



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Social Services, Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee**

5th July 2021

**Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing
Andrew Jarrett**

Matter for: Information and Monitoring

Wards Affected: All

**WALES AUDIT OFFICE REVIEW OF CORPORATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR
SAFEGUARDING – NEATH PORT TALBOT, DATED MARCH 2020.**

Purpose of the Report

To present the Wales Audit Office (WAO) findings following their review of 'Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding across Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC)' and subsequent work undertaken thereafter.

Executive Summary

The WAO review focused on the Council's own corporate safeguarding arrangements. The WAO undertook this review to seek assurance that the Council has effective corporate arrangements in place for safeguarding. Findings from a previous review of corporate safeguarding, dated 2014 were considered for the purpose of this review, including the Council's progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's report, 'Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils', dated July 2015. The review was carried out in the April and May 2019 and the final report, dated March 2020 can be found at Appendix A.

Main Findings

1. 'The review sought to answer the question: do the Council's governance and management arrangements provide assurance that children and adults are safeguarded? Overall, [the WAO] found that: the Council has corporate arrangements for safeguarding in place but needs to strengthen some areas'. (WAO, 2020: 4) and proposed the following areas for improvement:

P1 The Council needs to set out the overall governance structure for safeguarding, including how all the different groups concerned with safeguarding matters relate and/or report to one another.

P2 The Council needs to update its corporate safeguarding policy to reflect the revised arrangements for overview and scrutiny of safeguarding and refer to the role of the Corporate Safeguarding Group.

P3 The Council needs to put mechanisms in place to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of specific officers and Elected Members referenced in the corporate safeguarding policy are being effectively communicated and complied with, including having lead safeguarding managers in all service areas.

P4 The Council needs to improve the effectiveness of its Corporate Safeguarding Group by: a) developing and agreeing a terms of reference for the group to make its role and function clearer; b) defining the role and responsibility of officers in attending the group; c) reviewing the membership to ensure all parts of the organisation are represented; d) setting out where the group reports to, including whether it should report through to an overview and scrutiny committee; and e) regularly assessing the group's effectiveness in delivering the desired outcomes.

P5 The Audit Committee needs to improve their oversight of the Council's risk registers.

P6 The Council needs to strengthen its safe recruitment procedures by: a) assessing the risks around its current policy on the regularity of DBS checks and determine if any changes are needed; b) formally recording and retaining the risk assessment undertaken when determining if a role needs a DBS check (and at what level) on the corporate HR system; c) improving arrangements for completing DBS checks for staff working in schools; and d) maintaining a central recruitment record for all staff working or volunteering for the Council (including in schools).

P7 The Council needs to strengthen arrangements for safeguarding training by: a) assessing whether the current training on safeguarding meets its needs; and b) establishing a reliable, central record of training undertaken so there can be a corporate oversight of compliance with training requirements.

P8 The Council should review procurement practices to ensure that safeguarding matters are fully considered and managed when services are delivered on its behalf by third parties.

P9 The Council needs to establish a system to assess and report on the effectiveness of its corporate arrangements for safeguarding

2. An action plan to address the proposals for improvement has been overseen by the Corporate Safeguarding Group and can be found at Appendix B.

Financial Impacts

The audit work undertaken by the WAO has been delivered within the budget allocated for audit and inspection work.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Valleys Communities Impacts

No implications.

Workforce Impacts

No implications

Legal Impacts

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts

The Audit has identified an area of improvement, which relates to the Council's oversight of the operational and strategic risk register: **P5** The Audit Committee needs to improve their oversight of the Council's risk registers.

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

That Committee note the WAO findings following their review of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements and that the proposed action plan in response to the review findings be duly scrutinised and approved.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

Not applicable.

Implementation of Decision

Not applicable.

Officer Contact

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Appendix 1

WAO Review of Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding – Neath Port Talbot Council (2020)



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Safeguarding report

Appendix 2

Corporate Safeguarding Group (CSG) Work Programme 2020/21



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