

City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Safeguarding People & Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee

At: Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

On: Monday, 24 April 2023

Time: 4.00 pm

Chair: Councillor Ceri Evans

Membership:

Councillors: J P Curtice, R Fogarty, Y V Jardine, A J Jeffery, H Lawson, A J O'Connor, J E Pritchard and L V Walton

Watch Online: http://bit.ly/3zRznop

Agenda

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3	Minutes: To approve & sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.	1 - 2
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Huw Evans Head of Democratic Services Tuesday, 18 April 2023 Contact: Democratic Services - (01792) 636923

Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Safeguarding People & Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Monday, 27 March 2023 at 4.00 pm

Present:		
Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
J P Curtice	Y V Jardine	A J Jeffery
H Lawson	A J O'Connor	L V Walton

Officer(s)	Team Leader - Local Area Co-ordination
Jon Franklin	Head of Adult Services & Tackling Poverty
Amy Hawkins	Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement
Simon Jones	Officer
Allison Lowe	Democratic Services Officer
Lisa Thomas	Senior Lawyer

Also present Councillor H Gwilliam, Cabinet Member for Community (Support)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): R Fogarty

38 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

39 Minutes:

Resolved that the Minutes of the Safeguarding People & Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee held on 27 February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

40 Report on the Local Area Coordination Guide.

Jon Franklin, Local Area Co-ordination Implementation Manager, supported by the Cabinet Member for Community (Support) presented a report for the Safeguarding People & Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee to consider the draft 'Local Area Coordination Guide'.

The draft "Guide to Local Area Coordination in Swansea" was attached at Appendix A together with an "Impact Report 2022" which was attached at Appendix B.

The draft version had been circulated to all Councillors with a deadline of 10 March for responses. Responses from Councillors had been largely positive. The Committee suggested a small number of amendments which included minor typographical errors. These would all be incorporated in the final version of the guide.

Resolved that subject to the amendments received from Councillors being made, the guide be progressed to translation and publication.

41 Work Plan 2022-2023.

The Chair presented the Work Plan 2022-2023.

Resolved that the following items be added to the agenda for the next meeting scheduled for 24 April 2023:

- Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy Update / Review;
- Corporate Debt Policy Update / Review;
- Directorate Workforce Programme Social Services Update / Review.

The meeting ended at 4.23 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 4



Report of the Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty

Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee – 24 April 2023

Swansea Council Volunteering Policy / Strategy Development

Purpose:	The report is for information purposes only	
Report Authors:	Anthony Richards / Amy Hawkins	
Finance Officer:	Chris Davies	
Legal Officer:	Carolyn Isaac	
Access to Services Officer: Rhian Millar		
For Information		

1. Status at the start of the Municipal Year

- 1.1. At the start of the Municipal Year (24th May 2022), an internal mapping exercise focussing on Social Services and Cultural Services had been undertaken to identify examples of volunteering roles hosted within Swansea Council.
- 1.2. The mapping exercise identified 46 existing volunteering opportunities,15 within Social Services and 31 within Cultural Services.
- 1.3. The mapping exercise identified that various approaches are currently being taken to host volunteers within the Council. A combination of the Council's Voluntary Workers Policy, service are specific policies and agency policies where agencies are providing volunteers were identified.

2. Progress during the Municipal Year

2.1 A Swansea Council Volunteering Development Working Group was established to drive forward the development of this work. The Working Group is made up of cross directorate Council Officers and is coordinated by the Tackling Poverty Service and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service. Membership of the Working Group has recently been extended following promotion of the work via StaffNet.

