

Corporate Safeguarding Policy 2025 – 2028

Section 1 – Overview

1.1 Introduction

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to ensuring that everyone living within the Borough is safe and protected. This document outlines the arrangements for safeguarding in Blaenau Gwent and provides guidance on what actions should be taken if there are concerns about a child or adult at risk of abuse or neglect.

1.2 Legislative Framework

This policy is guided by the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, which provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) are also applied to ensure consistent policy and practice across Wales.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 define safeguarding as:

‘The prevention and protection of children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect, along with educating those around them to identify the signs and dangers.’

1.3 Scope and Responsibilities

Corporate safeguarding describes the arrangements in place to ensure that all employees, contractors, volunteers, and councillors play their part in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and adults who may be at risk of harm. Everyone has a role to play in protecting children and adults from harm.

For the purposes of this policy, **a child** is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday; **an adult at risk** is defined as an adult who is experiencing/is at risk of abuse or neglect, and/or has need for care and support and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against potential abuse or neglect; **workforce** is defined as those engaged by the Council, including permanent and temporary employees, students, volunteers, workers employed by employment agencies, contractors and consultants.

1.4 Key Principles

- **Safeguarding is Everyone’s Responsibility:** All employees, contractors, volunteers, and councillors must be aware of safeguarding in their day-to-day work and know when and how to raise concerns.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Effective safeguarding requires dynamic multi-agency intervention and treatment.
- **Training and Awareness:** Mandatory training on corporate safeguarding responsibilities is required for all staff.

1.5 Safeguarding Procedures

- **Reporting Concerns:** Any concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or adult at risk should be reported immediately using the appropriate channels.
- **Monitoring and Review:** Safeguarding arrangements are monitored through regular performance reviews and audits to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

1.6 Training and Development

All staff must complete mandatory safeguarding training. Additional training will be provided as needed to ensure all employees are equipped to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Individual departments may have their own supplementary structured guidance to inform their staff training, for example the Education Directorate Local Government Education Services (LGES) Safeguarding Policy covers all educational settings within Blaenau Gwent.

Section 2 – Safe Governance

2.1 Departmental Leadership Meetings

Safeguarding is a standing item on all departmental leadership meetings.

Each directorate is expected to contribute to the annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.

2.1.1 Safeguarding Self-Assessment

All service areas complete an annual safeguarding self-assessment using the Corporate Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool (Appendix A). The tool is set out in sections which require service areas to critically consider their own practices and procedures within their relevant setting. It is designed to give an understanding of how 'safeguarding' is currently being achieved in a particular service area/establishment and how practice might be developed. In addition, the self-assessment provides the Council with an overview of safeguarding practices across all its service areas, to ensure that safeguarding duties are being effectively met.

The self-assessments identify areas and actions for improvement for each Directorate. These areas are discussed in the relevant DLT Meeting and then reported through to the DSP Steering Group, to the Governance, Risk, Integrity, Performance and Partnership Group and to the Corporate Governance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) Steering Group

The Corporate Safeguarding DSP steering group is co-chaired by the Safeguarding Service Managers for Children and Adult Services. The steering group acts as a network of support and development for DSP's across the council. Safeguarding information is presented and discussed through this forum. The DSP Steering Group has responsibility for delegated actions from the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan. It reports progress on these actions to the Corporate Safeguarding Board annually. The DSP steering group can escalate matters to the Corporate Safeguarding Board by exception.

A list of Blaenau Gwent Council DSP's can be found on the Blaenau Gwent Council Intranet.

A list of the roles and responsibilities of a DSP (Appendix B).

2.3 Corporate Safeguarding Board

The Corporate Safeguarding Board is a strategic body responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is embedded across all council directorates, not just within Social Services and Education. The board is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, and membership is made up of heads of service from each directorate. The board reports to the Corporate Governance and Resources Scrutiny Committee. It oversees the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan, monitors safeguarding risks in the Council's Risk Register, and ensures that safeguarding is treated as a corporate responsibility.

2.4 The Governance, Risk, Integrity, Performance and Partnerships Group (GRIPP)

The Governance, Risk, Integrity, Performance and Partnership Group (GRIPP) oversees the implementation and effectiveness of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Action Plan and reviews the Council's risk register ensuring safeguarding risks are identified, escalated to Joint Executive as appropriate, and mitigated appropriately.

