



## Appendix A                      Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2022/23

### Report of the Director of Social Services & Cabinet Member – Care Services on behalf of the Corporate Safeguarding Group

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Purpose** - this annual report aims to update Scrutiny Programme Committee on the work undertaken in relation to corporate arrangements for Safeguarding across the whole Council, during the year 2022/23.
- 1.2 **Corporate Safeguarding** - Swansea Council expects that vulnerable people in Swansea are kept safe and protected from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children is both a corporate priority, and well-being strategic outcome within the new Corporate Plan (2023-28). This is now -widely understood as “everyone’s business”, by our leaders and elected members and our workforce, partner organisations and the individuals who are carrying out work on behalf of the Council,
- 1.3 **Corporate arrangements-** - by implementing a corporate wide approach to safeguarding vulnerable people the Council has to ensure there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability in all service areas of the Council, and that we are involving representatives of partner organisations in this work. We have a public duty to ‘Spot it, Report it!’, and the arrangements are ensuring everyone is clear about how we work together in response to shared concerns
- 1.4 **Safeguarding our most vulnerable people** – The Council, and Social Services and Education, in particular, have faced some major challenges the past two years through the recent pandemic, war and climate changes leading to mass migration and the cost-of-living crisis. This report also places what the Council is achieving in the wider context of the Corporate Plan, corporate priorities and policy commitments, looking across the range of services we provide, making use of evidence with the annual review of performance, particularly in the steps taken towards achieving the corporate priority of safeguarding vulnerable people.

1.5 **Director Of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23**

As a statutory requirement, the Council must have the opportunity to consider the Director of Social Services Annual Report. The latest report contains summary information about activity performance and service developments:

[Links to Director Of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23](#)

1.6 **Corporate Safeguarding Policy** – Swansea Council's corporate safeguarding policy has been updated to give greater focus on prevention work, and to extend the duty to report to all public service officers. Our policy aims to make sure our focus is on 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 [Corporate Safeguarding Policy - Swansea](#)

1.7 **All Wales Safeguarding procedures** – Swansea's corporate safeguarding arrangements procedures and training programme have all been updated on the revised national guidance (Sept. 2020). [Safeguarding Wales](#).

The new national procedures detail the essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect. The Procedures helps practitioners apply the relevant legislation, such as Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and replaces previous statutory safeguarding guidance Working Together to Safeguard People.

1.8 **Swansea Model for effective corporate safeguarding arrangements.**

Whilst the Wales Safeguarding Procedures provide guidance for anyone working with children or adults in Wales, whether in a paid or unpaid role; in the statutory, third (voluntary) or private sector; in health, social care, education, police, justice or other services. Our Swansea's Corporate Safeguarding Policy also sets out a **council-wide approach**, driving continuous improvement in the key policy areas (Fig. 1). Named safeguarding officers from all service areas of the Council are fully trained, and regularly come together to share learning from their experiences in carrying out this work, overseen by the Corporate Safeguarding group.

1.9 **Seven Key Areas for effective Corporate Safeguarding arrangements.**

Swansea Council's model covers our key areas of activity, and these are managed within a work programme, with lead officer reporting into the Corporate Safeguarding group.

- Safe governance & performance
- Safe employment
- Safe workforce

- Safe practice
- Safe partnerships
- Safe voice



*Figure 1. "Safeguarding is Everyone's Business" Swansea's Model*

1.10 **Safeguarding as Everyone's Business** - Our corporate safeguarding policy continues to promote "a "Safeguarding as everyone's business" approach, and this applies to:

- our employees
- elected members
- volunteers
- contractors (specific conditions may also apply within contracts)

Only by working together as a whole Council, we can ensure that all our activities and services are carried out by elected representatives, paid staff, partners, volunteers and providers who are all fully up to date and aware of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities to help protect our most vulnerable citizens.

1.11 **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.** This Act was implemented in April 2016, and brought about changes in safeguarding arrangements and responsibilities, in particular the introduction of a 'Duty to Report', now placed on all Council staff. Clearly to address the new statutory requirements, and the wider range of safeguarding issues and concerns now present in our communities, it is necessary to ensure that the whole workforce, elected members, volunteers and partners are fully informed, and

each is aware of their public duty to work together to keep our most vulnerable people safe and protected. This wider public responsibility is fully reflected in corporate safeguarding policy arrangements and supplemented a mandatory training programme. The code of safeguarding practice (updated Jan 2022) provides more detail about the full range expectations placed on Councils: [working-together-to-safeguard-people--code-of-safeguarding-practice](#)

#### 1.12 **Other Legislation**

The Council aims to ensure that everyone working with, or on behalf of, children and/or adults is competent, confident and safe to do so, by working within the full range of legal and statutory frameworks, as set out in the following:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UN Principles for Older Persons
- UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (CRDP)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equalities Act 2010
- Regulations and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2015
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

#### 1.13 **What do we know about quality standards across the whole Council?**

As well as the named safeguarding persons and lead officers meeting regularly through the Corporate Safeguarding group, there is now an operational steering group to drive progress on a work programme and to highlight good practice and issues to the main group. In addition, an annual self-assessment exercise is undertaken within all main service areas (previously section 135 audit), using a specially developed tool addressing the full set of quality standards across all seven key areas (Swansea model).