- 2.2 The Working Group has further explored current practice across departments and services and has reviewed best practice volunteering policy in Wales. It has been identified that the first step is to develop a Swansea Council Volunteer Policy to establish consistent approaches and practice across the organisation.
- 2.3 It was proposed that the development of a Swansea Council Volunteer Policy and subsequent Strategy would include the principles of volunteering as defined by WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action):
 - Volunteering is undertaken by choice. Individuals have the right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer.
 - While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards or incentives, they should be reimbursed for reasonable out of pocket expenses.
 - The contribution of volunteers and paid staff should complement one another. Volunteers should not be used to replace paid staff or to undercut their pay and conditions of service. Volunteers should enhance the quality of the Council's activities.
 - Effective mechanisms should be in place to support and develop volunteers.
 - Volunteers and paid staff should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination. All should be treated sensitively with regard to their preferred language.
 - Volunteers should have access to appropriate opportunities for learning and development.
 - There should be a recognised process for the resolution of problems, for both staff and volunteers.
 - Volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff in the case of industrial disputes.
 - Volunteering should be open and accessible to all
 - Mutual Benefit both the volunteer and the Council should benefit from the relationship
 - The contribution of the volunteer should be recognised
- 2.4 A Swansea Council Volunteer Policy will aim to set out consistent principles and practice by which volunteers are involved across the organisation. The policy will aim to create a common understanding and definition of volunteering and clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained consistently in relation to the management of volunteers within Swansea Council whilst also recognising the importance of volunteers to Swansea Council.
- 2.5 An initial Draft Swansea Council Volunteer Policy has been developed and is attached at **Appendix A**. This draft policy takes account of best practice as identified by Third Sector Support Wales and as such defines volunteering, sets out standards and commitments to roles and responsibilities, recruitment

and selection, induction and training and support and supervision. Feedback from the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee has further shaped the development of this draft policy.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 A Corporate Volunteer Handbook and Tool Kit for Volunteer Management to be developed as good practice and outlined within the draft policy.
- 3.2 Consistent baseline data for all volunteers hosted across services within Swansea Council to be established.
- 3.3 Alignment with HR work to develop 'Volunteering Guidance' is planned.
- 3.4 An application is being made via the Shared Prosperity Fund to provide additional resources to drive this work forward.
- 3.5 Engagement with current volunteers to undertake experience mapping and ongoing engagement and coproduction.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socioeconomic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 An Integrated Impact Screening has been completed for this report with no further assessment required (See Appendix B). This is an IIA Screening for the 'For Information' Report to the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee regarding the development of a Swansea Council Volunteering Policy and Strategy. A full IIA will be carried out as part of the policy / strategy development process in due course.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, it may lead to decisions being taken at a later date that may have costs attached, e.g. volunteer expenses. Any such costs will need to be managed within departmental resources at that time with due regard to the Council's medium term financial plan.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Swansea Council Volunteering Policy Appendix B: IIA Screening Form



Draft Swansea Council Volunteer Policy

Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Our commitments
- 3. What is a volunteer?
- 4. Standards of good practice
- 5. Roles and responsibilities
- 6. Recruitment and selection
- 7. Induction and training
- 8. Support and supervision
- 9. Recognition
- 10. Dealing with problems
- 11. Expenses
- 12. Moving on
- 13. Other relevant documents
- 14. Monitoring and review

1. Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers / host volunteering opportunities and is relevant to staff and volunteers within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained consistently in relation to the management of volunteers within Swansea Council.

The volunteer handbook gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

2. Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of Swansea Council. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the Council, our services, the community at large and the volunteers themselves.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. (In line with the <u>WCVA / TUC Charter for Volunteering and Workplace Relationships</u>) Volunteers will not be used to replace staff or undertake the core duties of staff under their statutory obligations.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, disabled people, older people and people from ethnically diverse communities.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

3. What is a volunteer?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.

The <u>Welsh Government Volunteering Policy</u> (2015) defines volunteering as activity which:

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public / community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Please refer to $\frac{HR}{HR}$ for further information about these.

Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:

- in the direct delivery of our services
- in community engagement to raise awareness
- in one off events and promotional activities
- in our offices or in community venues

Volunteers are valued for:

- Bringing additional and diverse and new skills and perspectives to the organisations
- Enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- Championing our cause within the wider community
- Enhancing the quality of our services and of client experience
- Promoting the wellbeing of users of services, staff, local communities, and themselves

4. Standards of good practice

Our management practice is informed by the Code of Practice for Organisations involving volunteers and <u>Investing in Volunteers</u> Quality Standard for volunteer management.