GRIPP receives quarterly updates from the Corporate Safeguarding Board, which includes updates on progress against the safeguarding action plan, safeguarding training compliance across the Council, audit outcomes and service-level safeguarding performance for education, adult's and children's social services, and corporate performance.

Safeguarding issues that require escalation will be taken to the Joint Executive Team.

2.5 Joint Executive

The Risk Register of the Council, which includes safeguarding risks, is reviewed annually by the Joint Executive Team. Safeguarding matters will be escalated to the Joint Executive Team for decision by GRIPP, by exception.

2.6 Elected Members

All Elected Members have an essential role and responsibility for safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults. Elected members have a responsibility to be aware of, and support, the Council's safeguarding responsibilities and to scrutinise how these are carried out in the planning and delivery of services. Elected Members need to satisfy themselves that the Council as a whole is discharging its statutory responsibilities and demonstrating good practice wherever possible.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families has responsibility to lead and inform the Cabinet on safeguarding, child protection, corporate parenting and looked after children matters. The Cabinet Member for Adults and Communities has responsibility to lead and inform the Cabinet on adult social care and safeguarding vulnerable adults' matters. Both Cabinet Members are to be regularly briefed by the relevant Statutory Director on safeguarding performance.

2.7 Scrutiny

The role of the Scrutiny Committees is to review and scrutinise safeguarding performance and delivery and to make recommendations, where necessary, to Cabinet.

The Corporate Performance Team will work with the service areas to produce performance reports annually for Scrutiny. Reports provide an overview of the Council's safeguarding performance utilising key performance indicators. The Team will also produce a Corporate Safeguarding Report twice a year for the Corporate Governance and Resource's Scrutiny Committee which will include progress against the Safeguarding Action Plan and on an annual basis the results of the annual safeguarding self-assessment. These reports will provide an opportunity for Elected Members to scrutinise and challenge Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and performance.

The Strategic Directors for Children, Young People and Families, and Adults and Communities will produce an annual safeguarding report relevant to their area.

Regular reports on safeguarding performance will be submitted to the following Scrutiny Committees:

- Corporate Governance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to receive a Corporate Safeguarding Report twice a year. They will monitor the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan.
- Adult and Communities Scrutiny Committee to receive an Adult's Services Safeguarding Performance Report on an annual basis.
- Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Committee to receive a Children's Services Safeguarding Performance Report and an Education Safeguarding Performance Report.

2.8 Cabinet

The Cabinet plays a crucial role in the governance and oversight of safeguarding practices within the Council. It is imperative that the Cabinet ensures robust safeguarding mechanisms are in place, continuously monitored, and improved where necessary. This includes:

- Receiving regular updates and reports from the Cabinet Members for Children, Young People and Families, and Adults and Communities through Cabinet/CLT meetings.
- Making informed decisions to allocate resources and support to enhance safeguarding frameworks.
- Engaging with internal and external audits to review and enhance safeguarding practices.

2.9 Internal Audit / External Regulators

Internal Audit review safeguarding on a cyclical basis in accordance with their normal planning and risk assessment process. Progress against recommendations for improvement from internal audit or external regulators will be reported to the Governance, Risk, Integrity and Performance Group. This ensures that:

- All safeguarding practices are held to the highest standards and rigorously evaluated.
- Continuous improvement is sought through the identification and implementation of best practices.
- Recommendations are acted upon promptly to address any deficiencies or areas of concern.

Section 3- Safe Employment and Workforce

3.1 Recruitment, selection and management of the workforce

The Council has implemented safe recruitment and employment standards in accordance with Gwent Safeguarding Board's regional guidance ([Multi Agency Practice Guidance for Safe Recruitment & Safe Employment Mach 2024](#)) and as set out in the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy ([Recruitment-and-Selection-Policy-April-2025.pdf](#)).

The Council's Disciplinary Procedure ([Disciplinary-Policy-Procedure-August-2022.pdf](#)) sets out the process for dealing with allegations that a member of the workforce has not complied with the Council's policies and procedures, including those in place to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and adults at risk. The policy also describes the sanctions that might be applied following investigation.

