

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
REPORT TO:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	17 June 2013
LEAD OFFICER:	Head of Adults' Services
TITLE:	Safeguarding Adults – Towards a North Wales Strategic Framework
DIRECTOR:	Corporate Director of Community
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Kenneth Hughes
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report on the strategic direction for Safeguarding Adults 2. To form a view regarding the change to the current regional arrangements and the creation of a 2 tier North Wales Safeguarding Adult Board

1. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Council's improvement journey for safeguarding adults has been completed over the past year and substantial progress has been made on an operational and strategic level. Indeed, this area of our statutory responsibilities is evolving to be an area of strength for us – with a new local improvement programme in place for 2013/14 (as a framework to secure focus and momentum for our medium term improvement objectives);
- 1.2 These efforts have meant that the sub-regional framework has evolved from being a Forum for Protecting Vulnerable Adults to being a strategic, multi-agency safeguarding framework. This work has progressed during the last 9 months. This is the first model in North and Mid Wales;
- 1.3 It is fair to say that the Social Services Improvement Agency ¹has been a reference point and has advised us on how to embark on a new and innovative path;
- 1.4 Sustainable Social Services: An Operational Framework and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill 2013 ²bring with them varying duties in the area of safeguarding adults.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1 In proceeding to establish a North West Wales Safeguarding Board (February 2013), the following matters/principles were confirmed as fundamental to the new safeguarding framework:

¹ Conducted by the WLGA – Welsh Local Government Association – the SSIA was launched in 2006 to improve and promote excellence in Social Services.

² Sustainable Social Services: Operational Framework (Welsh Government 2011) – a 10 year vision for Social Services in Wales.

- Replacing the Adult Safeguarding Forum with a Board with greater focus on leadership.
- Being in a better position to discuss strategic safeguarding outcomes with partners.
- Securing adequate resources for an effective Adults Safeguarding Board and improving outcomes.
- Attempting to develop a model for the Board that can be developed into a regional model over the forthcoming period.
- Discovering partners' commonalities, challenging boundaries and assumptions.
- Developing operational and strategic links with the safeguarding children frameworks.
- Securing a clear and strong direction.

2.2 There is now an outline of a work/improvement programme in place for 2013/14 together with an assessment of strengths/weaknesses and a position statement – using the SSIA toolkit for Safeguarding Boards as a template.

2.3 Section 7 of the Social Services and Well-being Bill 2013 sets out the operational and strategic expectations for safeguarding, with the legislative framework reinforcing our legal foundation for adults in future. The recent announcement made by the Deputy Minister for Social Services in the Welsh Government placed a clear expectation in terms of moving towards establishing regional strategic arrangements for safeguarding.

2.4 Whilst welcoming this legislative change which will mean responding to adult safeguarding / protection within a strong statutory basis, it is necessary to draw attention to the:-

- Resulting increase in demand for interventions by Adults' Services
- Change in practice expectations of our workforce

Welsh Government in publishing the Bill made a clear statement that there would be no additional financial resources available to enable Local Authorities to realise these new legislative responsibilities. Effective multi-agency partnerships between statutory partners will therefore be crucial in our ability to respond appropriately to the new responsibilities. Our strategy will therefore be concerned with identifying opportunities to standardise arrangements across Local Authority boundaries where appropriate and possible.

3. TOWARDS A STRONG STRATEGIC REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing Bill and Sustainable Social Services: Operational Framework place a duty on partners to develop the current arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults so as to create a local, regional and national programme for safeguarding adults. It is fair to say that the current arrangements for vulnerable adults in North Wales are a network for sharing information and supporting practice only. There is no evidence of strategic direction or work. The safeguarding agenda will now need to move towards a regional strategic framework – that is robust and which meets the requirements of the Social Services Bill.
- 3.2 Section 7 of the Bill(entitled Safeguarding) contains a mission statement for the Adult Safeguarding Board as follows:

“Functions and Procedures of Safeguarding Boards

.....(2) 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 at risk of, abuse or neglect, and*

(b) To prevent those adults within its area mentioned in paragraph

(a) (i) from becoming at risk of abuse or neglect.....”³

Statutory regulations will follow in due course – setting out the geographical areas for the Safeguarding Boards in Wales(called Safeguarding Board Areas). Discussions thus far during the consultation on the Bill lead us to believe that North Wales will be a single area for the purposes of establishing an Adult Safeguarding Board.