5. Roles and responsibilities

A named officer/s has responsibility for the development, management, and coordination of voluntary activity within the host team, including volunteering procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated and named staff member/volunteer for guidance, support, and supervision.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable and honest
- uphold the organisation's values and policies
- make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training, mentoring etc.
- contribute positively to the aims of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- To receive adequate support and training relevant to role
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To be reimbursed out of pocket expenses
- To have opportunities for personal development
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

6. Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted as appropriate, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community.

Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Online application is encouraged but non-digital methods of application are also available. We will use the Volunteering Wales platform to advertise widely.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles and identified risks and steps to mitigate risks will be shared with the volunteer.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, application form and the taking of references; the process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example, the recruitment process for regular volunteers and for volunteers for one off events will be proportionate and so may differ from one another.

Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles, or signposted to the local volunteer centre or the <u>Volunteering Wales</u> website.

For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults in a regulated service, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

7. Induction and training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

8. Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate for role / setting and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

9. Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation via staff and volunteer team meetings, planning events, focus groups and/or volunteering surveys. Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, website articles, social media, and during Volunteers' Week (June 1st – June 7th each year).

10. Dealing with problems

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively, and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted, and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the organisations <u>Complaints Policy</u> will be adhered to.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

11. Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim. Volunteers will be reimbursed all agreed out of pocket expenses incurred by their volunteering activities.

12. Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will also be supported to explore other volunteering opportunities or move on to other options.

13. Other relevant documents

The Volunteer Handbook includes detailed, useful information for volunteers including template forms.

Organisational policies relevant to volunteers include; Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Social media, Safeguarding, Complaints, Settling Differences.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date approved: Date of next review: Responsible Officer:

Please ensure that you refer to the Screening Form Guidance while completing this form.

Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Tackling Poverty Service Directorate: Adult Social Services

Q1	(a) What are you screening for relevance?
	New and revised policies, practices or procedures Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff
	Efficiency or saving proposals
	Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
	New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, changing location Large Scale Public Events
H	Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation
	Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions
	Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
	Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
	Major procurement and commissioning decisions
	Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services

(b) Please name and fully <u>describe</u> initiative here:

This is an IIA Screening for the 'For Information' Report to Corporate Delivery Committee regarding background information and actions to develop a coproduced Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy.

The report is to inform the CDC of the progress made to date.

A full IIA will be carried out as part of the policy / strategy development process in due course.

Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-) High Impact Medium Impact I ow Impact Needs further

ŀ	ligh Impact	Medium Impact	Low Impact	Needs further investigation
	+ -	+ -	+ -	
Children/young people (0-18) Older people (50+) Any other age group Future Generations (yet to be born Disability Race (including refugees) Asylum seekers Gypsies & travellers Religion or (non-)belief Sex Sexual Orientation Gender reassignment Welsh Language Poverty/social exclusion	+ -			
Carers (inc. young carers)		Page 12	$\boxtimes \Box$	

Community cohesion
Marriage & civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity

\boxtimes	
	\square
	\square

Q3	What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g.
	engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches?
	Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not
	undertaking involvement

N/A at this stage.

At the time of writing, a Swansea Bay regional approach to developing improved volunteering opportunities is progressing. Swansea Council, together with Swansea Council for Voluntary Services, Neath Port-Talbot Council for Voluntary Services, Neath Port-Talbot Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership are working in partnership to develop a Regional Volunteering Strategy. A Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy will form part of the regional approach.

A Working Group of Council Officers has been established to drive forward the coproduction of Swansea Council's Volunteering Policy / Strategy. The Working Group is coordinated and facilitated by the Tackling Poverty Service and supported by Swansea Council for Voluntary Service.

Engagement, coproduction and consultation will be critical to the process of developing this work. A full IIA will be carried out as part of the policy / strategy development process in due course.

- Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the Q4 development of this initiative:
 - a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan's Well-being Objectives when considered together?

)

- b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals? Yes 🖂 No 🗌
- c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working? Yes 🖂 No
- d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs? Ye

es	\boxtimes		N	0	
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Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk	Medium risk	Low risk
		\square

Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service? Page 13

Yes I No If yes, please provide details below

A Swansea Council Volunteering Policy / Strategy will provide a framework for services across the Council that already host volunteers or develop opportunities to host volunteers.