To promote safe recruitment and Organisational Development (OD) practices the Council:

- Ensures that the Safe Recruitment Policy is applied equally to volunteers, agency workers and employees.
- Reviews its recruitment and selection procedures regularly.
- Will carry out regular auditing on safe recruitment practices for the whole workforce.
- Ensures that managers responsible for recruitment receive appropriate recruitment training which is updated as required.
- Ensures that safe recruitment procedures are made accessible to and used by all managers.
- Monitors staff compliance with its policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk through training and auditing of OD processes.

3.2 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is defined as:

'The disclosure by a member of staff or professional of confidential information which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the work place, be it of the employer or his/her fellow employees' (Public Concern at Work Guidelines 1997).

The Council has an agreed Whistleblowing Policy ([Whistleblowing-Policy-October-2024.pdf](#)) which refers to the reporting, by any member of the workforce, of suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act within the Council. The Whistleblowing Policy can be used for confidential reporting of any abusive, inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour against any children or adults at risk, or any conduct that breaches criminal law or statute; compromise health and safety breaches accepted professional code of conduct or otherwise falls below established standards of practice in relation to children or adults at risk.

The Council expects the highest standards of conduct from the workforce and encourages the workforce and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns in a safe environment. The Whistleblowing Policy enables members of the workforce to raise concerns at an early stage and in the correct way.

The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover serious concerns such as:

- conduct which is a criminal offence or a breach of a legal obligation
- miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public, service users, as well as other employees
- damage to the environment (for example relating to land, buildings, highways, water, air, waste, energy, transport or natural habitat)
- the inappropriate or unauthorised use of public funds or other resources
- possible fraud, corruption, bribery and tax evasion
- abuse of clients, employees, contractors or members of the public
- unethical employment practices (such as modern slavery or human trafficking)
- other unethical or improper conduct or
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above.

The policy applies to all Blaenau Gwent Council employees and all persons who could be in a position to identify serious concerns within the Council, for example, contractors, Councillors, members of the public and close partner agencies.

Legal rights of workers

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides legal protection, in certain circumstances, to workers making disclosures in the public interest (referred to as 'Protected Disclosures'). The Act makes it unlawful for the Council to dismiss anyone or allow them to be victimised on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure in accordance with the Act.

3.4 Allegations Against Adults Who Work with Children, Young People or Adults at Risk

It is essential that all allegations of abuse are dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, providing effective protection for the child or adult at risk while supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Allegations should be dealt with in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, and Regional Safeguarding Board Guidelines - [Safeguarding allegations and concerns about practitioners and those in a position of trust protocol](#).

Referral forms (known as Duty to Report Forms) for adults and children can be found at:

[Report a child at risk - Gwent Safeguarding](#)

[Report an adult at risk - Gwent Safeguarding](#)

The sharing of information about an allegation must be handled sensitively and must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- Protect children/ adults at risk
- Facilitate enquiries, or
- Manage disciplinary / complaints aspects

Information about the child / adult at risk must not be shared with an individual against whom the allegation was made or anyone representing them.

Child/Adult Safeguarding and Protection enquiries take priority over disciplinary investigations and determine whether investigations can be carried out concurrently.

All Professional Strategy Meetings for children and adults at risk will be convened and chaired by either the Adult or Children Safeguarding Team (dependent on the nature of employment activity being with a child or adult) in accordance with regional guidance.

On the completion of the investigation, should an individual be dismissed or removed from working with children or adults at risk (in a Regulated Activity) the Council has a duty to refer the individual to the DBS (Safeguarding Vulnerable Group's Act 2006). The Council also has an obligation to refer certain information about an employee's conduct and matters relating to safeguarding to professional regulatory bodies.

Any member of the Blaenau Gwent County Council workforce/ employee of a contractor or sub-contractor who believes that allegations or suspicions are not being investigated properly has a responsibility to escalate their concern to a higher level within the Council or via the Council Whistleblowing Policy.

3.5 Volunteering

This Policy applies to all volunteers who engage with adults at risk, children and young people in their volunteering role and will be covered within the initial induction.

The Council has a Volunteering Policy ([Volunteering-Policy-August-2022.pdf](#)) which recognises the valuable contribution made by volunteers to the services provided by the paid workforce, with the ultimate aim of enhancing services for citizens and communities in Blaenau Gwent.

