



**Gwent Safeguarding  
Board**



**Strategic Plan**

**2023 –2026 (Year 3)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

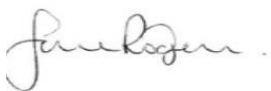
The Gwent region comprises of the areas covered by the local authorities of Caerphilly, Blaenau-Gwent, Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Newport, with a population of 587,700. The region's demographic is diverse, ranging from the city of Newport to more rural parts of Monmouthshire and to valley communities of Blaenau Gwent. Regional safeguarding partners maintain a self-governing, joint Gwent Safeguarding Board, which includes the Southeast Wales Safeguarding Children's Board (SEWSCB) and the Gwent-wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GwASB), to ensure appropriate and dedicated priority for each population group.

The Gwent Safeguarding Board strategic plan sets out its priorities, across a three-year period, which incorporates the work of both the Gwent-wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GwASB) and the Southeast Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB). The joint priority focus areas remain unchanged, as we enter Year 3 of this plan. The Board's progress against these priority focus areas will be reviewed and published in July 2025, as part of the Board's annual report. Gwent Safeguarding Board's three-year period enables its Board partners to have a greater impact on its priorities during this time. However, the Board continues to recognise where, as a result of emerging safeguarding themes over the course of each year, some priority focus areas may become more amplified and require more targeted attention in future years. For example, the last Board Development Session identified the importance of more routine opportunities to promote good performance and to celebrate the positive practice of our hard-working practitioners. In addition, the importance of implementing and operationalising the National Safeguarding Training Standards and Framework required priority attention this past year.

Board members continue to recognise the significance of the relentless economic challenges upon families, staff and services within our communities, which can also be more prevalent for those with protected characteristics. Gwent Safeguarding Board partners continue to use the strength of collaboration and partnership working in order to continue to serve the citizens and diverse communities of the region.

Gwent Safeguarding Board values its strong partnership foundations which were established in preceding years, to deliver against its priorities and to continue to achieve its core functions, protecting and preventing children and adults from experiencing harm. As we move into Year 3 of our strategic plan, we believe that the ten priority focus areas enable Gwent Safeguarding Board to continue to adopt an all-age safeguarding people approach to children and adults at risk.

The Chairs of both Boards are a Director of Social Services and a Head of Children's Services in Gwent. They are actively supported by a Vice Chair who is Head of Safeguarding from A.B.U.H.B. This plan has been developed and informed by the hard work carried out by Board members across our partnership, subgroups member, task and finish groups and safeguarding network forums who endeavour to safeguard children and adults in Gwent.



Jane Rodgers  
Director of Social Services  
Monmouthshire



Gareth Jenkins  
Head of Children's Services  
Caerphilly

## **WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?**

The Welsh Government “Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance” Volume 1 states that:

### **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:**

- a) To protect adults within its area who –
  - i. Have needs for care and support (whether or not a local authority is meeting any of those needs), and
  - ii. Are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect
- b) To prevent those adults within its area mentioned in paragraph (a) (i) becoming at risk of abuse or neglect.

In order to achieve these objectives both Boards agreed a joint vision statement, which ensures that when we do business, we are clear about our purpose and goals.