Q7 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?

(You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups/ communities more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making. For example, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, e.g., disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc.)

N/A at this stage.

Outcome of Screening

Q8 Please describe the outcome of your screening below:

- Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)
 - Summary of involvement (Q3)
 - WFG considerations (Q4)
 - Any risks identified (Q5)
 - Cumulative impact (Q7)

This is an IIA Screening for the 'For Information' Report to Corporate Delivery Committee regarding background information and actions to develop a coproduced Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy.

The report is to inform the CDC of the progress made to date. The 'For Information' report identified no implications with the IIA. A full IIA will be carried out as part of the strategy development process in due course.

(NB: This summary paragraph should be used in the relevant section of corporate report)

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email.

Screening completed by:

Name: Anthony Richards

Job title: Poverty and Prevention Strategy Development Manager Date: 13/02/23

Approval by Head of Service:

Name: Amy Hawkins

Position: Head of Adult Social Services and Tackling Poverty

Date: 13/02/23

Please return the completed form to accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5



Report of the Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty

Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee – 24 April 2023

Draft Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy

Purpose:	This report is for information purposes only.
Report Author:	Anthony Richards
Finance Officer:	Chris Davies
Legal Officer:	Carolyn Isaac
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar
For Information	

1. Status at the start of the Municipal Year

- 1.1 At the start of the Municipal Year (24th May 2022), an initial working Draft Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy had been produced and engagement with departments and services with a responsibility for the collection of personal debt was ongoing.
- 1.2 Relevant services across the Council that collect outstanding personal debts continued to contribute to the Draft Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy including the draft policy statement. Contributing services include Revenues and Benefits, Housing, Education, Social Services, Parking Services and Accounts Receivable.

2. Progress during the Municipal Year

- 2.1 The draft policy has continued to develop during this period with further input from relevant services and feedback from the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee.
- 2.2 The draft policy was circulated and presented to Corporate Management Team (CMT) in January 2023. Recommendations were given regarding further specific service engagement as well as well as Monitoring and Reporting governance. The recommendations of CMT were subsequently addressed and reflected in the draft policy.

2.3 The Draft Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy (**Appendix A**) was presented for initial consultation to the Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum during January and the Financial Inclusion Steering Group during February.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 The next step is to launch the formal consultation phase. The consultation is planned to launch during May 2023. This will be promoted widely through appropriate networks with feedback collated for consideration. Following this process, it is proposed that the draft policy be presented to Cabinet for consideration and adoption.
- 3.2 As part of the consultation phase, departments and services within the Council that are responsible for the collection of personal debt will be informed of the consultation and requested to consider any implications and changes required as a result of the policy to their normal operating procedures. Changes to service level operational guidance and procedures are to be determined / developed by the relevant service including the completion / updating of an Integrated Impact Assessment where appropriate.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the public sector duties relating to equality and socio-economic inequalities as prescribed by the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socioeconomic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in

accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 An IIA screening has been completed and accompanies this report (**Appendix B**).
- 4.5 The cumulative impact of the introduction of this policy would be positive. The policy itself will introduce a consistent approach to supporting people that owe the Council personal debt. Council Services that collect personal payments/debt recovery will be required to update/develop operational guidance/standards to ensure the policy commitments are embedded and met within their operational procedures. It is recommended that an IIA Screening is updated/completed by each relevant service in relation to the policy and their service specific operational guidance.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, it may lead to decisions being taken at a later date that may have costs attached. Should that be the case, additional consideration will need to be given to how the additional costs / resources will be provided at that time.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 The Council must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 as well as its duties under the Equality Act (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy Appendix B: IIA Screening Form



Draft Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy

Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Definitions
- 3. Policy Statement
- 4. Action Plan and Monitoring

1. Introduction

This Policy sets out how the Council will work with residents to collect personal debt and what we will do to help those who owe money to the Council. This policy does not apply to commercial debtors.

Swansea Council recognises that early engagement from people who owe the council money and help from the Council or other appropriate organisations can prevent debts from escalating, reduce indebtedness and increase the ability of residents to meet their financial responsibilities.