The policy sets out the safeguarding requirements which must be embedded in recruitment procedures for volunteers, and depending on the nature of volunteering roles, includes Disclosure and Barring service checks.

Safeguarding will be covered within the initial induction for volunteers. Volunteers must subsequently attend the level of safeguarding training relevant to the nature of the voluntary activity being undertaken. Volunteer co-ordinators are expected to refer to the Council's Volunteers in the Workplace – A Manager's Guide available on the intranet - [Blaenau Gwent Intranet :: Policies & Manager's Guides](#).

Volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults must have the appropriate DBS checks. It is the responsibility of the relevant team manager e.g. individual schools, or teams, to maintain an up-to-date list of volunteers, including DBS information and Safeguarding training compliance details. These lists will be subject to audit checks.

3.6 Training

All members of the workforce, whether permanent or temporary, and volunteers be given access to this policy and the name and contact details of their Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) as part of their induction when they commence work.

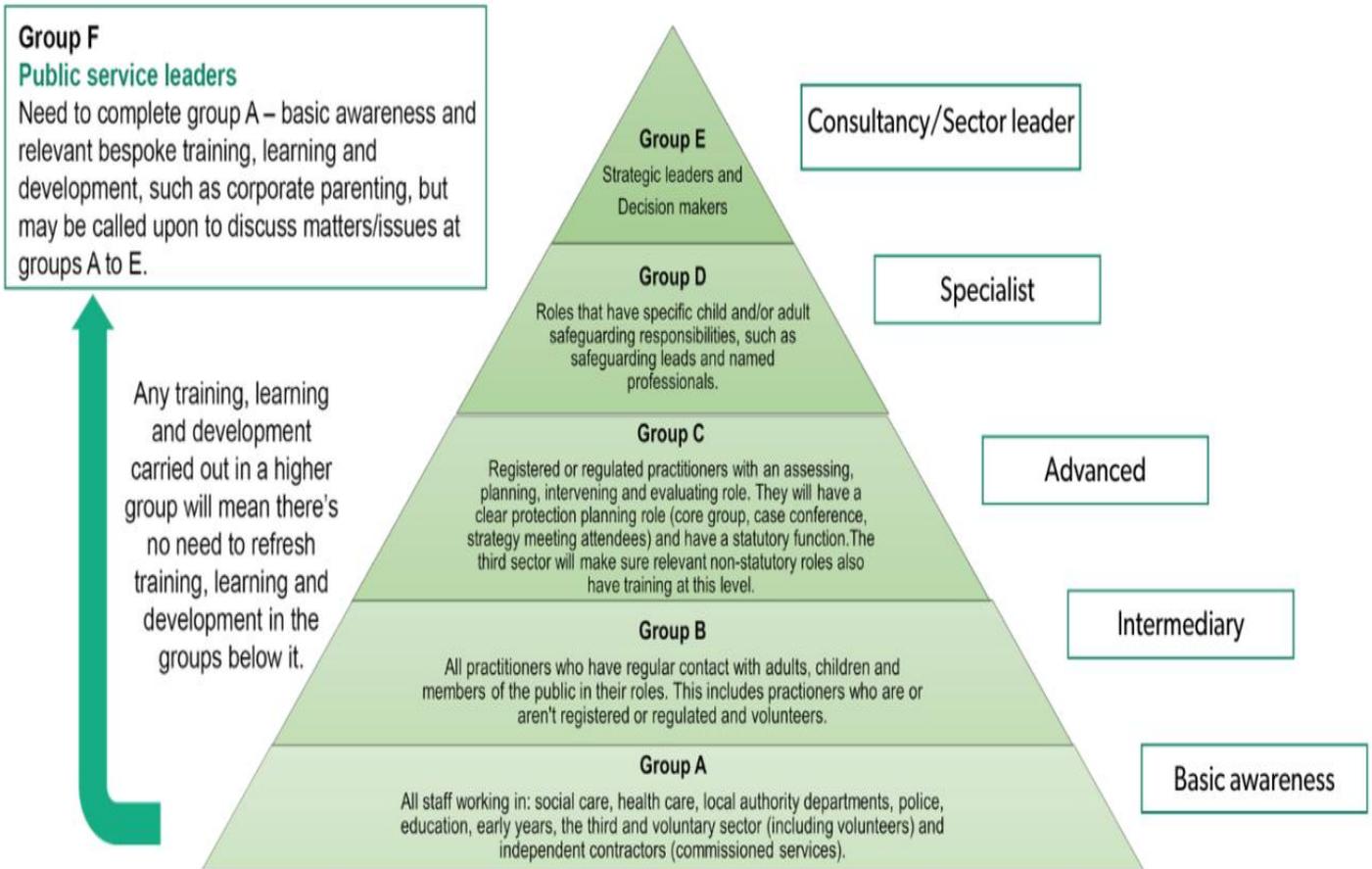
All members of the workforce are responsible for their own Continuous Professional Development and to ensure that their safeguarding training is current and up to date.