### **The vision of the joint Gwent Safeguarding Board is:**

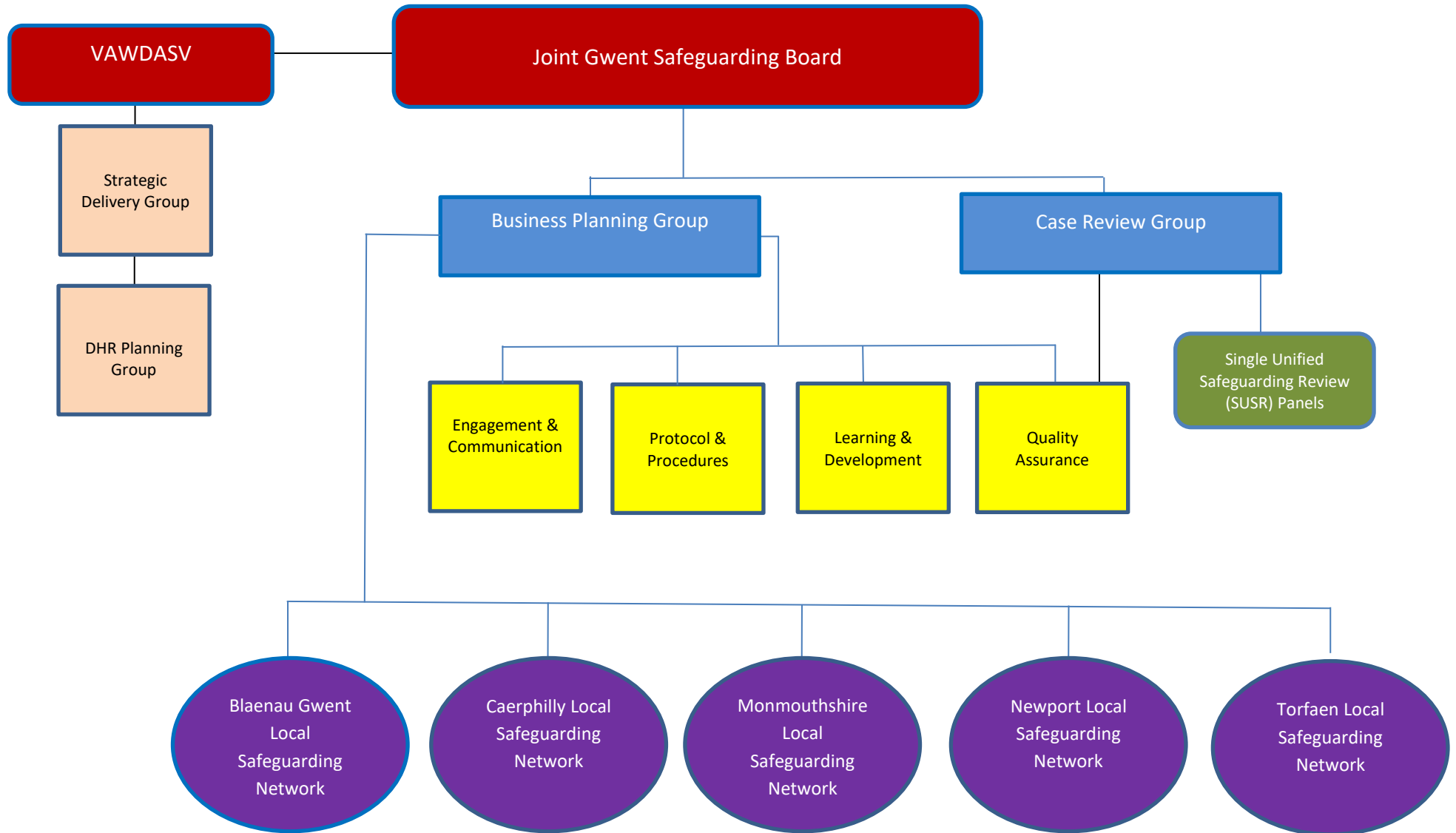
**To ensure that all children and adults within the Gwent area are safeguarded.**

It is the role of Gwent Safeguarding Board to set the strategic direction for safeguarding and to carry out core functions in relation to multi-agency safeguarding.

The Board carries out these day-to-day functions, through policy direction, monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding within agencies, commissioning practice reviews and disseminating learning to practitioners to ensure that safeguarding is high on the agenda at all levels of the workforce.

# HOW DO THE SAFEGUARDING BOARDS WORK?

## Gwent Safeguarding Board Strategic Structure



## **Gwent Safeguarding Boards**

The joint structure of Gwent Safeguarding Board and the subgroups is illustrated above, which highlights our strong relationship with the regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Board. Gwent Safeguarding Board will continue to work collaboratively with the regional VAWDASV partnership, offering support to ensure that joint working opportunities are maximised.

The Board and its sub-groups will give consideration over this period as to where there might be opportunities to meet both virtually but also, where safe and viable, on a face-to-face basis. This will enable us to maximise the opportunities of efficient virtual working when meeting regularly across the region but also to recognise when better outcomes might be achieved through meeting safely, in person. Examples of this are Practice Review Learning Events, Board Development sessions, National Safeguarding Week events and subgroup workshops.

The functions and procedures of Regional Safeguarding Boards are set out clearly in statute and the accompanying Working Together Guidance, and the above structure enables us to fulfil these functions largely through the work of individual groups, supplemented by review panels and task and finish groups.

### **Business Planning Group**

The Business Planning Group supports Gwent Safeguarding Board by co-ordinating the development of strategic plans and reports which record the effectiveness of safeguarding practice across the region. This senior subgroup oversees the progress and outputs of the relevant action plans, thus driving forward the strategic safeguarding agenda, in Gwent. In addition, the group facilitates a free flow of communication between local groups, subgroups and Boards.

### **Case Review Group**

As another senior subgroup, the Case Review Group supports Gwent Safeguarding Board by delivering on the statutory function to consider all referrals for Child Practice Reviews and Adult Practice Reviews. From October 2024, the Case Review Group now has extra responsibilities for instigating all Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews (SUSR) which will replace Child and Adult Practice Reviews. This includes Domestic Homicide Reviews, Mental Health Homicide Reviews and Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews, once pilot evaluations have been completed. The Case Review Group also considers thematic reviews and Multi-Agency Professional Forums (MAPFs), as appropriate. The group ensures that all reviews are appropriately resourced and that strategic and operational action plans are co-ordinated and managed effectively.