- 3.3 As a result of regional work streams over the past 4 months, the following recommendation will be presented to the Scrutiny Committees of the 6 Authorities in North Wales in the next month:

To establish a 2 tier North Wales Safeguarding Board – enabling 3x2 Local Authorities to collaborate in order to develop Safeguarding Boards using the lessons learned from the model that is now in place in Anglesey and Gwynedd. The proposed structure for this option would therefore be:

³ The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill 2013 – Legal Framework for policy delivery.

- **One Regional Safeguarding Adults Board;**
- **3 Sub-regional Boards(Môn/Gwynedd, Conwy/Denbigh and Flint/Wrexham)**
- **4 Sub-groups:**
 - **Training;**
 - **Policies and procedures (links to national work);**
 - **Performance and audit**
 - **Serious Case Reviews**

Option 4 was considered (Appendix 1 to the report contains a full options assessment). This option was unanimously supported by the Local Authorities and all the partners due to the following benefits:

- This model is currently being piloted in safeguarding children – the early indications are encouraging and positive. It provides opportunities to combine various adults and children safeguarding functions in the medium term.
- Gwynedd and Anglesey have already embarked on this journey and lessons learned are available to others.
- It enables developing structures in ways that strike an acceptable balance and good management between local and regional agenda.
- Responsiveness to local practices and issues.
- The regional safeguarding elements could create a higher profile and increase the influence of the North Wales Board regionally and nationally.
- A more functional model for organisations working regionally throughout North Wales (e.g. Health/Police).

3.4 The impact of the decision on corporate priorities – developing a two tier regional Adult Safeguarding Board will enable all the partners to realize the aspirations of the Social Services Bill and the Welsh Government’s long term vision. This development will also expand the collaboration agenda across North Wales thereby reducing demands on resources(people and funding). Approving this option would also place safeguarding adults on the same footing as safeguarding children and would provide a robust model for safeguarding.

- 3.5 **Any cost implications** – It is initially intended to develop this model within the current capacity available regionally. A bid has been made to the Regional Collaboration Fund including 3 year project management capacity to support this workstream. The scope of the preferred option will lead to integration across aspects of adult and children’s safeguarding work – thereby requiring a dialogue on how to share business support.
- 3.6 **Consultation** – extensive consultation has taken place with the Authorities in North Wales and the key partners/stakeholders. This consultation work included two workshops in North Wales.
- 3.7 **Equalities Impact Assessment** – It is confirmed that the assessment has been completed and is available for inspection.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is requested to recommend the following for approval by the Executive:-

- R1. Note developments and progress hitherto in the area of safeguarding adults in the North West;**
- R2. Approve the Anglesey and Gwynedd strategic direction for safeguarding adults as a trigger for influencing the development of the regional framework.**
- R3. Confirm the principle that the safeguarding frameworks for adults and children need to be addressed on an equal footing and not to discriminate between them in terms of their status or importance.**
- R4. Approve revising the current North Wales arrangements and supporting the preferred option – a 2 tier North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board.**

Anwen Davies
 Head of Adult Services
 Isle of Anglesey County Council

28/05/13
 (amended 02/06/13)

APPENDIX:	Document by the North Wales Social Services Improvement Collaborative
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North
Wales
Social
Services
Improvement
Collaborative

Cydweithredfa
Gwell
Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol
Gogledd
Cymru

North Wales Adult Safeguarding Integration and/or Collaboration: The way forward

Context

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Bill and Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action brings a different context to adult safeguarding. The current arrangements is a network arrangement for sharing information and peer support. The emerging view is that there is a need to move the adult safeguarding agenda into a robust regional framework.

Purpose of the report

This report

- 1) Presents the options
- 2) Is a vehicle for decision making
- 3) Explores the appetite for seeking closer synergy across adult and children safeguarding

These were initial discussions in December which paved the way to a regional North Wales Workshop which was held on 25th January 2013 with a range of stakeholders from statutory organisations. The discussions at that workshop have influenced the formulation of the options within this report.