A training framework (Figure 2) has been developed to create a greater understanding and consistency of what training should be completed, for roles across the Council. This framework outlines safeguarding training requirements for staff within the Council and is based on the Social Care Wales National Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Standards Framework ([National safeguarding training, learning and... | Social Care Wales](#)).

It is the responsibility of the service area to identify the group of training the individual employee/ volunteer is required to undertake, and this should be clearly defined and recorded within the service area.

If organisations or managers are unsure of which group is the appropriate one, the expectation is that the practitioner will be trained up to the higher group.

Figure 1 – Safeguarding Training Framework



****Any training, learning and development carried out in a higher group will mean there's no need to refresh training, learning and development in the groups below it ****

Detailed safeguarding training framework group breakdown (Appendix C). This details the group descriptions, memorable principles and how to access training for each training group.

All staff/volunteers will be expected to undertake the e-learning Safeguarding Group A training as a mandatory part of their induction to the Council along with any other training relevant to the position that they hold.

3.7 Elected Member Training

It is essential to ensure that all members are well-informed and up-to-date with their safeguarding responsibilities. Annual training sessions reinforce the importance of

safeguarding and ensure that members are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to effectively carry out their duties.

By implementing regular safeguarding training, we can foster a culture of vigilance and responsibility, ensuring that all members are well-prepared to protect and support those in need.

3.8 Training Compliance

The DSP Steering Group track and monitor safeguarding training compliance for the workforce and Elected Members. Each Directorate will be able to review their service compliance and take targeted action to improve compliance rates when necessary.

Section 4 – Safe Practice and Standards

4.1 Child Protection

The categories of abuse recognised within Child Protection are:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional and Psychological Abuse
- Neglect
- Financial Abuse

The definitions of categories of abuse can be viewed here - [Categories and definitions of abuse - Gwent Safeguarding](#).

The primary legislation and guidance which shape's Safeguarding Practice and Procedures is:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014
- [Children \(Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment\) \(Wales\) Act 2020](#)

Whilst Statutory Social Services' Departments are the Lead Agency in Child Protection matters, there is a wider duty on all agencies to work together to protect and safeguard children. All members of the workforce have a duty to report child protection concerns.

4.2 Adult Protection

Adult Safeguarding is on a statutory basis under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 (SSWBA). Adult protection duties are undertaken in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019.

This applies to all adults within the County boundary whether they are ordinarily resident or not. Adult safeguarding considers the capacity of adults to make decisions in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act (2005). If an adult is deemed to have capacity, then consent must be sought for the safeguarding process. The exception to this is when an alleged abuser is a potential risk to other vulnerable people or there is a wider public interest, or a criminal offence is suspected.

The SSWBA also places a 'duty to report' on all staff to report actual or suspected abuse or neglect of adults at risk. It provides for the use of Adult Protection Safeguarding Orders (APSO) via a Magistrate to allow Designated Officers to enter a premises where it is suspected an adult is at risk and speak to them alone to establish if they are safe.

Designated teams in the Adult Services, Housing and Communities directorate have statutory duties when an Adult at Risk is identified to make an enquiry and to decide what action should be taken and by whom to Safeguard the individual.

Flowchart outlining referral making processes for children and adults (Appendix D).

4.3 Prevention

The Council is committed to the development and commissioning of early intervention and preventative approaches to enhance the well-being of children and adults at risk.