## **Protocols and Procedures Sub-Group**

The Protocols and Procedures Sub-Group supports the work of Gwent Safeguarding Board in contributing to the development of safeguarding by reinforcing and promoting best practice in inter-agency working across the region. This is achieved by managing and co-ordinating the development and regular review of guidance, policies and protocols applicable to the safeguarding of people at a regional level. By working with other local, regional or national groups, this sub-group ensures that these are embedded into practice and that the Board remains alert to other initiatives, gaps or future work areas.

## **Learning and Development Sub-Group**

The Learning and Development Sub-Group ensures Board member agencies provide access to appropriate training on child and adult protection for their staff and supports those member agencies by providing multi agency safeguarding training opportunities, through its Delivery Group function. A key priority over the coming year will be the continued implementation of the National Safeguarding Training Standards and Framework across the region.

## **Quality Assurance Sub-Group**

The Quality Assurance sub-group supports the development and implementation of a performance management and quality assurance framework; the commissioning of case audits into strategic priority areas as identified by the Board; and the implementation of action plans arising from Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews.

## **Engagement and Communication Sub-Group**

The Engagement and Communication Sub-Group supports Gwent Safeguarding Board by delivering on the statutory function to engage / consult with people, including children and young people, parents and carers, adults at risk, the general public and professionals, and to raise awareness of safeguarding issues across the region.

## **Local Safeguarding Networks**

The Local Safeguarding Networks (LSNs) ensure connection between the strategic Safeguarding Board and the work of frontline practitioners. The well-established LSN practitioner events enable us to promote successful practice and working processes, and champion a culture of multi-agency learning and increased accountability for safeguarding, to wide ranging audiences. They remain the driving force behind the Board's annual success during National Safeguarding Week using their considerable reach.

## **WHO ARE THE BOARD MEMBERS?**

### **Membership**

The membership of each Board is as follows:

### **SOUTH EAST WALES SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

<b>Chair / Head of Children's Services</b>	Caerphilly C.B.C.
Paediatrician Named Doctor	A.B.U.H.B
Head of Safeguarding	A.B.U.H.B.
Lead Consultant	A.B.U.H.B (Public Health Team)
Assistant Director	Barnardo's
Service Manager	Blaenau Gwent C.B.C
Head of Children's Services	Blaenau Gwent C.B.C.
Corporate Director of Education	Blaenau Gwent C.B.C.
Head of Community Services	Bron Afon Community Housing
Service Manager	Caerphilly & Blaenau Gwent YOS representing Gwent YOT's
Chief Officer Education / representative	Caerphilly C.B.C
Senior Solicitor, Legal Services	Caerphilly C.B.C
Service Manager Safeguarding	Caerphilly C.B.C.
Chief Executive Officer	GAVO
Head of Operations	GDAS
Head of PPU	Gwent Police
Head of PDU	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
Head of Children's Services	Monmouthshire C.C.
Safeguarding Service Manager	Monmouthshire C.C
Housing & Communities Manager	Monmouthshire C.C.
Chief Education Officer	Monmouthshire C.C.
NISB member	National Independent Safeguarding Board
Children's Services, Service Manager	Newport C.C
Chief Education Officer	Newport C.C.
Head of Children's Services	Newport C.C.
Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner	Office of Gwent Police & Crime Commissioner
Safeguarding Professional	National Safeguarding Service, Public Health Wales
Business Manager	Regional Safeguarding Business Unit
Group Manager	Torfaen C.B.C
Head of Children's Services	Torfaen C.B.C
Head of Resources & Planning, Education	Torfaen C.B.C
Senior Executive Officer	Torfaen Voluntary Alliance
Regional Adviser	VAWDASV Regional Team



Head of Safeguarding	Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust
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## **GWENT-WIDE ADULT SAFEGUARDING BOARD**

<b>Chair / Director, SSD</b>	Monmouthshire C.B.C.
<b>Vice Chair / Head of Safeguarding</b>	A.B.U.H.B.
Lead Consultant	A.B.U.H.B. (Public Health Team)
Service Manager	Blaenau Gwent C.B.C
Head of Adult Services	Blaenau Gwent C.B.C.
Service Manager Safeguarding	Caerphilly C.B.C.
Head of Adult Services	Caerphilly C.B.C.
Head of Active Ageing	Derwen Cymru (part of POBL Group)
Chief Executive Officer	GAVO
Head of Operations	GDAS
Head of PPU	Gwent Police
Safeguarding Lead	H.M.P. Usk
Head of PDU	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
Safeguarding Service Manager	Monmouthshire C.C
Head of Housing	Monmouthshire C.C.
Head of Adult Services	Monmouthshire C.C.
NISB member	National Independent Safeguarding Board
Service Manager	Newport C.C
Head of Adult Services	Newport C.C.
Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner	Office of Gwent Police & Crime Commissioner
Safeguarding Professional	National Safeguarding Service, Public Health Wales
Business Manager	Regional Safeguarding Business Unit
Head of Education	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Group Manager	Torfaen C.B.C
Head of Adult Services	Torfaen C.B.C.
Regional Adviser	VAWDASV Regional Team
Head of Safeguarding	Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

## **WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE BOARDS?**

The strategic priorities for Gwent Safeguarding Board remain unchanged as part of our three-year commitment to a broad range of priority safeguarding focus areas which we have deemed as pertinent to our region. As outlined earlier, the Board's progress against these priority focus areas will be reviewed and published as part of the Board's annual report.

