

Enw'r Grŵp: Name of Group:	Exception Report from Strategic Safeguarding Operational Group
Cadeirydd y Grŵp: Chair of Group:	Sian Passey, Assistant Director of Nursing Quality, Assurance and Safeguarding
Cyfnod Adrodd: Reporting Period:	9 th June 2020

**Materion Ansawdd, Diogelwch a Phrofiad:
Quality, Safety & Experience Matters:**

Strategic Safeguarding

The Strategic Safeguarding Operational Group has not held a meeting since the previous report to QSEAC, although the next meeting is scheduled for 1st July 2020. This report provides a focus on the Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) safeguarding response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safeguarding Legislation

HDdUHB continues to fulfil its duties outlined within the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Act (2015). This ensures that the statutory duty to report a child or adult at risk of abuse or neglect remains as prior to COVID-19. This also applies to the duty to undertake Looked After Health Children health assessments.

On a regional basis, colleagues have raised concerns relating to low numbers of referrals for both child, adult safeguarding and domestic incident reports; this has not been the case within the HDdUHB activity where a similar number of referrals to pre-COVID-19 have been received. During this period, to continue raising awareness, the corporate safeguarding team have used global email, the safeguarding intranet and making every contact count to ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to continue to report abuse or neglect and to apply a low threshold. In addition, these messages have been conveyed to primary care colleagues.

To support partnership-working, the Head of Safeguarding has participated in 1-2 weekly regional Safeguarding Board meetings to share, assess and mitigate risks with multi-agency colleagues. COVID-19 related regional guidance has been approved and shared within HDdUHB via global email and on the dedicated Safeguarding and COVID-19 section of the safeguarding intranet.

Further to this, the Regional VAWDASV Delivery Group has met monthly to review the position within the region and maximise opportunities for victims to report their abuse and obtain an appropriate response, and also to maximise opportunities for funding to support COVID-19 related work. This is being co-ordinated by the Regional VAWDASV Co-ordinator.

Professional Concerns

Professional concerns are raised when there is concern relating to the conduct of a paid or volunteer member of staff who are in a position of trust. In HDdUHB, there has been an increase in the number of domestic abuse related reports involving employees.

As part of the rapid response to Coronavirus, the Health Board appointed a number of additional staff. Three reports have been raised relating to members of staff who have been recruited all were managed appropriately under safeguarding procedures. As a consequence, no staff will now be able to commence positions until all the usual recruitment checks have been carried out.

Looked After Children (LAC)

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the LAC Health Team have made changes to their normal practice in line with national advice. LAC and young people are a particularly vulnerable group. HDdUHB has statutory duties in relation to the planning, commissioning and delivery of services in order to address the health needs of LAC residing in HDdUHB and children from our locality placed in other Health Board areas. The current advice is that video conferencing or telephone consultations are used to undertake health assessments and this has been implemented by the LAC Team. The LAC activity which existed prior to COVID-19 continues and the team regularly contribute to the multi-agency working with representation at strategies, LAC reviews, foster panels and also provide impromptu support for foster carers, social workers, health visitors and school nurses.

We have a particular vulnerable cohort of young people who are placed in our 22 registered residential homes within Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. They have a higher tendency of risk taking behaviours, have increased mental health issues and have unmet health needs. The LAC Nurse has regularly liaised with the homes during this period offering support around emotional well-being and all have been given an emotional health pack which was devised by Iechyd Da.

During the previous 5 weeks, HDdUHB are receiving an increase in the number of LAC within the Health Board, which could be a reflection of the pressure families are experiencing as part of the pandemic and lockdown.

This is having a significant impact on workload, which the team are managing at the moment, however this is something that the service needs to monitor and review to establish whether the pattern continues or is just a variance.

For clarity, HDdUHB would normally have 30 to 45 new LAC in a quarter. During these 5 weeks, HDdUHB has received 49 new children into the area, with 31 within a fortnight period. The number of LAC has increased from 721 to 770 in total.

Child Safeguarding

Scrutiny of the data available to the corporate safeguarding team has taken place to identify areas where there may be exceptions in assurance in referring children at risk of abuse or neglect to Local Authority Children Services. A detailed report will be shared with Service Safeguarding Delivery Groups and Strategic Safeguarding Operational Group.

In summary, the analysis demonstrates that despite a significant decline in relation to children under 18 years attending HDdUHB emergency departments during the same period, (March and April 2019), the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) activity for HDdUHB shows no significant variations. However we will continue to monitor this with the social restrictions which remain in place in Wales.

Safeguarding Training

In line with other training across HDdUHB, face to face safeguarding training has been cancelled due to the priorities for clinical skills training for new recruits, and updating existing staff. This is likely to impact on the overall training compliance; however, this is being monitored. The corporate safeguarding team are reviewing alternative means of delivering training to accommodate the social distancing rules and maximise capacity and attendance.

Risgiau:**Risks (include Reference to Risk Register reference):**

Two risks remain on the risk register which are reviewed bi-monthly. One relates to the compliance with Group 1 VAWDASV e-learning, and the other, the capacity within operational services to release staff for safeguarding training. The latter risk is being reviewed in light of the cancellation of training due to COVID-19 and the negative impact on poor compliance rates in 2019-20 particularly for Level 3 child safeguarding training and Level 3 adult safeguarding training.

Gwella Ansawdd:**Quality Improvement:**

The corporate safeguarding team are undertaking an analysis of safeguarding activity and themes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Argymhelliad:**Recommendation:**

The Committee is asked to discuss and gain assurance that the corporate safeguarding team are continuing to monitor and scrutinise safeguarding activity during the COVID-19 period.

Dyddiad Cyfarfod Nesaf y Grŵp Gweithredol:**Date of Next Operational Group Meeting:**

1st July 2020