Services operating within the Council are expected to respond to the needs of children and adults at risk, understand how to establish a positive culture of safeguarding and adhere to the principles of partnership working in promoting prevention and early intervention. Critical to these approaches is understanding the potential safeguarding risks and addressing these proactively in the design of the service.

4.4 Counter Terrorism and the Risk of Radicalisation

The UK defines terrorism as: '*The use or threat of serious violence against a person or serious damage to property where that action is:*

- *designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; and*
- *for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.'*

The ideological component of terrorism is what sets it apart from other acts of serious violence. Islamist ideology is resilient and enduring. Extreme Right-Wing ideology is a growing threat i.e. cultural nationalism, white supremacy etc. Other ideologies are less present, but still have the potential to motivate, inspire and be used to justify terrorism.

[Section 26](#) Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced the statutory Prevent Duty which requires the [specified authorities](#): local authorities, schools, colleges, universities, health bodies, prisons, probation and police, to have "*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*".

The objectives of Prevent are to:

- tackle the ideological causes of terrorism,
- intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation,
- enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

Prevent provides an opportunity for safeguarding through early intervention and prevention, by identifying people who are susceptible to radicalisation and providing support to those suitable for intervention. This support is provided by the Blaenau Gwent statutory **Channel Panel**. Channel is a confidential, voluntary programme where the person consents to receive support to address their terrorism susceptibilities and reduce the risk to them.

Channel uses a multi-agency approach to:

- identify people at risk,
- assess the nature and extent of that risk, and
- develop the most appropriate support plan for the person concerned.

The type of support available within the Chanel Panel is bespoke and can include help with accessing other mainstream services, such as education or career advice, dealing with mental or emotional health issues, substance abuse, and theological or ideological mentoring from a specialist Channel Intervention Provider, working with the individual on a one-on-one basis.

Notice, Check, Share

- If anybody has PREVENT concerns, they should raise with the PREVENT Lead for the Council (Professional Lead for Community Safety).
- Initial referrals are made via the Duty to Report (DTR) before a PREVENT referral is submitted.
- Prevent referrals are submitted via the approved [All Wales Partners Prevent Referral Form](#).

4.5 Exploitation

Exploitation is hidden and complex and abuses the basic human rights and dignity of victims who are subjected to it. Exploitation includes (list is not exhaustive):

- Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking
- Labour Exploitation
- Criminal Exploitation (including County Lines)
- Domestic Servitude
- Sexual Exploitation
- Forced Marriage
- Honour based violence
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Radicalisation
- Financial Abuse
- Mate Crime
- Cuckooing

Victims may be subjected to one or more of these at the same time. Exploitation can happen to anyone. It can be dangerous to make assumptions, generalise or rely on stereotypes when considering exploitation. Exploitation can happen to both adults and children. Exploitation can happen anywhere, including online. There is no single victim profile, no single perpetrator profile and no single pattern of exploitation.

4.6 Child Exploitation

Child Exploitation refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical and/or mental health, education, moral or social/emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimisation, oppression or ill-treatment.

Child exploitation could include one or a combination of the below:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE),
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE),

- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT),
- Missing from Home (MFH)
- Online Child Exploitation (OCE)
- Wider Contextual Safeguarding

4.7 Child Sexual Exploitation

The abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another as well as personal sexual gratification. Examples: Use of children in sex work, trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation, child pornography, sexual slavery.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures Practice Guide - [Safeguarding Wales](#)

4.8 Child Criminal Exploitation

The use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. Economic exploitation implies the idea of a certain gain or profit through the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. This material interest has an impact on the economy of a certain unit, be it the State, the community or the family. Examples: Child domestic work, child soldiers and the recruitment and involvement of children in armed conflict, child bondage, the use of children from criminal activities include the sale and distribution of narcotics, the involvement of children in any harmful or hazardous work. Criminal exploitation is also known as 'county lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties and they use dedicated mobile 'phone 'lines' to supply drugs.

Wales Safeguarding procedure Practice Guide - [Safeguarding Wales](#)

The Council actively works with partners to identify children at risk and prevent this form of abuse.

4.9 Modern Slavery / Trafficking

Modern Day Slavery encompasses slavery, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have to coerce, deceive, and force the individual into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. The Modern Slavery Act came into law in 2015 and allows the courts to pass down severe sentences on the perpetrators, and to place restrictions on people from harm. In 2019 Blaenau Gwent Council signed up to the [Welsh Government's Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains](#).

