



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

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19 November 2024

Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2023-24

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 2023-24, and highlights improvements carried out in support of the Council's corporate safeguarding policy.
Policy Framework:	Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, provides the overall legislative framework for safeguarding children and adults in Wales. Swansea Council's Corporate Safeguarding policy sets out the arrangements and expectations for a whole Council approach.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, and the Corporate Safeguarding Operational group
Recommendations:	Committee to consider the information provided, ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary
Report Author (s):	David Howes, Statutory Director of Social Services Simon Jones - Social Services Strategy & Performance Improvement Officer, on behalf of Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services
Finance Officer:	Chris Davies
Legal Officer:	Lucy Moore
Access to Services Officer:	Catherine Window
For Information	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This latest Annual Report - Corporate Safeguarding 2023/24 (attached as Appendix 1) 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 Operational Group, on behalf of the Corporate Safeguarding group, jointly chaired by the Cabinet Member for Care Services and the Director of Social Services.
- 1.2 Swansea Council's Corporate Safeguarding Group was first set up in 2014 to lead on the development, implementation and monitoring of corporate safeguarding policy and practice.
- 1.3 The Annual Report focuses on the following key areas of activity:
 - Safe Governance & Performance,
 - Safe Employment,
 - Safe Workforce,
 - Safe Practice,
 - Safe Voice
 - Safe Partnerships,
- 1.4 The attached report also identifies some areas of 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. The report does not cover the full range of work undertaken in support of corporate safeguarding, there is a wider range of activities set out in the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, which was considered at Full Council on 3rd October 2024.

2. Annual Report on Corporate Safeguarding 2023/24

The main annual report (appended) contains updates on the work undertaken within and on behalf of the Council, in support of corporate safeguarding policy. This section outlines some of the key developments in the report covering the past year 2023-24.

2.1 Corporate Plan 2023/28

Safeguarding our most vulnerable people from harm - so that our citizens are free from harm and exploitation remains a key strategic priority. The Corporate Plan details the next steps and success measures linked to this priority and our progress towards meeting this well-being objective is considered separately, within the Annual Review of Performance.

2.2 Safeguarding as 'everyone's business'

Safeguarding our most vulnerable people is 'everyone's business' across the council, within schools, with partners, and through West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board and partnerships, we will undertake a review of post-pandemic care and support provision.

2.3 Corporate Safeguarding policy

Swansea Council's corporate safeguarding policy has a strong focus on prevention and the '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".

3. Priority Areas

- 3.1 At the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 14th November 2023, Cabinet Member Louise Gibbard and the Director of Social Services, David Howes presented the previous annual report, questions were raised, and a letter was sent in response, by the Chair to the Cabinet Member for Care Services, on behalf of the Committee.
- 3.2 Letter of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee dated 6th December 2024, requested that the work planned for the year ahead to be followed up, and these items are addressed within the main report.

4. Work Programme for year ahead

- 4.1 The work programme of the Corporate Safeguarding Group through the Corporate Safeguarding Operational group will continue to focus on the key areas (as set out in section 1.3).
- 4.2 Focus on renewing the role and purpose of the Corporate Safeguarding Operational group.
- 4.3 Focus on agreeing an updated work programme, with the Corporate Safeguarding operational group ensuring that actions keep moving forward, and operates within timescales, where possible.
- 4.4 Focus on standards and quality assurance within the corporate safeguarding arrangements

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.

5.1.1 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'.

5.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also considers 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.

5.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form has been completed 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.

5.3 The annual report of corporate safeguarding sets out progress towards the Council's wellbeing objective on safeguarding people from harm, as described in the Corporate Plan 2023-28, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and associated statutory guidance.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.

Background papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2023/24