



Joint Report of the Cabinet Member for Care Services and Director of Social Services

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 15 November 2022

Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2021-22

Purpose:	This is the latest annual report on the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements. This report summarises the work programme of the Corporate Safeguarding Group during 2021/22 and improvements carried out in support of the Council's corporate safeguarding policy.
Content:	<p>The Cabinet Member for Care Services and Director of Social Services will attend to present the report, to respond to questions about the report and in follow up to the letter sent by the Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Community Health Services, following last year's report dated 24 November 2021</p> <p>https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=188&MId=9540&Ver=4&LLL=0</p>
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided, ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary.
Lead Councillor/Member:	Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services
Lead Officer:	David Howes, Statutory Director of Social Services
Report Author:	Simon Jones - Social Services Strategy & Performance Improvement Officer
Finance Officer:	Chris Davies
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Catherine Window
For Information	

1. Background

- 1.1 This latest Annual Report - Corporate Safeguarding 2021/22 (attached as **Appendix A**) aims to update the Scrutiny Programme Committee on the work programme to implement safeguarding across the whole Council during the past year. The Annual report was prepared by the Corporate Safeguarding Group, on behalf of the lead Cabinet Member and the Director of Social Services.
- 1.2 Swansea Council's Corporate Safeguarding Group was first set up in 2014 to lead on development and of corporate safeguarding policy, monitoring of policy implementation.
- 1.3 The Annual Report focuses seven key areas of activity:
 - Safe Governance,
 - Safe Employment,
 - Safe Workforce,
 - Safe Practice,
 - Safe Partnerships,
 - Safe Voice,
 - all contributing to Safe Performance
- 1.4 The attached report also identifies work for the year ahead. It is a routine report to the Scrutiny Programme Committee for awareness and comment on progress, achievements and implementation of policy.
- 1.5 At the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 19th October 2021 Cabinet Member Mark Child and the Director of Social Services, David Howes were questioned on the previous report and a letter was sent in response. The latest report covers many of the same area as the Chair's letter.

2. Latest Developments

- The main report contains detail about the broad range of safeguarding activities undertaken within and on behalf of the Council, in support of the corporate priority and safeguarding policy. This section outlines some of the key developments in the report covering the past year 2021/22.
- 2.1 **Covid response** – Swansea Council and the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership has overseen a coordinated, regional response to the Covid-19 crisis over the past two and a half years. During this time resources have been deployed quickly to meet local need, service have transformed themselves and new ways of working have been discovered. Director of Social Services has provided regular weekly briefings to staff during this challenging period, and services are still being challenged by the impact of the crisis, particularly in relation to demand and workforce pressures.

- 2.2 **Corporate Safeguarding policy** – Swansea Council’s recently updated policy has a greater focus on prevention and duty to report placed on all public service officers. The policy aims to make sure our work covers the full extent of potential, contextual safeguarding risks and concerns posed to vulnerable people, such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, radicalisation, etc. Reflected in the new corporate safeguarding policy are the key elements needed to ensure safeguarding remains "everyone’s business”.
- 2.3 **Internal Audit report on Corporate Safeguarding 2022/23** - our own internal audit team has recently carried out a recent review of the Council’s Corporate Safeguarding 2022/23, and their final report has just been published September 2022). The overall assurance given within the scope of the review is ‘High’.
- 2.4 **Estyn review** - recent finding- from Estyn’s Inspection report on Education in Swansea (June 2022) endorses the Council’s approach to corporate safeguarding, noting strong leadership, a positive culture and collaboration between service areas.
- 2.5 **Corporate Safeguarding Working Group** – named safeguarding lead are working closely together to drive improvements in all seven of the key areas, and reporting progress to the Corporate Safeguarding group chaired by the Cabinet Member for Care Services and Director of Social Services
- 2.6 **Self-Assessment exercise / work programme**
Swansea Council’s Corporate Safeguarding group requested that the section 135 audit, now called a self-assessment, be carried out this year to provide assurances that arrangements are robust in all the Council’s main service areas, and to identify any additional improvements needed. This latest self-assessment used a regional tool with a clear set of standards for corporate safeguarding, which was adapted by Safeguarding Leads to better reflect the ‘Swansea model’ and seven key areas as shown above. The tool was completed by **15** service areas (last year = 8).

3. Issues arising from previous year

- 3.1 **Mandatory Training Compliance** – work is still underway in the development of management information to evidence compliance to achieve mandatory training standards across all service areas, in relation to: employees / elected member completion of mandatory safeguarding awareness training, and violence against women, sexual violence and domestic abuse training. Delayed implementation of the new Cloud based ERP system (Oracle Fusion) has held up support for real-time reporting of staff training records and employee data checks.