The Council acts in accordance with the relevant Modern Slavery and Trafficking legislation and guidance and promotes practices to identify and safeguard victims of these crimes, and ensure transparency of supply chains. To this end the Council is working in partnership with Welsh Government, the wider public sector, suppliers, service providers and others to address Modern Slavery challenges and drive collaborative action with a view to reducing risks and incidence of modern slavery.

4.10 National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's framework for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. First Responder agencies including the Police and Local Authorities have a statutory duty under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act to notify the Secretary of

State when they identify a potential victim of modern slavery and in the context of children must therefore make referrals into the NRM. Section 52 of the Act also places a duty on Local Authorities to identify and refer consenting adult victims through the NRM. Councils also have a duty to notify the Home Secretary of adults who do not consent to enter the NRM.

This requirement in respect of potential victims of Modern Slavery is harnessed to responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 as set out in this Corporate Safeguarding Policy when, as an employee of the local authority, members of staff have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns in relation to a child or adult at risk.

The objective of the National Referral Mechanism is to provide effective decision-making on victims of modern slavery following referrals from the Home Office. It is essential that all who are identified as victims of modern slavery are connected to local support. Report modern slavery as a first responder - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4.11 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - VAWDASV

Domestic Abuse is recognised to impact both adults and children and can have life changing effects. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises children to be direct victims. The VAWDASV Act (Wales) 2015 aims to improve arrangements for the prevention of gender based violence, abuse, and sexual violence, and to ensure victims and survivors are supported and protected.

The protection of victims and support for people affected is underpinned by the 'Ask and Act' duty placed on public service staff to ask potential victims about the possibility that they may be experiencing VAWDASV and act so as to reduce suffering and harm.

The National Training Framework is the main vehicle of delivery of The Act. Full details on the training requirements can be found here - [National Training Framework - Gwent Safeguarding](#).

All staff/volunteers/Elected Members will be expected to undertake the e-learning Group 1 VAWDASV training as a **mandatory** part of their induction to the Council along with any other Group training relevant to the position that they hold (Appendix F).

4.12 Self-Harm / Suicide

Self-harm is the name given to any deliberate act of self-injury or behaviour intended to cause harm to someone's own body. The Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy and associated action plan ([Suicide prevention and self-harm strategy: delivery plan 2025 to 2028 | GOV.WALES](#)) sets out the strategic aims and objectives to prevent and reduce suicide and self-harm in Wales. It identifies priority care providers to deliver action and confirms the national and local action required.

[Multi agency protocol self harm and suicide in C and YP Mach 25](#) – Gwent Safeguarding Board.

Section 5 – Safe Partnerships

5.1 Safe Partnerships

Prospective providers of commissioned services received details of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and training requirements during the procurement process. They must agree to meet the Council's requirements to continue through the tender process.

Relevant staff in partner organisations who are commissioned to work for the Council to deliver services to children and young people must undertake the Council's safeguarding training. The Council has a process to collect and record performance data from partner organisations to assure itself that they are complying with its safeguarding policies i.e. safeguarding training and recruitment practices, and checking awarding contractors are registered with the relevant industry regulator, where applicable.

A checklist is in place for managing contractors working on Council sites. DBS checks are required for all personnel.

5.2 Commissioning Arrangements

Any new service provider commissioned to provide services to children or adults at risk will be required to undergo an accreditation process. The accreditation process is designed to ensure that the service is fit for purpose and has the necessary arrangements in place to safeguard those it is supporting and deliver a quality service. As part of the accreditation process checks will be made with other local authorities, regulating bodies and financial enquiries. Providers will be required to provide information confirming their safeguarding policy and procedures.

The Contractor Safeguarding Assessment Guide is fully embedded within the Council's Tendering processes. The Guide is aimed at ensuring that Council officers engaged in planning a procurement include safeguarding within tender and contract documentation in consistent way that is proportionate to the risk. Safeguarding questions are also embedded within the Council's Contract Management system.