Gwent Safeguarding Board has maintained its overarching strategic vision underpinned by three joint strategic priorities as follows:

### **One Joint Overarching Vision:**

To ensure that children and adults, in Gwent, are safeguarded.

### **Three Joint Strategic Priorities:**

- To better protect children and adults from neglect, physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm.
- To better protect children and adults at risk of exploitation.
- To improve and maintain the effectiveness of regional safeguarding arrangements.

Gwent Safeguarding Board's priority focus areas are listed from page 13 onwards. These focus areas are reviewed throughout the course of the year as part of the routine implementation plan, regular feedback from our subgroups / Board and discussions at the Board Development Sessions to review activity-to-date. This year, Gwent Safeguarding Board chairs and sub-group chairs took part in a Development Session with the chairs of the Gwent VAWDASV Board and the Gwent Area Planning Board. The purpose was to consider the people they serve, any shared priorities and to identify opportunities to strengthen collaborative working. The learning from this event has helped to identify any amplified safeguarding themes that reach across our regional partnership boards for Year 3 and beyond.

The significant economic challenges for citizens, communities and services remain prevalent as we move into Year 3. Budgetary constraints continue to impact the way services are provided across the partnership, whilst population need remains high. This is likely to mean that there is a risk that people will not be able to get access to the services they need in a timely way potentially giving rise to an increase in safeguarding concerns for all partners. In addition, there is a risk of there being

fewer opportunities for earlier intervention with a greater risk of more complex and challenging care and protection concerns, emerging later downstream.

Despite these on-going and anticipated challenges, Gwent Safeguarding Board partners continue to ensure that concerns are shared and discussed and to work diligently to ensure that essential safeguarding services are prioritised to provide support, care and protection to children and adults, in Gwent.

As outlined above, our three-year plan outlines a number of key priority focus areas, some of which are amplified and in sharp focus for the final year of this plan. The first of these is **transitional safeguarding** which is a boundary-spanning approach to safeguarding that applies to children's services, adult services and all partner agencies. It recognises that harm and its effects do not abruptly end when a young person turns 18; the brain may continue to develop until the mid-20s, but support may stop at 18. So, transitional safeguarding aims to ensure that support continues, in order to reduce the risks to older children or young adults which are associated with ongoing abuse, neglect and particularly exploitation. This is in recognition that chronological age is not always an indicator of a person's ability to function well and remain safe. Transitional safeguarding involves a more fluid approach across all services, allowing a more tailored approach, albeit still within the relevant age-related legal framework.

Over the three years, it is the Board's intention to move towards the development of a more transitional approach to supporting and safeguarding young people as they move into adulthood. We continue to endorse the innovation which is taking place in one of our Local Authority areas to test a new approach to working with children as they become young adults. This will enable us to learn and share well-tested lessons across our region to ensure that practitioners feel equipped to identify and respond to complex needs for young people transitioning into early adulthood.

In light of the many challenges that have presented themselves to our communities over recent years, it is not surprising that **mental health** continues to take priority focus as we move into the final year of our strategic plan. Gwent Safeguarding Board recognises that the effects of the pandemic and the current economic challenges are likely to have had a significant and long-lasting impact on children, adults and families. We recognise from our work in supporting partners in the immediate aftermath of critical incidents and from our thematic practice review work that mental health challenges remain highly prevalent within our communities.

Another example of an amplified focus area for the Board is **service user voice / participation**. This enables the Safeguarding Board to ensure that safeguarding is person-centred with the aim of engaging with the child, young person or adult at risk at every step of the safeguarding process. The Board are committed to building on

existing links with partners across the region, continuing with our public engagement and podcast development work. We also intend to analyse service user survey responses to identify key themes for improved services for citizens as well as to understand citizens' experiences of child protection processes.

We continue to recognise the importance of **workforce resilience** as a key factor in all of the work streams that we prioritise. The last few years have demonstrated the considerable challenges which have been experienced by our Board partner agencies in relation to staff capacity. We continue to see the substantial pressure which partners are experiencing in terms of staff recruitment and retention, across all sectors. The Safeguarding Board considers these resourcing and well-being challenges to be significant in partners' capacity to sustain effective safeguarding arrangements. In addition, these workforce challenges can create an impact in terms of mental health and wellbeing for practitioners who are trying to cope in these circumstances. Therefore, our focus on resilience extends to existing teams who may be operating under very challenging resourcing arrangements and contributes to our thinking as we move forward. Further strains continue to be recognised where partners have a relatively newly qualified and less experienced workforce, which can add challenges, including staff competence and confidence.