Swansea Council also recognises that a significant part of Council services are funded through taxes and service charges. If income is not collected effectively, then the Council will be unable to properly fund the vital services it provides for the residents of Swansea.

We know that anyone can experience financial difficulties at any time and that money problems don't just affect the person in debt. Families and communities thrive when people can afford healthy lives and avoid the stress of money worries.

We want this policy to reflect this and our residents to know we will help people with money worries to get specialist free and impartial help if they want it.

We recognise that supporting those who are in debt will help whilst reducing outstanding debt to the Council, providing the funding to deliver essential services.

The Swansea Tackling Poverty Strategy states our vision of a Swansea in which:

- Income poverty is not a barrier to doing well at school, having a healthy and vibrant life, developing skills and qualifications and having a fulfilling occupation.
- Residents maximise their income and get the most out of their money.
- Residents avoid paying the 'Poverty Premium', the extra costs people on low incomes must pay for essentials such as fuel and transport.

The Welsh Government's Financial Inclusion Strategy (2016) promotes financial inclusion for all residents in Wales. The overall aim is to provide information and advice and to ensure residents have access to appropriate and affordable financial services.

2. Definitions

This Policy defines debt as 'any amount owed that has not been paid by the due date'.

This Policy covers personal debts owed to the Council, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Housing Rents
- Council Tax
- Social Care fees
- Housing Benefit Overpayments
- Overpaid Council salaries and wages (current and former employees)
- Housing recharges for property damage
- Berthing fees and charges for boats
- Fines for parking penalty charge notices
- Fines for littering and dog fouling
- Other debts owed to the authority

3. Policy Statement

Swansea Council aims to:

- 1. Make it easy for residents to pay bills and contact us early if they are struggling to pay or worried about money;
- 2. Offer friendly help, including information about where to get specialist free and impartial money advice;
- 3. Use enforcement action as a last resort.

Therefore we will:

- 1. Communicate clearly so that residents know how and where they can pay their bills and who they can contact for information and advice if they are struggling;
- 2. Offer advice to residents in respect of money owed to the Council if we become aware that a problem exists;
- 3. Promote the uptake of reliefs, discounts, grants or benefit entitlements;
- 4. Work with our partners to offer the most appropriate specialist free and impartial money advice;
- 5. Take personal circumstances of those in debt into account and agree realistic payment arrangements where possible;
- 6. Follow the requirements of the <u>'Breathing Space' Debt Respite Scheme</u>. This may require the completion of a Standard Financial Assessment (SFA) assisted by a Debt Advisor;
- 7. Use enforcement action as a last resort;
- 8. Continue to improve our debt recovery practices in line with national and local strategies and legislation.

4. Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reported to the Audit and Standards Committee to ensure that our debt recovery practices are in-line with legislation and to consider revisions to commitments made within this policy.

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Please ensure that you refer to the Screening Form Guidance while completing this form.

Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Tackling Poverty Service Directorate: Adult Social Services

Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?		
	New and revised policies, practices or procedures Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff	
	Efficiency or saving proposals	
	Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning	
	New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, changing location	
	Large Scale Public Events	
	Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation	
	Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions	
	Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)	
	Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)	
	Major procurement and commissioning decisions	
	Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services	
	Other	

(b) Please name and fully <u>describe</u> initiative here:

Developing a Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy for Swansea Council.

This policy aims to embed consistent approaches to the collection of personal debt owed to the Council and set out what we will do to help those that owe money to the Council.

The draft policy defines debt as 'any amount owed that has not been paid by the due date.'