Background

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Bill and Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action places a requirement upon partners to develop the current adult protection arrangements into an adult safeguarding agenda both locally, regionally and nationally. A statement letter from Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services dated 19th October 2012 communicated some clear messages around Welsh Government's direction of travel in light of its recent consultation on the Bill. Furthermore, part 7 of the Bill relating to safeguarding clearly states the requirements for Safeguarding Adults Boards and clearly sets out the objectives of the Safeguarding Adults Board as:

(a) To protect adults within its area who:

- Have needs for care and support (whether or not a local authority is meeting any of those needs, and
- Are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- To prevent those adults within its area from becoming at risk of abuse and neglect

The Bill also prescribes that Safeguarding Boards must produce an 'annual plan' at the beginning of each financial year setting out its proposals for achieving its objectives within that year and a report must be published by 31st July of each year on how it has exercised its functions in the preceding financial year, and the extent to which it implemented the proposals in its annual plan for the preceding financial year.

The WG agenda therefore, is firmly set around the requirement to develop Adult Safeguarding Boards as a means of strengthening adult safeguarding across Wales.

Statutory regulation on Adult Safeguarding Boards will set out the areas in Wales for safeguarding boards (to be referred to as safeguarding board areas). In reflecting upon discussions during consultation it is anticipated that the North Wales footprint will remain one region.

Joint working with Children Safeguarding Board

Notwithstanding the fact that it is fully acknowledged that the complexities and possible risks and practice concerns associated with integrating safeguarding frameworks across both children and adult services need to be carefully considered, this is however, something that should be pursued. This would place North Wales as a region in a position of strength as the national direction of travel evolves and is clarified.

Engagement of Elected Members in Adult Safeguarding

Consideration needs to be given to the active engagement of elected members within adult safeguarding. There is acknowledgement that this has been in need of some strengthening and is inconsistent. This will provide a framework of ensuring political accountability for safeguarding.

Current Landscape – Adult Safeguarding

Currently the Local Authorities of Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy undertake adult safeguarding activities on an individual basis. Gwynedd and Anglesey Council's however are working collaboratively to develop a joint Safeguarding Adults Board. Although this development is currently in its infancy a shadow joint board has now been established and has met once.

The 3 sub-regional Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) in North Wales has already taken steps ahead of recent communications from Welsh Government to develop a shadow LSCB.

Summary of Options to be considered

- 1 Maintain the status quo – 4 North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board and 1 Sub-regional Adult Safeguarding Board (Gwynedd and Anglesey)
- 2 Three North Wales Adult Safeguarding Boards
- 3 Single North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board
- 4 Two-tier North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board
- 5

The feedback from the workshop held on 25th January 2013 can be found in Appendix 1.

Options

- 1 Maintain the status quo – 4 North Wales Safeguarding Boards and 1 Sub-regional Adult Safeguarding Board (Gwynedd and Anglesey)**

Given the clear direction provided within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill, the option of maintaining the status quo in 4 of the North Wales Local Authority areas is unlikely to be commended by the Welsh Government. A North Wales Adult Protection forum exists in North Wales however, this is a network arrangement for information sharing and peer support.

This option is least favourable as:

- It is not in line with the requirements of the Deputy Minister
- It is resource intensive
- It does not bring about efficiency
- The current arrangement is a network and not a decision making forum

2 Three Sub-regional North Wales Adult Safeguarding Boards (Wrexham and Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy, Gwynedd and Ynys Mon).

There are a number of strengths and weaknesses to this option; the most significant weakness is the requirement for appropriate resources and duplication of work in particular for the regionally structured organisations such as North Wales Police and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

This model is already being progressed by Gwynedd and Anglesey and therefore, there will be shared-learning available to develop this model. Local Authority members and officers may find a three board structure may initially be more palatable and more acceptable from a governance point of view.

This model would also mirror the established LSCB structure and again learning from this development would be shared.

