wales Safeguarding Board

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