### **The Implementation of the Strategic Priorities**

The delivery of the strategic priorities set out within this document is supported by an internal implementation plan, which has been developed to assist in setting out objectives, each specific activity, who will be involved and indicating year-on-year timescales, enabling a focus upon the specific priority themes. The implementation plan is further revised to capture developments throughout each year and to identify future activities and work streams. This enables greater flexibility and responsiveness over the course of this 3-year period, in the event that we need to build in additional activities to achieve against a particular priority.

We will continue to ensure that detailed work plans are produced for, and owned by, subgroups and these will continue to form the basis of our reporting framework through our Annual Report. These work plans will continue to include detailed actions and chart progress by each of the groups, enabling us to quantify the work as it is completed and allowing a 'smarter' reporting process.

Our summary table, below, of strategic priorities and associated focus areas will continue to be our reference tool whilst we also consider what areas may become amplified from new or emerging safeguarding themes.

## **SUMMARY OF OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES / FOCUS AREAS AND HOW WE PLAN TO ACHIEVE THEM**

**Joint Strategic Priority (JSP) 1 – To better protect children and adults from neglect, physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm.**

Priority Focus	What do we want to achieve?	How can we achieve this?
<b>JSP 1.1 Child Sexual Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide effective, regional response to identifying, preventing and responding to child sexual abuse both in its online and offline forms. Ensuring dedicated, timely, multi-agency collaboration for coordinating and implementing regional improvements.</li> <li>• To ensure that all professionals are fully appraised of current research and national developments in relation to Child Sexual Abuse, including Welsh Government responses to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategic, multi-agency group provides consistent support for regional work required to review or improve services in identification, prevention and responses to child sexual abuse.</li> <li>• The Board is routinely updated and monitors key themes emerging from qualitative audit work and quantitative regional data trends, in relation to child sexual abuse.</li> <li>• An effective and consistent awareness-raising campaign is implemented across the region as a response to the forthcoming national action plan for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse.</li> <li>• Opportunities for child sexual abuse training for practitioners are identified and promoted. This includes engagement with the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.</li> </ul>

<b>JSP 1.2 Neglect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that neglect continues to be recognised and responded to as a safeguarding concern. With particular recognition of the impact which the cost-of-living crisis is likely to have given the association between families' socio-economic circumstances and the chances that they will experience abuse or neglect.</li> <li>• To support practitioners to understand the types and consequences of neglect and to be equipped to work with children, young people and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing, neglect. This should include self-neglect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multi-agency neglect training course, which is compliant with the National Safeguarding Training Standards, is routinely delivered to improve understanding amongst all professionals when working with this particular type of harm.</li> <li>• The regional neglect protocol and toolkit is refreshed and informed by the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, and complements the regional neglect training, and is available for practitioners to use.</li> <li>• The national self-neglect guidance is implemented in Gwent and appropriate consideration is given to the development of supplementary regional resources.</li> <li>• The Board is routinely updated and monitors key themes emerging from quantitative regional data trends, in relation to neglect for both children and adults.</li> </ul>
<b>JSP 1.3 Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support practitioners to feel equipped to work with children, young people and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing, suicide and self-harm ideation.</li> <li>• To work in partnership with regional suicide and self-harm prevention leads to identify opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased opportunities to better understand from children, young people and adults, what specific issues are currently impacting on mental health and well-being.</li> <li>• Children, young people and adults are better informed about issues that may impact their mental health and well-being.</li> </ul>

	<p>for practice, process or service improvement in relation to mental health and wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To raise awareness amongst professionals to understand the nature of this harm and to be able to spot the signs and respond appropriately. With particular recognition of the impact that increased deprivation, as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, is likely to have upon this focus area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved understanding of self-harm and suicide across a multi-agency workforce.</li> </ul>
<b>JSP 1.4 Whole family domestic abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve awareness of a whole family approach to identifying, preventing and responding to safeguarding concerns relating to domestic abuse.</li> <li>To support practitioners to feel equipped to work with whole family domestic abuse, with particular regard to be given to the potential link to suicide for children and adults.</li> <li>To ensure continued collaborative working between Gwent Safeguarding Board and the VAWDASV Board to maximise our multi-agency approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness across all agencies in relation to the whole family approach to domestic abuse, particularly in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and children and young people being victims in their own right.</li> <li>Increased awareness and understanding of the risk of suicide and self-harm for all partners working with families where domestic abuse is prevalent, in collaboration with the work of the regional VAWDASV agenda.</li> <li>The single unified safeguarding review process is fully implemented in Gwent, enabling domestic abuse to be a fundamental consideration which is central to all safeguarding reviews and will enable learning in this area.</li> </ul>

