

Report to	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	6th July 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Elen Heaton, Lead Member for Health and Social Care / Alaw Pierce Service Manager, Adult Social Care & Homelessness Service
Head of Service	Ann Lloyd, Adult Social Care & Homelessness Service
Report author	Nerys Tompsett, Safeguarding Team Manager
Title	Annual Report on Safeguarding Adults in Denbighshire 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

1. What is the report about?

This report constitutes the annual performance report for Safeguarding Adults in compliance with statutory guidance and provides an overview of the impact of local safeguarding arrangements and practice.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide Members with an overview of the impact of Local Safeguarding arrangements and practice and to review progress in this key area of work over the last twelve months. To refer to data which reflects figures submitted by the Local Authority on an annual basis to the Welsh Government Data Unit.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That members receive and comment on the report and acknowledge the importance of a corporate approach to the safeguarding of adults at risk and the responsibility of the Council to view this as a key priority area.

4. Report details

- 4.1 The past 12 months' adult protection activity, focusing on the quality of safeguarding work, with particular attention on consistent performance against the Welsh Government performance indicator of enquiries completed within 7 working days.
- 4.2 Data comparison on the activity for the past 12 months around Section 5: Person in a Position of Trust referrals.
- 4.3 Activity for the past 12 months in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).
- 4.4 A summary of the key achievements for 2022/23.

Headlines from 2022 - 23 Statistics

Year	Reports(referrals) received
2019 - 2020	597
2020 - 2021	354
2021 - 2022	324
2022 - 2023	348

- There has been a slight increase (7%) in the number of Adult at Risk reports received in comparison to the same period last year. Overall, reporting levels over the last 3 years have been fairly steady.
- The Social Services & Wellbeing Act came into force in April 2016, showing its highest level of Adult at Risk reports in 2018 and then started to show signs of decreasing as the 'duty to report' became clearer for professionals. However, whilst the number of reports increased, this did not result in an increase in the number of cases proceeding to a strategy meeting. Local Authorities across North Wales noted a change in relation to the number of Adult at Risks reports during Covid, possibly affected by restrictions, less contact with outside services and/or families, this may have contributed to this change. Figures appear to be similar from previous years, demonstrating that perhaps the 'duty to report' abuse or neglect or the risk of abuse has become more recognisable for professionals. Denbighshire safeguarding team work closely with partner agencies to ensure that safeguarding is high on the agenda and continue to receive telephone calls from provider services and professionals, who are seeking advice or guidance relating to safeguarding issues. These calls are monitored to support further analysis of any possible themes or trends that might be

emerging, that may require an additional approach to support any wider safeguarding actions.

- Physical abuse 34% (166) and neglect 31% (149) were the most common types of abuse reported, again similar to previous years and following the national trends. It is important to note, when looking at the data that more than one category of abuse can be reported within a safeguarding report. (See Appendix 1 for safeguarding data 2022 – 23)
- Last year we were able to capture a full year's data in relation to Section 5 process: *Allegations/ Concerns about Practitioners and Those in a Position of Trust*. We have seen an 84% increase in section 5 referrals compared to the previous year. Sources of referrals came from Providers (41%), Health Board (33%), Local Authority (17%) and Police (9%).
- Strategy discussions were held on all Section 5 referrals to determine the next course of action i.e. strategy discussion meeting and/or formal strategy meeting. Those cases that progressed to formal strategy meeting led to outcomes based on the balance of probability as to whether the allegation was substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded, deliberate, invented or malicious. (See Appendix 1 for safeguarding data 2022 – 23). Of the cases that proceeded to strategy meetings, 37% (7) cases were subject to a criminal investigation. None reached the criminal threshold for prosecution and were then reconsidered under a non-criminal process.

4.5 Performance Indicators

There is only one national performance indicator currently relating to Adult Safeguarding: the number of enquiries completed within 7 working days. We continue to maintain our performance, with 99.1% of enquiries completed within the 7 working day timescale for 2022/23. There has been an increase in the overall number of reports in this period compared to last year's data. This high level of performance, along with the increase in section 5 referrals, demonstrates the team's dedication and commitment to safeguarding those citizens of Denbighshire who are deemed to be Adults at Risk.