The draft policy covers personal debts owed to the Council, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Housing Rents
- Council Tax
- Social Care fees
- Housing Benefit Overpayments
- Overpaid Council salaries and wages (current and former employees)
- Housing recharges for property damage
- Berthing fees and charges for boats
- Fines for parking penalty charge notices
- Fines for littering and dog fouling
- Other debts owed to the authority

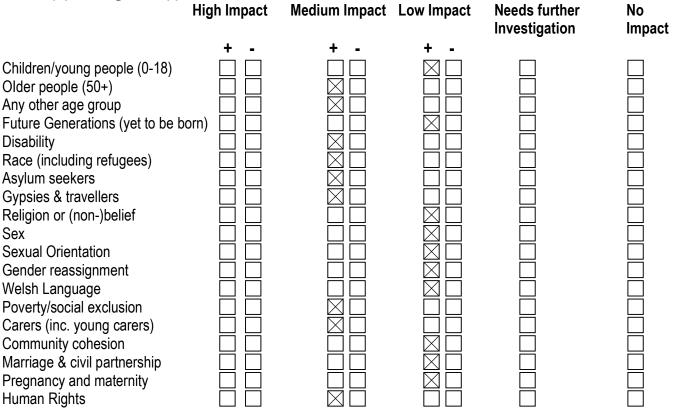
We know that anyone can experience financial difficulties at any time and that money problems do not just affect the person in debt. Families and communities thrive when people can afford healthy lives and avoid the stress of money worries.

We also recognise that early engagement from those at risk of debt or in debt, can prevent debts from escalating, reduce indebtedness and increase the ability of residents to meet their financial responsibilities.

We recognise that a significant proportion of Council services are funded through taxes and service charges. If income is not collected effectively, then the authority will be unable to properly fund the vital services it provides for the residents of Swansea or it will simply mean costs fall to others to pay more to make up the shortfall.

The policy will let our residents know that we will help people with money worries to get specialist free and impartial help if they want it.

Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-)



Q3 What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g. engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches? Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not undertaking involvement

Council Services that are responsible for the collection of personal debts have been involved in the development of the draft policy to date. The development of the policy is reported to the Safeguarding and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee for recommendations to be made. The draft policy has been presented to Corporate Management Team and initial engagement with the Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum and Financial Inclusion Steering Group has taken place to date.

Formal consultation is now planned which will run alongside engagement activities with a wide range of stakeholders.

The development of this policy was identified as 'good practice' in the Audit Wales Report – 'Time for Change: Poverty in Wales' published in November 2022.

- Q4 Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative:
 - a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan's Well-being Objectives when considered together? No 🗌
 - Yes 🖂
 - b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals? Yes 🖂 No
 - c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working? Yes 🖂 No 🗌
 - d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs? No
 - Yes 🖂

No No

Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk	Medium risk	Low risk

Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?

X Yes

If yes, please provide details below

This policy will apply to all Council services that collect personal debt directly. These services have been involved in the development of this draft.

Council Services that collect personal payments/debt recovery will be required to update/develop operational guidance/standards to ensure the policy commitments are embedded and met within their operational procedures. It is recommended that an IIA Screening is updated/completed by each relevant service in relation to the policy and their service specific operational guidance.

Q7 Will this initiative result in any changes needed to the external or internal website? X Yes No If yes, please provide details below

The policy will be available on both the external and internal website.

Q8 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?

(You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups/ communities more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making. For example, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, e.g., disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc.)

The cumulative impact of the introduction of this policy would be positive. The policy itself will introduce a consistent approach to supporting people that owe the Council personal debt.

In the economic context of the Cost or Living Crisis, this policy would ensure that those that are in debt to the Council and have made contact with us will be offered support whether that be with the service to which the debt is owed, help that we can provide or signposting / referring to specialist free and impartial support that is available.

Council services that collect debt are to ensure that their specific operating procedures are aligned to the principles of the policy and furthermore consider any negative impacts or inequalities on communities of interest or communities of place.

Outcome of Screening

Q9 Please describe the outcome of your screening using the headings below:

- Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)
 - Summary of involvement (Q3)
 - WFG considerations (Q4)
 - Any risks identified (Q5)
 - Cumulative impact (Q7)

Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed

This policy will positively impact on those that have personal debt owed to the Council or have financial worries including risk of personal debt to the Council. The aims set out in the draft policy are to:

- 1. Make it easy for residents to pay bills and contact us early if they are struggling to pay or worried about money;
- 2. Offer friendly help, including information about where to get specialist free and impartial money advice;
- 3. Use enforcement action as a last resort.

