

Protocol for Managing Adult Large-Scale Safeguarding Investigations

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board	Date: February 2025	Status: Approved
Author: Policies and Procedures Group on behalf of CTMSB	Previous Version: December 2019	Review Date: February 2027

1. INTRODUCTION

Definition

An Adult Large-Scale Safeguarding Investigation (ALSSI) will take place when;

- A number of adults at risk have allegedly been abused or neglected either within a single care setting or served by the same service provider (regardless of which agency commissions care or whether it is privately arranged), **or**
- A group of adults at risk appear to have been abused by one individual or group of individuals in an organised and targeted manner, **or**
- A pattern or theme of potential abuse or neglect from a single care provider is emerging from safeguarding or contract monitoring data.

Purpose

The purpose of an ALSSI is to;

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all adults at risk involved, individually and collectively
- Arrange and co-ordinate multi-agency responses to reduce risk of harm and protect all other potential adults at risk

It will be necessary to differentiate between poor practice, which should be addressed via the contract monitoring and Escalating Concerns/Provider Performance process, and abuse, which should be investigated under this protocol. However, as there is a significant over-lap in the two processes, there will need to be effective communication between the Multi-Agency Operations Group (MAOG) and the ALSSI, as action under both processes may be occurring simultaneously.

Every individual adult safeguarding concern will be dealt with following a person-centred safeguarding procedure compliant with the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Adult Safeguarding procedures. **The ALSSI protocol does not replace these procedures**, but is intended to enhance multi-agency communication, co-ordination and ensure availability of appropriate resources when large-scale abuse is suspected. The immediate safeguarding of individuals and investigations into individual incidents should continue in the usual way.

The group should be cognisant of the [Single Unified Safeguarding Review](#) (SUSR) Guidance and ensure that throughout the process due consideration is given to key criterion for a SUSR and where appropriate make necessary referrals to the CTMSB Business Unit, whereby the referral will be discussed at SUSR Group (previously referred to as Joint Review Group).

2. THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP

An ALSSI may involve a wide range of agencies and multiple individual adult safeguarding processes and investigations. It may also cross local authority boundaries and may involve services that are not commissioned by the Local Authorities or the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It is, therefore, crucial that such processes are tightly co-ordinated and managed.

Suspected multiple or organised abuse should be brought to the attention of the local authority designated manager and designated senior detective in South Wales Police responsible for Adult Safeguarding as soon as possible.

Stage 1: Deciding whether the ALSSI Protocol should be triggered

These officers will take responsibility for initiating the ALSSI protocol if appropriate and will also take responsibility for notifying the relevant agency senior manager. If it appears that the criteria for initiating a large-scale investigation might be met, the local authority manager and the senior detective must discuss the concerns and decide whether the protocol should be triggered or not. In either event, the local authority manager will keep a record of the decision made and the rationale for it.

The senior manager in each agency will ensure that appropriate resources are deployed and that staff will receive the necessary support. The decision as to whether this protocol will be invoked will be based on whether;

- the definition is met, **and**
- the concerns cannot be managed solely via individual safeguarding processes, the Escalating Concerns process or by individual case management, **and**
- there is a need for complex inter-agency co-ordination and planning.

Stage 2: The Initial & Follow-up Strategic Management Meetings

The designated Adult Safeguarding Manager from either Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil or Bridgend County Borough Council will have overall co-ordination responsibility throughout the ALSSI and will:

- Liaise with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB) Business Unit to arrange an initial Strategic Management Group meeting within 2 working days of the decision to invoke this protocol and will convene regular meetings, at no less than every 6-8 week intervals, to ensure robust inter-agency communication, co-ordination and progress reporting. A suggested agenda is attached as Appendix 1. The CTMSB Business Unit administrator will take and circulate minutes of each meeting and will hold a central record of all meetings related to the ALSSI.
- Co-ordinate non-criminal investigation work, identify any barriers to progress and work with partners to secure additional resources if required

- Act as a central point of communication about the ALSSI
- Report to the Board's Operational Committee
- Consider whether the Strategic Management Group should be chaired by the designated officer for another Local Authority within Cwm Taf Morgannwg if the concerns relate to a setting operated directly by the Home Local Authority.

This initial meeting will consider;

- the number and nature of concerns already known and how those cases have been, and continue to be, managed
- whether there are other adults at risk who may also be experiencing or have experienced abuse and how to manage that potential
- how safeguarding measures can be put in place whilst criminal investigations are in progress.

The Strategic Management Group will also agree lines of communication and accountability for each agency and to the Safeguarding Board: this will include consideration of the need for media statements and an escalation process should issues emerge that cannot be resolved by the Group. Each Strategic Management Group will produce a specific Terms of Reference for the particular ALSSI, which incorporates all of these points and also sets out an agreed initial timetable for meetings.

Core Membership of the Strategic Management Group

- The Local Authority Safeguarding Manager in whose area the alleged abuse has occurred (usually the Chair of the Strategic Management Group)
- Local Health Board Head of Safeguarding
- South Wales Police Detective Inspector for Public Protection
- Local Authority Commissioning Manager
- Local Health Board Commissioning Manager
- Care Inspectorate Wales/HealthCare Inspectorate Wales
- Care Management service managers for the Local Authority
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Business Unit representation
- Other agencies/professionals to be co-opted as required

A template for the Terms of Reference for the SMG is attached as Appendix 2.

Communication with Providers, Service Users and their Families/Advocates

Communication with care providers will be via the individual safeguarding process and the Escalating Concerns process. The Strategic Management Group will consider at each meeting whether any additional communication with the Provider is necessary.

Individual service users and their families or advocates will be central to the large-scale investigation. They will be kept up-to-date with progress in investigations and

outcomes for perpetrators by the Safeguarding Lead Co-ordinator (Designated Lead Manager) who has had responsibility for managing their case.

Stage 3: Final Strategic Management Group meeting

There will be a final ALSSI strategy meeting once all investigations (including criminal) are concluded. The purpose of this meeting will be to consider the outcomes of criminal and non-criminal investigations and to consider whether any other actions are necessary. This meeting will decide whether the ALSSI can be closed.

Whilst there will be protection plans for the individuals affected, other actions may be required such as:

- Multi-agency actions e.g. changes in policies, procedures or practices.
- Contract and commissioning actions, via Escalating Concerns or service improvement action plans.
- Ongoing action by the Regulator
- Further police investigation or non-criminal investigation.

The meeting will also evaluate the process by considering;

- What was managed successfully in this investigation?
- What could we have done better and what should be done differently next time?
- Did the ALSSI Protocol help?
- Does the Protocol or the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Management Group need to be reviewed?
- Are there any cross-boundary issues or any outstanding local issues that can only be resolved by the Safeguarding Adults Board?

This meeting will also be minuted by the CTMSB Business Unit and an evaluation report will be produced for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board. This report will be shared with practitioners via a Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum (MAPF).

3. REVIEW OF THE ALSSI PROTOCOL

This Protocol will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

Appendix 1 - Agenda format for first ALSSI Strategic Management Group meeting

Strategic Management Group for Adult Large-Scale Safeguarding Investigations

AGENDA TEMPLATE

Confidentiality Statement

In signing the attendance sheet, all present agreed to abide by the following confidentiality statement:

"The issues discussed are confidential to the members of the meeting and the agencies they represent. They will only be shared in the best interests of the adults at risk."

Minutes of the meeting are circulated on the strict understanding that they will be kept confidential and stored securely.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to make the minutes of the meeting available to the civil and criminal courts, solicitors, psychiatrists, other Local Authority social workers or other professionals involved in the care of adults at risk".

1. Confidentiality statement
2. Welcome and Apologies
3. Terms of Reference and Membership
4. Overview of case for consideration:
 - a. Number and nature of concerns already known and management arrangements
 - b. Identify other adults at risk and agree how this can be managed
 - c. Agree on safeguarding measures to be put in place
5. Timescales, milestones and reporting arrangements
6. Communications arrangements:
 - a. Media
 - b. Providers
 - c. Service Users, Family, Advocates
7. Dates of future meetings

Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference for ALSSI Strategic Management Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Management Group for Adult Large-Scale Safeguarding Investigations

1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been produced to support the function of the Strategic Management Group established under the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Protocol for Managing Adult Large Scale Adult Safeguarding Investigations (ALSSIs). The Strategic Management Group will develop a bespoke Terms of Reference for each ALSSI that is specific to the circumstances and requirements of that investigation.

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2. AIM OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP

The overall aim of the Group is to ensure that large-scale investigations into allegations of adult abuse or neglect are co-ordinated and include all relevant agencies and officers of sufficient seniority to make decisions on behalf of their agency.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that each agency's responsibility in a large-scale investigation is clear and that there is no duplication of function or gaps in the process.
- To ensure that all relevant agencies are involved and kept up-to-date with the investigation's progress and outcomes
- To manage the flow of information between agencies
- To manage communication with adults at risk, their families and the wider public.
- To ensure that Senior Police, Council and Health Board Officers are kept informed, along with Council and Board Members.
- To ensure that resources are made available within each agency to ensure that investigations are concluded in a timely way.
- To review and evaluate the course of the ALSSI and learn lessons.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

Every professional nominated to attend and participate in the Strategic Management Group will be accountable to their own agency and to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

5. MEMBERSHIP

As stated in the Protocol.

6. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Once the Adult Large Scale Safeguarding Investigations Protocol is triggered, the first Strategic Management Group meeting will take place within 2 working days. After this, the Group will meet at least every 6-8 weeks and more often if necessary. This will continue until the Group decides to close the ALSSI. At closure, the process will be evaluated and the Chair will produce a report for the Safeguarding Board.

7. REVIEW

These terms of reference will be reviewed following the conclusion of every ALSSI or annually.