## Joint Strategic Priority 2 – To better protect children and adults at risk of exploitation

Priority Focus	What do we want to achieve?	How can we achieve this?
<b>JSP 2.1 Criminal / Sexual / Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance understanding and awareness in how to recognise and respond to all forms of exploitation.</li> <li>To support professionals in identifying approaches, tools and services to respond to all forms of exploitation, with specific consideration given to the context or environment around the child, young person or adult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training and awareness-raising relating to all forms of exploitation is delivered.</li> <li>A regional practitioner toolkit or template which enables understanding and effective responses to exploitation is endorsed and promoted by the Board.</li> <li>The Board is routinely updated and monitors key themes emerging from quantitative regional data trends, in relation to multi-agency child exploitation.</li> </ul>
<b>JSP 2.2 Transitional safeguarding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop and embed a more transitional approach to safeguarding young people into adulthood.</li> <li>To support practitioners to feel equipped to work with young people who are approaching adulthood, with particular recognition of situational, contextual and environmental factors such as online harms.</li> <li>To support practitioners in identifying and responding to complex needs for young people transitioning into early adulthood, including non-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner agencies work together to safeguard and support individuals through their transition to adulthood, in a needs-led way, recognising that safeguarding concerns will rarely stop when a person turns 18.</li> <li>The Board is routinely updated and monitors key themes emerging from quantitative regional data trends, in relation to transitional safeguarding, emerging from forthcoming MACE pilots to include 18-24 year olds.</li> <li>Complex needs and situational, contextual, environmental factors are all identified and</li> </ul>



	binary or transgender factors, parental domestic abuse and substance misuse services.	<p>effectively responded to for children moving through transitional stages and into adulthood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A set of principles for transition that are endorsed by the Board, are promoted with partner agencies.</li> <li>• Examples of transitional safeguarding innovation are shared and promoted across local and regional areas.</li> </ul>
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### Joint Strategic Priority 3 – To improve and maintain the effectiveness of regional safeguarding arrangements.

Priority Focus	What do we want to achieve?	How can we achieve this?
<b>JSP 3.1 Participation / voice of the service user</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that safeguarding is person-centred with the aim of engaging with the child, young person or adult at risk so that their voices are heard at every step of the safeguarding process.</li> <li>• To build on existing links with partners across the region to provide opportunities for improved citizen engagement, consultation, and involvement in the work of the Safeguarding Board.</li> <li>• To identify new opportunities for effective engagement and participation with children and adults within our communities to ensure that the voice of the citizen informs the work of the Safeguarding Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increased number of children, young people and adults are engaged, consulted, involved or participating in the work of the Board, using existing forums and new co-developed opportunities.</li> <li>• The Board is routinely updated and monitors key themes emerging from quantitative regional data trends for both children and adults.</li> <li>• Children, young people and adults receive a person-centred approach from partners throughout the safeguarding process.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual reports from the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and Child Protection Coordinators highlight the experiences of children, young people and families engaged in the safeguarding process.</li> </ul>
<b>JSP 3.2 Workforce resilience – capacity, competence and confidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain awareness, to seek assurances and to scope solutions with partners in relation to workforce recruitment and retention challenges.</li> <li>To maintain awareness, to seek assurances and to scope solutions with partners in relation to the challenges associated with new legislation and its impact on service delivery.</li> <li>To align the current training provision with the National Safeguarding Training Standards and Framework.</li> <li>To identify opportunities to ensure that practitioners feel equipped to work with children, young people, parents and families where there is fabricated / induced illness and non-accidental injuries.</li> <li>To support partners to promote a professionally curious culture within their agencies, which enables practitioners to feel safe, supported and confident in their safeguarding practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A consistent and solution-focussed dialogue between Board partners in respect of workforce recruitment / retention challenges and the impact of forthcoming legislation.</li> <li>Effective collaboration with relevant regional partnerships in order to support and endorse mutual priority areas in relation to workforce resilience, including Mental Capacity Act and Liberty Protection Safeguards.</li> <li>Safeguarding training provision complies with the National Safeguarding Training Standards and Framework. Routine training evaluations provide the Board with assurances.</li> <li>Workforce surveys in relation to capacity, competence and confidence should provide the Board with assurances.</li> <li>Partners are assured of the availability of guidance, training and resources to support practitioners when working with fabricated / induced illness, non-accidental injuries and mental capacity factors.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner agencies demonstrate an open and supported culture within their organisations which encourages reflection, review and learning.</li> </ul>
<b>JSP 3.3 Poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maintain awareness, to seek assurances and to collaborate with partners in respect of the challenges associated with poverty and its impact on families, service delivery and staff wellbeing.</li> <li>• To identify opportunities to predict and mitigate, where possible, the potential impact of poverty on families, service delivery and staff wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners anticipate, and mitigate with preventative services, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis impact upon families and the associated safeguarding implications.</li> <li>• Partner agencies provide assurances as to how the cost-of-living crisis and its impact on families, service delivery and staff is being managed or mitigated.</li> </ul>
<b>JSP 3.4 Performance Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review current performance management arrangements for the Board and clearly identify where and how Board performance and partner performance can be demonstrated routinely.</li> <li>• To routinely review the performance outcomes of the Board and its partners in carrying out its objectives, contained within this plan.</li> <li>• To review the efficacy of measures taken by Safeguarding Board partners, either individually or collectively, to implement the objectives of the Board and to make whatever recommendations it sees fit to those bodies in light of such a review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fully integrated performance management framework, including meaningful quantitative and qualitative, multi-agency data, is established to demonstrate regional practices.</li> <li>• Following their review of regional safeguarding boards in Wales, to ensure that CIW feedback on potential further lines of enquiry is integrated into Board regional performance reporting arrangements. This sets how Boards should be seeking assurances on the arrangements in place to oversee the quality and effectiveness of multi-agency child-protection practice.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An implementation plan, which routinely reviews the activities set against the priorities and focus areas listed as part of this plan to ensure that performance is planned, monitored and progressed.</li> </ul>
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## **HOW MUCH ARE WE GOING TO SPEND IN THE NEXT YEAR?**