4.6 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) – activity 2022 - 23

- There has been an increase in the number of applications received: 469 (11%) compared to 423 last year. The previous year saw a significant increase of 26%, the

increase this year is more in keeping of what we would expect to see as placements become more stable and permanent and the effects of Covid start to plateau.

- 238 authorisations have been granted, which is comparable to last year at 236. New ways of working brought about by Covid19 have continued and digital platforms for the completion of assessments continues to support this area of work. Welsh Government funding to support DoLS work has enabled us to retain the increased Best Interests Assessor (BIA) capacity from last year as well as some additional capacity to carry out assessments through the medium of Welsh.
- To further increase our capacity to sign the DoLS authorisations, other team managers have been briefed and supported to undertake these duties and will further support the completion of DoLS authorisations as we attempt to reduce our waiting list. as we prepare for the implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS).
- A further 7 applications have been submitted to Court in relation to Deprivation in Domiciliary Settings (DiDS). This is ongoing work that's incorporated within routine casework in Complex Disability team.

4.7 Key achievements 2022 -23

- We have maintained a high level of performance in completing 99.1% of the section126 enquiries within 7 working days.
- The focus on completing quality audits has been maintained throughout 2022/23. These audits have continued to concentrate on a sample of safeguarding cases to review the quality and consistency of safeguarding work and the Position of Trust process (Section 5). They provide an opportunity to consider the quality of reports/referrals received, involvement of professionals, and the safeguarding action taken in relation to the perceived risk and how these risks will be managed moving forward. These audits enable regular checks and review of practice, ensuring good practice has not been compromised by the success of the performance indicator.
- The virtual platforms for facilitating safeguarding strategy meetings and Section 5 strategy meetings, along with Adult Protection case conferences, continue to work well and are now embedded within the service. These prove to be positive and provide good representation from both professionals and family members of the Adult at Risk, when appropriate.
- During challenging times across the social care sector for recruitment and retention of staff, the safeguarding team have reorganised its structure to support business continuity and have been successful in recruiting to all vacancies. The team now

consists of a team manager, deputy team manager and 3 experienced grade 9 social workers.

- Modern slavery: a referral was submitted to the National Referral Mechanism relating to individuals who were employed within a care home in Denbighshire. A safeguarding process was co-ordinated with all relevant partners to link in with the Gang masters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) processes.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

The Safeguarding Adults arrangements contribute directly to the corporate priorities of A healthier and happier Denbighshire, A better connected Denbighshire, and A fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire.

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

This service is already featured within existing budgets.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

A Well-being Impact Assessment is not required as this report makes no changes to policy.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Not applicable.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

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

- Section 5 process still proves to be a challenge in many areas, but specifically in relation to the operational element of this process i.e. poor practice verses abuse/neglect etc. The section 5 National Task and Finish Group has now concluded its work and we await the outcome for consultation. The initial feedback suggests that additional clarity may not be available and may now require further consideration from

the regional boards to reviewing the principals to support joint working with partner agencies.

- Further delay has been announced regarding LPS implementation date. There is no sign of feedback from the consultation undertaken in 2022 and we are still awaiting completed Codes of Practice. Therefore, Welsh Government have decided to pause any work, including the work around developing training materials through Social Care Wales, until there are clear implementation timescales in place. We await the next update to ensure that we are clear of the actions required to meet our statutory obligations for the implementation of LPS. In the meantime, we will continue to work to reduce the DoLS waiting list, and prioritise Mental Capacity Act training for all practitioners.
- Court proceedings continue to increase and the impact of this work on the capacity of our operational teams as well as our colleagues within the legal team cannot be underestimated. For example, for a DiDS, typically the Court takes 9-12 months from date of application to consider the application and make an Order. Given the delay we often experience requests from the Court to lodge updated information e.g. care plans which sometimes may create additional work for both social services and legal. Updated information is requested where previous documentation has expired whilst awaiting judicial consideration. This is a situation experienced by all Local Authorities and not unique to Denbighshire.

11. Power to make the decision

Scrutiny's powers with respect to this matter are set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution.