WALES SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES BULLETIN

Section 5 Revisions – Safeguarding Allegations Against Practitioners / Persons in Positions of Trust

June 2026 Update

Key Message

Revised **Section 5 procedures** will be launched July 1st 2026. These revised procedures strengthen the way safeguarding allegations against practitioners and those in positions of trust are **reported, managed and monitored** across Wales.

These updates aim to ensure **consistency, clarity, and improved safeguarding practice** for children and adults at risk and those who have allegations made against them.

What is Section 5?

Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures provides guidance on:

- Managing allegations against individuals working (paid or unpaid) with children or adults at risk
- Identifies Person In Positions of Trust roles and how these procedures apply
- Identifying and responding to potential harm
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding responses across organisations

Why the Changes?

The revisions respond to:

- Inconsistencies in how Section 5 has been applied since its introduction in 2019
- Learning from safeguarding reviews across Wales
- The need for clearer processes, thresholds and responsibilities

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Improvements

- Clear definitions of outcome categories (substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded, deliberately invented/malicious)
- Explicit use of the **"balance of probabilities"** standard (rather than criminal threshold) when determining outcomes
- Stronger emphasis on evidence-based decisions

The revised procedures introduce:

Clearer Framework

- Defined roles and understanding of *positions of trust*
- Strengthened responsibilities for employers and organisations
- Improved guidance to support decision-making

New Threshold Criteria

Four clear criteria to support decision-making on referrals:

1. Harmed or may have harmed a child or adult at risk
2. Possibly committed a criminal offence
3. Behaviour suggests a risk of harm
4. Behaviour in personal life raises concerns about suitability

Transferrable Risk

- Mandatory consideration of **ongoing and transferrable risk beyond the immediate allegation/concern outcome**
- Risk levels assessed (low/medium/high) and clearly recorded
- Improved expectations for documentation and recording
- Introduction of good practice timescales

Resources



- A dedicated resources section where supporting information is available such as emodule training link; information for those who have allegations made against them; links to guidance; DBS section
- It is intended that this resources section will be added to.

Key Roles: LADO / DOS

Updated expectations include:

- Screening of Section 5 referrals
- Leading multi-agency strategy discussions
- Supporting consistency through a **national community of practice**
- Access to new dedicated training

Complaints and Representations

- Complaints relate to **process only**, not outcome appeals
- Local authorities must provide a clear complaints pathway
- Representations must be made within **12 weeks of outcome**
- Cases may be reviewed where significant new information

Implementation Timeline

- **July 2026:** Revised Section 5 procedures launched
- **July–December 2026:** Adoption and implementation by Safeguarding Boards across Wales
- **End of June 2026:** National e-learning module available
- **July 2026:** LADO/DOS Network Community of Practice established

What This Means for You

All practitioners and organisations should:

- Familiarise themselves with the updated Section 5 procedures
- Review internal safeguarding policies and reporting pathways

- Ensure staff complete relevant training
- Apply the new threshold criteria and recording standards

Support Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. These updates strengthen our collective ability to:

- Protect children and adults at risk
- Respond consistently and fairly
- Manage risk effectively across Wales

Further Information

The updated procedures, training and resources will be available from July 1st 2026 via the **Wales Safeguarding Procedures**

There will be a 6 month period where these revisions are implemented and embedded, we will review and consider any further revisions/changes following this.

If you have comments/queries please send to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures mailbox WSP@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk where one of the Project Team will consider and respond.

Many thanks

Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Team

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