The draft policy sets out the following commitments for all services collecting personal debt:

- 1. Communicate clearly so that residents know how and where they can pay their bills and who they can contact for information and advice if they are struggling;
- 2. Offer advice to residents in respect of money owed to the Council if we become aware that a problem exists;
- 3. Promote the uptake of reliefs, discounts, grants or benefit entitlements;
- 4. Work with our partners to offer the most appropriate specialist free and impartial money advice;
- 5. Take personal circumstances of those in debt into account and agree realistic payment arrangements where possible;
- 6. Follow the requirements of the <u>'Breathing Space' Debt Respite Scheme</u>. This may require the completion of a Standard Financial Assessment (SFA) assisted by a Debt Advisor;
- 7. Use enforcement action as a last resort;
- 8. Continue to improve our debt recovery practices in line with national and local strategies and legislation.

The next step is to undertake wider consultation and engagement on the draft policy to identify any further positive or negative impacts for consideration and action to mitigate any negative impacts.

Summary of involvement

Council Services that are responsible for the collection of personal debts have been involved in the development of the draft policy to date. The development of the policy is reported to the Safeguarding and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee for recommendations to be made. The draft policy has been presented to Corporate Management Team and initial engagement with the Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum and Financial Inclusion Steering Group has taken place to date.

Council Services that collect personal payments/debt recovery will be required to develop operational guidance/standards to ensure the policy commitments are embedded and met within their service specific operational procedures. It is recommended that an IIA Screening is updated/completed by each relevant service in relation to the policy and updated/developed operational guidance. Formal consultation is now planned which will run alongside engagement activities with a wide range of stakeholders.

WGF considerations

This policy will positively contribute to the National Wellbeing Goals, in particular, a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales and a Wales of more cohesive communities.

The policy considers the long term impact of personal debt on individuals, families and communities as well as the need to provide sustainable public services. The policy aims to set out how we can help to prevent problems from occurring or becoming worse by clearly communicating how we can help. An integrated approach is taken by working closely with free and impartial specialist debt advice agencies to ensure appropriate guidance and advice is available. Ongoing collaboration between services and partners on the delivery of the policy commitments will ensure that help is available to all.

Any risks identified

None

Cumulative impact

It is expected that the policy will have a cumulative positive impact for all stakeholders.

(NB: This summary paragraph should be used in the 'Integrated Assessment Implications' section of corporate report)

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email.

Screening completed by:	
Name: Anthony Richards	
Job title: Tackling Poverty Development Manager	
Date: 10/02/23	
Approval by Head of Service:	
Name: Amy Hawkins	
Position: Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty	
Date: 17/02/23	

Please return the completed form to access foservices@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Chair

Safeguarding People & Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee – 24 April 2023

Work Plan 2022-2023

Date of meeting	Agenda items and Format	
27 June 2022	 Annual Review of People PDC Work Programme 21-22 Annual Review of Tackling Poverty PDC Work Programme 21-22 	
25 July 2022	Work Programme 2022-2023	
26 September 2022	 Creating a Workforce to deliver more Care Service directly Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy Development Corporate Debt Policy Update 	
24 October 2022	A new Local Area Coordination Best Practice Policy / Guide including Recruitment	
28 November 2022	Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy Development	
19 December 2022	CANCELLED	
23 January 2023	A new Local Area Coordination Best Practice Policy / Guide including Recruitment	
27 February 2023	 Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy (Update) Corporate Debt Policy (Update) Creating a Workforce to Deliver More Care Services directly (Support and development of a workforce and well-being Strategy and plan for the Directorate) 	
27 March 2023	Development of Local Area Co-ordination Best Practice Guide (Update)	
24 April 2023	 Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy Update / Review; Corporate Debt Policy Update / Review; 	

Future Items:

- Creating a Workforce to Deliver More Care Services directly:
 - a. Short term Support and development of a workforce and well-being Strategy and plan for the Directorate (27 February 2023);
 - b. Medium Term (February / March) Options for the Council to take forward the rebalancing agenda in Adult Services;
 - c. Long Term (New Financial Year) How the council will support the Welsh Government to eliminate the profit agenda in Children's Services.