The Joint Gwent Safeguarding Board is funded by contributions from statutory partner agencies in accordance with the funding formula as set out in the Welsh Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 1 – Introduction and Overview,' the guidance which accompanies the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Safeguarding Board Lead Partner role is set out within this guidance and for Gwent the Lead Partner is Caerphilly County Borough Council, who operates as the budget holder. The funding from Board partner agencies resources a regional infrastructure of staff working closely with the Board Chairs, Safeguarding Board partners and other bodies represented on the Board, whose purpose is set out within the above guidance, to:

- drive forward day-to-day business in relation to the Board's core functions.
- provide administrative and organisational support for the work of a Board's subgroups.
- provide administrative and organisational support for activities associated with quality assurance, training and staff development and the learning and reviewing arrangements, including Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews.
- provide support for the review of the Board's performance and for its medium-term financial planning.

The host organisation for the Business Unit is also the Lead Partner.

The Board continues to provide an extensive multi-agency regional training programme. This consists of a range of generic safeguarding courses which enable free access for practitioners and volunteers across the region. They are designed to complement and add value to the training provided by workforce development teams in the region. The statutory guidance states that Boards should agree a budget as part of its medium-term financial plan which is then rolled forward until modified to ensure stability and security of funding over more than one financial year. The anticipated costs for the forthcoming financial year of 2025/2026 are set out below:

<b>Total costs</b>	<b>£492,273</b>
Staff cost	£ 408,663
Day to day running costs	£ 25,751
Provision of Multi-Agency Training and Practice Reviews	£ 46,681
Engagement / Websites & Publicity / Professional events	

(Including National Safeguarding Week)

£ 11,178

In addition, as and when additional financial contributions are allocated to regional safeguarding boards to address regional or national needs, the Lead Partner also acts as budget holder for those funds.

It is acknowledged that resources used to support the work of the Joint Safeguarding Board are not confined or restricted to financial contributions from statutory partner agencies. The Joint Gwent Safeguarding Board Chairs, Executive Board Members, Sub Group Chairs and members provide a significant amount of their professional time to support the Board and its work. This is often in addition to their identified professional roles and day to day responsibilities. Board Members should expect an annual presentation by the host organisation as to how financial contributions have been allocated and future funding proposals.

## **COLLABORATIVE WORKING**

Gwent Safeguarding Board retains strong foundations in collaborative working, which have been galvanised in the face of adversity over recent years. These foundations will ensure that the Board can continue to come together to share opportunities, to learn and identify innovations together, as partners potentially face more adversity over the coming years.

Our history of collaborative work is reflected in the membership of both of our Boards which includes not only the statutory partners prescribed in guidance, but also voluntary sector partners and those where safeguarding is an integral part of their work. This inclusive approach allows us to involve partners who can influence the safeguarding agenda on a local, regional and national level.

As a statutory regional partnership which is self-governing, Gwent Safeguarding Board continues to pride itself on having a close working relationship with a number of other regional partnerships, including the Gwent Area Planning Board, the Regional Partnership Board and the Gwent Public Service Board. By establishing connections and relationships with other strategic partnerships we are able to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority consideration.

A strong link also remains with the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) partnership. Our regional teams continue to work collaboratively, providing an advisory and support function wherever we can and sharing a website together.

Our close working relationships continue to be demonstrated with the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, and nationally recognised bodies such as Public Health Wales and Barnardo's Cymru, along with our regional volunteering agencies, Gwent Association of Volunteering Organisations (GAVO) and Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA).

We will continue to drive forward innovative practice, as demonstrated by our recent implementation of the national Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) initiative. Our engagement and support of SUSR into 2025/2026 will ensure that as a region, Gwent can continue to improve and learn from future safeguarding reviews.