Contract monitoring activity, either planned or unplanned, will include satisfying the Council that the provider is managing their responsibilities in regard to safeguarding and are operating in line with legislation, policy and procedures. Where required, confirmation will be sought of the services performance regarding safe recruitment practices, DBS checking and safeguarding referrals.

The Council publishes an annual Modern Slavery statement. The statement is signed off by the Chief Executive and Lead Cabinet Member and:

- Sets out the action taken in the previous year, and the actions to be taken, to ensure that there is no Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in its own business or supply chains.
- Includes details of the targeted Modern Slavery training that will be available to Council employees.
- Includes a commitment that, where appropriate, the Council's tender and contract documentation will include clauses to ensure compliance with the Council's Safeguarding Policy and wider legislation.

5.3 Lettings and Hiring

The Council must ensure that any external organisations using its facilities (e.g. for community events or services) are aware of and comply with safeguarding expectations. This includes ensuring that hirers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

In the case of 'one off' children's events, for example, a private birthday party, safeguarding legislation exempts such uses from the processes mentioned above but nonetheless this policy requires managers to be able to properly demonstrate due regard to safeguarding risks in agreeing any hiring arrangements.

5.4 Blaenau Gwent Housing Register

The Council's Housing Register is a partnership between the Council and local housing associations. Blaenau Gwent Housing Register is a common housing register and a joint allocations policy. The Housing Register, a legal responsibility of the Council, determines the priority and procedure for the allocation of social housing in Blaenau Gwent. The Housing Register policy supports and contributes to the Council's Safeguarding Policy through the following:

5.4.1 Special Management Lettings - There may be exceptional circumstances where the only way an exceptionally urgent housing need can be resolved is through the use of management discretion. There is the ability in very urgent cases to exercise discretion. In the interests of fairness to all applicants these circumstances are kept to an absolute minimum. Such cases may include the following circumstances: an applicant has an exceptional need that is not covered by the allocation scheme, for example, where Child or Public Protection issues require urgent rehousing.

5.4.2 Serious Offenders – Blaenau Gwent Housing Options will seek to minimise the risk to the community and the applicant where individuals are considered to pose a risk to themselves and/or others (even where an individual has not been convicted of an offence). Blaenau Gwent Housing Register (through the Council's Housing Options Team) will work with the Police and Probation Services to assess and manage risk and will apply special arrangements where cases are referred through the Multi-Agency Public Protection panel (MAPPA) or any protocol with Probation Services Officers. This may result in restrictions being placed upon the applicant in their choice of property or area, or a direct offer of suitable accommodation being made.

5.4.3 Information Sharing - Information may be shared about individuals and their history, irrespective of whether their consent has been obtained, in exceptional circumstances. This will be in accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 115). This includes where there is a need to safeguard children and address issues regarding child protection or adults at risk

5.5 Licensing

The Blaenau Gwent Council statement of Licensing Policy (2003) sets out the four licensing objectives under the Licensing Act 2003, one of which is the "the Protection of Children from Harm".

The Statement of Licensing Policy is concerned with the licensing of premises selling alcohol and the licensing of late night refreshment. In administering the statutory Licensing regime in this regard, all Responsible Authorities, including Social Services, are able to share relevant information and make representations in respect of individual applications for grant or variation

of a licence. In addition, the Licensing team acts as a signpost to information, including any material that relates to Safeguarding advice.

The Council will continue to work with traders who require licences e.g. takeaway outlets, to provide assistance on how to recognise possible safeguarding issues, signposting as above.

All staff within the Licensing team receive safeguarding training to assist with the performance of their roles. In their work with the taxi trade, Licensing staff are able to share relevant information with Police and Social Services in respect of the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.

5.6 Education Establishments Roles and Responsibilities in Schools

The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools is set out in the Keeping Learners Safe Guidance (March 2022) ([Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](#)) and the Blaenau Gwent LGES Safeguarding in Education Policy.

Section 6 – Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool



Self-Assessment-Corporate-Safeguarding-

Appendix B – Designated Safeguarding Person Role and Responsibilities



DSP role and responsibilities.docx

Appendix C – Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework; Group Breakdown



Corporate Safeguarding Training

Appendix D – Making a Referral



Safeguarding Children and Young P



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults-Dut

Appendix E - Key Resources for Counterterrorism



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Appendix F – VAWSDAV Training



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