- 3.2 **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** - Swansea Council must ensure DBS checks are undertaken for all roles that have identified as needing one. The DBS Policy has recently been reviewed and updated and is awaiting final agreement. Alongside policy development, work is underway reviewing the procedure guide and letters for Managers/Schools. Work in this area is carried out within the Council by a dedicated service centre, to assist Council managers, School Governors, Head teachers in making safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.
- 3.3 **Contracting and Procurement** – the Chair’s letter noted that corporate safeguarding extends to how we work with suppliers and contractors to ensure safety of vulnerable children and adults. We expect that all staff employed by suppliers and contractors carrying out work on the Council’s behalf are fully aware of their broader responsibilities and duties. When required that checks are carried out, and staff are given safeguarding awareness training. We carry out a suitability questionnaire to ensure that all expectations, in relation to safeguarding, are fully understood. As the letter notes, there are different levels of conditions and monitoring, depending on the nature of services contracted
- 3.4 **Safeguarding Leadership** – to ensure leadership full coverage of corporate safeguarding arrangement and activities including communication, mandatory checks, safeguarding representation and the self-assessment exercise extends across all council services, in accordance with the updated policy.

4. Work Programme for year ahead

- 4.1 The work programme across the seven areas is focused on tackling the above (section 3: issues), as on-going challenges. The new Corporate Safeguarding Working Group has been set up to ensure that the work programme keeps moving forward and operates within timescales, where possible.
- 4.2 In addition, there is work on promoting collaborative practice at the front door, within frontline teams and across all Council services. This work contributes to ‘Safe Voice’ aims of placing the adult/child firmly at the centre of their concern, and engaged with decisions in their own best interests, whether directly or through advocacy.
- 4.3 A Management Action Plan has been also set out to meet recommendations from the two recent Internal Audit (see Main Report: Appendix 2)

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 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 socio-economic 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.
- 5.2 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'.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 An Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form has been completed (**Appendix B**), with the agreed outcomes as follows:
- Summary of Impacts (Q2) Impacts are positive and low on specific groups due to the nature and purpose of the report as explained above.
 - Summary of involvement (Q3) Swansea Council works closely with Swansea Bay University Health Board, Third Sector organisations, Social Care providers and the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Boards. The Councils also works co-productively on what matters most to people, how services are developed and within commissioning plans. This collaborative, co-productive approach and the involvement of others has been involved in his report.
 - WFG considerations (Q4) Well-being of Future Generation forms part of the overall plan and as part of the corporate plan and Council's

transformation programmes, which are working towards safe, sustainable approaches to corporate safeguarding. Health, social care and wellbeing is a significant part of the local and regional economy of Swansea, and the report focused on the range of services and other organisations which form part of this economy. A skilled, qualified public sector workforce is vital to improving wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable people. The report shows how we are looking to the future by ensuring that we are well placed to recruit, retain and better support employees in their professional development, in their duty to report on safeguarding concerns, and how we can help them be the best that they can be in their work with Swansea citizens.

- Any risks identified (Q5) The work programmes referred to within this report is risk managed closely. Any risks identified within one or all of the Council services, are agreed, mitigated and checked as routine at service, directorate and corporate levels, for example through monthly Social Services Performance and Financial Monitoring meeting and the Corporate Safeguarding group. Risks are then escalated accordingly through to appropriate corporate and political structures. Some of the wider impacts for example those emerging during the Covid pandemic, and their associated risks have been, and will continue to be, managed through the regional partnership structures.
- Cumulative impact (Q7) There is a positive impact on the wellbeing of Swansea citizens through corporate safeguarding of our most vulnerable people, including children, and the benefits this brings to the local area, economy and workforce.

The screening exercise concluded it is not necessary to complete a full Integrated Impact Assessment on this report.

- 5.5 The annual report of corporate safeguarding sets out progress towards the Council's corporate objective on safeguarding people from harm, as described in the Corporate Plan 2022-23, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and associated statutory guidance.
- 5.6 The Annual Report takes into account the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by outlining how Swansea Council is committed to taking forward these rights forward through the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership Board, and action plan.
- 5.7 The Council's approach to corporate safeguarding, and practice across all functions and services, must comply with Welsh Language Standards.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications.

For Information

Background papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A. Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2021/22

Appendix B. Integrated Impact Assessment screening