

**Report To: Cabinet**

**Date of Meeting: 30 July 2013**

**Lead Member / Officer: Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Social Services and Health / Phil Gilroy, Head of Adult & Business Services**

**Report Author: Alaw Pierce, Service Manager, Disability Services and Safeguarding**

**Title: Adult Safeguarding**

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**1. What is the report about?**

This report is about proposals for the future arrangements for the oversight of Adult Safeguarding in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

A decision on the available options is required to enable any changes to the current arrangements to be made.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That Cabinet considers the report and agrees to change the current arrangements for adult safeguarding, in line with each partner across North Wales, to the preferred option of a Two-tiered North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board. The options appraisal is attached at Appendix 1.

**4. Report details**

4.1 The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Bill places a requirement upon partners to develop the current adult protection arrangements into an adult safeguarding agenda both locally, regionally and nationally. Currently across North Wales there is a network arrangement for sharing information and peer support and the emerging view is that there is a need to move the adult safeguarding agenda into a robust regional framework.

4.2 Locally, Denbighshire has an Adult Protection Committee which is made up of the local authority, police, health groups, 3rd and independent sectors. They work together to challenge and combat abuse and promote the rights of vulnerable adults. They have a quality monitoring function and regularly review practice and procedure, including feedback from reports (e.g. Serious Care Reviews), in order to improve services and outcomes for individuals.

4.3 Part 7 of the Bill relating to safeguarding clearly states the requirements for Safeguarding Adult Boards to be developed and sets out the objectives as follows:

- a) To protect adults within its areas 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

- b) To prevent those adults within its area from becoming at risk of abuse and neglect.

4.4 Statutory regulation on Adult Safeguarding Boards will set out the areas in Wales for safeguarding boards (to be referred to as safeguarding board areas). Discussions during consultation has led to the understanding that North Wales will remain one region.

#### 4.5 Preferred Option

Four options have been considered as a model for North Wales and the preferred option is Option 4 – a two tier North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board (see appendix 1). This option enables the North Wales Local Authorities to work together in pairs to develop three Adult Safeguarding Boards using the learning from the current Gwynedd and Ynys Mon model. The proposal is for Denbighshire to work with Conwy. 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.

##### 4.5.1 Weaknesses

- Potential confusion over accountability between regional and sub-regional
- Securing representation at the right level for both regional and sub-regional elements
- Requires strong leadership at each level
- Potential impact on the capacity of senior managers of all agencies – having to attend more meetings than previous

##### 4.5.2 Strengths

- Model is being piloted in children’s services and the learning is transferrable
- Duplication is lessened
- Allows for innovation
- Offers the potential to reduce demand on resources – people and financial
- Gwynedd and Ynys Mon have already started on the journey of establishing a joint board and the learning from this is available

#### 4.6 This two-tiered option is favoured as:

- This model allows for structures to be developed in ways which strike an acceptable and well-managed balance between local and regional agendas
- Maintains the ability to be responsive to local issues and practice
- 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

- Over time, this model could bring the opportunity to merge some common areas of safeguarding practice across children and adult services
- This model can also bring an opportunity for integrated business support to underpin children and adult safeguarding across North Wales.
- Most importantly, this model enables efficiencies to be developed at the same time as improving outcomes for vulnerable adults through an increased capacity to share learning and innovation as well as ensuring a common standard of response for citizens across North Wales.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The development of Adult Safeguarding Board arrangements contributes to the corporate priority to protect vulnerable people and enable them to remain living independently.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

This model will initially be developed using existing regional capacity. A bid has been made to the Regional Collaboration Fund which includes a project management post to support this development. If successful, this funding will be available for 3 years. However, the preferred model does provide the opportunity to merge some common areas of safeguarding practice across children and adult which has the potential to lead to an integrated business support function to underpin adult and children safeguarding across North Wales.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

The EqIA (attached at Appendix 2) concluded that there would be a positive impact through standardising practice across North Wales, raising the profile of adult safeguarding and providing robust governance under which the Board will conduct its business.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out?**

- 8.1 Senior Social Care officers and other North Wales Organisations, e.g. Police, BCU, have been involved in agreeing the preferred option.
- 8.2 A report was presented to Partnership Scrutiny on 18 July 2013, which was after the deadline for this report. Verbal feedback will be available at Cabinet.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

If the regional funding bid succeeds, the cost of implementing the proposed safeguarding arrangements should be contained within the funding available. If the bid is unsuccessful the business case should be reviewed to assess whether there is merit in developing the project using existing resources. The position with regard to potential efficiencies should be reviewed as the project develops. Proposals to develop the contract monitoring function are noted. Capacity may be created within the monitoring function in future if national and regional procurement projects develop successfully and include social care contracts within their remit.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The risks are highlighted above in 4.5.1. These will continually be monitored by both the regional and sub-regional boards to ensure that they are effectively managed.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Arrangements for managing the protection of vulnerable adults are set out in 'In Safe Hands' (2000), a guidance document from Welsh Government. This places duties on Local Authorities and relevant partners to investigate and monitor adult protection issues.

The formation of regional arrangements is included in the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Bill.