We will continue to build our links with other regional partnership forums. We have an established relationship with the regional suicide and self-harm prevention steering group. During Year 3, we will continue to strengthen these relationships and align our shared goals in working with suicide and self-harm, across Gwent.

Our Safeguarding Board chairs are also chairpersons for a number of partnership forums, and Board members ensure that the work from relevant partnership groups is recognised and reported at Board level.

Our collaborative working with our Board partners has continued to go from strength to strength, as we use opportunities to support and learn from each other as well as to innovate, with the benefits of virtual working enabling greater connections. Our recent Development Session with the chairs of the Gwent VAWDASV Board and the Gwent Area Planning Board enabled us to meet in person to consider shared priorities and to agree our collaborative approach as a region.

We continue to value the opportunity to work closely with the Safeguarding and Advocacy team in Welsh Government and also with the members of the National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB). The consistent representation from the NISB at regional Board meetings and developmental workshop events continues to prove valuable, in promoting strong levels of collaboration and communication throughout the year.



## **ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in significant changes in the ways that services and partners connected and engaged with service users. Whilst initially this presented many challenges for organisations, it has resulted in the use of different platforms, ways of working and approaches to re-engaging, involving and interacting with stakeholders and service users. This priority remains amplified in focus for us as we move into next Year 3.

We will continue to build on existing links and innovate with partners to identify new opportunities across the region for improved citizen engagement, consultation, involvement and participation, to ensure that the voice of the citizen informs the work of the Safeguarding Board. We intend to ensure that safeguarding is person-centred with the aim of engaging with the child, young person or adult at risk so that their voices are heard at every step of the safeguarding process. Joint Strategic Priority 3.1 sets out what we intend to achieve in relation to this and the implementation plan identifies specific activities, timescales and details for partners and subgroup members to consider.

We recognise that there needs to be alternatives to the more traditional methods of engagement, consultation and participation in order to provide the breadth of choice and accessibility. So that we can remain in touch with those whose views matter the most, we continue to work to our Engagement and Communication strategy, which sets out its vision as:

- Creating and maintaining regional safeguarding ‘communities of practice’ amongst practitioners, and improved collaboration between all agencies / stakeholders.
- Raising public awareness of specific safeguarding issues and concerns, and how / where to access support and information.
- Providing regular opportunities for practitioners to inform Gwent Safeguarding Board’s communications and awareness-raising work.
- Providing opportunities for public participation and engagement, in order that the voices of Gwent citizens are heard and help to shape the communications and awareness-raising work.
- Supporting additional public engagement initiatives where required, as guided by the wider work of the Gwent Safeguarding Board.

We will continue to ensure that our dedicated subgroup has the most appropriate, specialist support from participation roles across our partnership network. We will also continue to explore the current digital methods which might be available to us, enabling us to provide accessible platforms for all citizens and service users. This will enable us to maximise opportunities to reach stakeholders, communities and citizens who can inform us about the most relevant safeguarding themes for them.

Gwent Safeguarding Board strives to take account of the voices of those it seeks to protect, and support and it continues to promote a number of methods of doing so. In recent years, we have continued to utilise the high virtual footfall which our online events provide, whilst also re-introducing face-to-face opportunities, which has enabled us to undertake evaluations and surveys on a variety of issues in Gwent. This assists us to continue to target practitioner groups to find out how effective or meaningful our work is for them as stakeholders.

Our Local Safeguarding Network Forums ensures that practitioners' and volunteers' views and experiences continue to inform the more practical elements of the Boards' work. Our practitioner events enable us to celebrate successful practice and effective working processes to wide ranging audiences, whilst also signposting to our website and the provision of training. We intend to continue this form of consultation to inform our work in the future.

We continue to work hard to ensure that our partners are fully consulted when we develop new policies or procedures, and we have a robust and trusted mechanism for ensuring this consultation process is an integral part of endorsing our documents.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION AND USEFUL LINKS**

Everyone has a duty to be alert to concerns about the abuse and neglect of people and know to whom they should report their concerns.

If you are worried that a child or adult is being abused or neglected you must report your concerns to your local Social Services contact. Details are listed below:

**Caerphilly:**

Concerns about an adult:  
Tel: 0808 100 2500

Concerns about a child:  
Tel: 0808 100 1727

**Monmouthshire:**

Concerns about an adult:  
Tel: 01873 735 492

Concerns about a child:  
Tel: 01291 635669

**Blaenau Gwent:**

Tel: 01495 315700

**Torfaen:**

Tel: 01495 762200

**Newport:**

Tel: 01633 656656

**After 5pm and on weekends and bank holidays please contact the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team on 0800 328 4432.**

**If you think a person is in immediate danger then contact the Police on 999.**

If a person tells you something that concerns you or them, listen carefully and say that you will need to share this information.

*Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility*

For further information on safeguarding people go to:

**[www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk)**