This option is not favourable as:

- It is not within the spirit of the Welsh Government's footprint underpinning collaboration across boundaries.
- It does not bring about efficiency and sufficiently reduce duplication
- It continues to be resource intensive
- It is not conducive to innovative collaboration and forward thinking around governance and accountability frameworks across agency boundaries
- May be deemed as being overly cautious.
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3 Single North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board

Given that 4 Local Authorities currently have individual safeguarding arrangements and Gwynedd and Anglesey sub-regional arrangements, it would be challenging to comfortably move from the current structure to a single board. Governance and accountability arrangements would need to be considered carefully and there would be potential dilution of links with local services and remoteness from practice. This model would also run the risk of becoming detached from frontline staff and the

public. Given that safeguarding currently lies within individual or sub-regional arrangements Local Authority members and officers would need to be assured that this model would provide transparent and robust governance and accountability for adult safeguarding as the statutory duty for safeguarding lies with the Director of Social Services as clearly stated in the Roles and Responsibilities of that post.

The strengths of this option include the potential for greater efficiency, reduced duplication and effective shared learning. A single safeguarding board also brings the potential to bring a broader range of skills, knowledge and experience to the safeguarding agenda. This option would no doubt, be preferred by Welsh Government and organisations that work across North Wales.

This option is less favourable as:

- Whilst the aspiration of the Deputy Minister is to have regional adult safeguarding board, to move from a local arrangement straight to a regional arrangement would require great confidence in the new model and the North Wales footprint covers a very large geographical area
- It would be too remote from practice
- It would prove hard to hold a large number of representative agencies to account
- The agenda could become unmanageable which would impact on the effectiveness of the Board
- Governance issues and accountability would become remote and impact on statutory duty of the Director of Social Services.

4 Two tier- North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board

This option would enable 3 x 2 Local Authorities to work together to develop a Safeguarding Board and to develop using the learning from the current Gwynedd and Anglesey model. However, there are elements of adult safeguarding that could conceivably be carried out on a regional basis for example, training, performance and audit, policy, and serious case reviews.

This structure would provide a balance between regional working and being able to work effectively across boundaries whilst continuing to maintain local links.

With regard to weaknesses this option would present the most potential for confusion around accountability, securing representation at the right level for both sub-regional and regional elements and would require strong leadership at each level. This could impact on the capacity of senior managers of all agencies; some members would find that they have more meetings to attend than

previously, for example however, this would have less capacity implications on pan North Wales organisations.

The most notable strengths for this options include the fact that this model is now being piloted in children safeguarding via the LSCB's and early indications would suggest its potential as a future model that could be fully integrated. Duplication would be lessened, and it allows for innovation, evolution and offers the potential to reduce demand on resources, both people and financial. The general broad direction of travel as outlined in the Bill is a National Board for Children and Adults. There is lots to learn from children safeguarding boards and this structure would allow us to achieve equity.

This is the favoured option as:

- This model is currently being piloted in children's safeguarding through the LSCB model and early indications are encouraging and positive
- Gwynedd and Anglesey have started on the journey of establishing a joint board and the learning from this is available
- It allows for the structures to be developed in ways which strike an acceptable and well-managed balance between local and regional agendas
- It maintains the ability to be responsive to local issues and practice
- The regional adult safeguarding elements could create a higher profile and increase the North Wales Board's influence regionally and nationally
- This model would be more manageable for the pan-North Wales organisations
- It strengthens the collaborative agenda in North Wales
- Having the same model for adults and children safeguarding boards will bring about equity for both adult and children safeguarding in readiness for any direction from Welsh Government
- Over time, this model will bring about the opportunity to merge some common areas of safeguarding practice across children and adults e.g. training, policies and procedures, performance and audit, serious case reviews.
- This model will also bring a real opportunity for integrated business support to underpin children and adult safeguarding across North Wales.

5 The favoured option – a two tier Adult Safeguarding Board

The potential structure for this option consists of:

- One Regional Adult Safeguarding Board
- Three Sub-regional Adult Safeguarding Boards (Gwynedd/Anglesey; Conwy/Denbighshire; Flintshire/Wrexham)
- To underpin the above, four regional sub-groups:
 - o Training
 - o Policies and procedures (linking to National work)
 - o Performance and Audit
 - o Serious case reviews

Next Steps:

- 1) The collaborative of NWSSIC, NWASH and safeguarding leads for the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Police and North Wales Ambulance Service are invited to form a view around the preferred option.
- 2) Provide a clear steer to the current adult protection forum in relation to their existence and any forward work programme
- 3) Consider the resources needed to take forward