



Diogelu Gwent
Gwent Safeguarding

South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board
&
Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board

RESPONSE TO COVID-19
PANDEMIC

May 2020

INTRODUCTION

Gwent Safeguarding Board has produced this strategic response to ensure that safeguarding remains everybody's business whilst our partner agencies and services cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Board would like to reassure the public and staff that whilst we accept that we are facing a set of unprecedented circumstances, with the pressures on front-line staff due to social distancing and self-isolation, we are working hard to uphold our statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of our most vulnerable. It is vital that the needs of vulnerable children and adults continue to be met and that they remain safe during this time.

Clearly, this is a fast moving situation. We recognise that guidance cannot be available to cover every situation, so it is important that Board partner agencies implement their business continuity arrangements in relation to essential services and exercise local judgement in response to local circumstances, within the context of national guidance.

Please be assured that the wellbeing of our front-line staff and the community remains our priority and that the safety of the most vulnerable in our society remains our paramount consideration. The Board would like to commend and support all of those committed staff and volunteers who are working with the most vulnerable and delivering essential services, at this time.

Gwent Safeguarding Board will continue to support its partner agencies and practitioners, at this time, as they perform their safeguarding duties. It remains crucial that we work together collaboratively, as a region, to ensure that the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk remains at the forefront of our work.



Damien McCann and Keith Rutherford
Chairs of the Gwent Safeguarding Board

CRITICAL ROLE OF THE BOARD

We recognise that the impact of Covid-19 on the wellbeing of our most vulnerable children, young people and adults may be significant and could result in an increased risk of:

- Neglect and/or abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Parental substance misuse
- Illness/Isolation
- Poor mental health
- Poverty
- Financial Abuse
- Loneliness

During this difficult and challenging time, the Board will ensure that those most at risk continue to be protected from abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm. The Board has a statutory responsibility to ensure that each of their partner agencies have effective measures in place to carry out their critical safeguarding responsibilities and that there is a co-ordinated, regional response to the safeguarding of our most vulnerable people.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

The Board will put in place the following measures:

- **Host fortnightly Executive Safeguarding Board meetings in response to COVID19 to ensure strong governance and assurance that our work is meeting strategic regional need**
- **Communicate the regionally agreed safeguarding arrangements with Board partners and routinely review changes**
- **Receive and share guidance from Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board to ensure that the statutory duties of the Board are fulfilled**
- **Co-ordinate the essential safeguarding communications of our Board to ensure a consistent and clear message**

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARDS

The Board is required to carry out a number of statutory functions as set out in the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act, but clearly business as usual is not possible at this time as partners are called upon to respond to the urgent and unprecedented demands facing public and voluntary services.

On 18th April, Welsh Government issued guidance on the expected role and functions of Safeguarding Boards at this time which has been used to inform the development and agreement of our business critical priorities which will be reviewed on a frequent basis. We will look to revert to usual practices when it is reasonable and safe to do so.

Report a child or adult at risk

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Everyone has a duty to be alert to concerns about the abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults and to know whom they should report their concerns.

If you are worried that a child, young person or adult is being abused or neglected you must report your concerns to your local Information, Advice and Assistance Service below:

Blaenau Gwent *Children & Adults* Tel: 01495 315700 DutyTeam@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk DutyTeamAdults@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Caerphilly *Children* Tel: 0808 100 1727 contactandreferral@caerphilly.gov.uk
Adults Tel: 0808 100 2500 povateam@caerphilly.gov.uk or IAAAdults@caerphilly.gov.uk

Monmouthshire *Children* Tel: 01291 635 669 ChildDuty@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Adults Tel: 01873 735492 MCCadultsafeguarding@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Newport *Children & Adults* Tel: 01633 656656 children.duty@newport.gov.uk
firstcontact.adults@newport.gov.uk or pova.team@newport.gov.uk

Torfaen Children and Adults Tel: 01495 762200 socialcarecalltorfaen@torfaen.gov.uk

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

If you think a child or adult is in immediate danger then contact the **Police** on 999