#### 1.14 **Corporate Safeguarding Annual Reporting** aims to showcase the progress made during the previous year. This annual report, with the accompanying appendices, intends to act as a broad summary of the range of corporate safeguarding activities and as a record of the Council's improvement journey towards a fully corporate approach to safeguarding our most vulnerable people from harm, which applies across the whole Council. This annual report picks up highlights from the work programme, annual self-assessment exercise and any feedback the Council has received.

Appended to this report are:

- **Appendix 1.** Corporate Safeguarding Governance chart

## **2. Activities and progress made this year.**

This next section highlights progress within each of the seven key areas of activity as set out in the Swansea model (Fig. 1), using the findings from this year's self-assessment carried out in **June 2023** by safeguarding leads within the Council's key service areas:

**No. of corporate safeguarding self-assessments completed = 15 (2020 = 13).**

### **2.1 Safe Governance & Performance**

As mentioned, safeguarding is seen as 'everyone's business' and within the Council's Corporate Plan, a corporate strategic priority. As an organisation, we are confident that we have a set of robust, effective arrangements for responding to and managing all safeguarding concerns. Through sound arrangements, we can show a 'golden thread' running through everything we do. From the corporate objective to safeguard our most vulnerable people, through service planning and extending to help each employee to act on their duty to report.

#### **2.1.1 Corporate Leadership –**

Swansea has strong, effective corporate leadership in place to ensure that all staff know, understand their wider responsibilities, and they are well supported to apply what they know about safeguarding, in all circumstances. We can demonstrate 'safe' leadership through the 'safeguarding as everyone's business' culture, an established governance structure, clear policy framework, effective management and lead roles across the whole Council, and most of all by taking action as and when needed. Safe governance operates across the whole Council and within all committee and meeting structures, including Cabinet, Corporate Management Team, scrutiny boards, corporate policy development and partnership structures (see Appendix 1).

**2.1.2 Swansea Council and Cabinet** - the Council continues to review assurance around its governance, strategic priorities, accountability and risk management to drive forward shared corporate priorities, including safeguarding our most vulnerable people. Cabinet Member portfolios are reviewed regularly with the Cabinet Member for Care Services as lead for safeguarding. Cabinet receives regular performance updates from Child and Family Services and Adult Services.

**2.1.3 Corporate Management Team**—all Corporate Directors, Chief Officers and Heads of Service – through their Management Teams – are jointly responsible for ensuring that all the statutory requirements in terms of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults receive due consideration. Each Director must ensure there is a named safeguarding officer in their service area, who regularly attends the corporate safeguarding group and ensures the quality, content and frequency of training provided to their own

staff, and by maintaining a sufficient staff training record. Also, named safeguarding officers are there to ensure all statutory duties are carried out with regard to the duty to report within the Council, and Swansea's corporate safeguarding policy is being implemented.

**2.1.4 Corporate Safeguarding Steering Group** - An effective corporate safeguarding culture requires strong, visible, leadership presence, ensuring that senior officer and their workforce receives positive, professional and consistent backing in carrying out Council activities. This has been evident during this most difficult, challenging period, and though the vast range of actions taken in keeping people safe and well. All named safeguarding officers are working effectively together under the direction of a Corporate Safeguarding group, which meets quarterly, and is jointly chaired by the Director of Social Services David Howes and the Cabinet Member for Care Services –Cllr. Louise Gibbard.

**2.1.5 Local Authority Designated Officers**

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have at least one Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who holds primary responsibility for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who in working with children may have caused them or could cause them harm. The LADO is expected to coordinate the safeguarding and investigative process in response to allegations made against people working with children. Also, to provide advice/guidance to other employers or voluntary organisations when there are concerns or allegations about individuals who work with children.

To liaise with police, human resources and other agencies including CiW, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other professional bodies. In Swansea, the LADO within Child and Family Services is currently the Principal Officer for Single Point of Contact and Early Help.

**2.1.6 Scrutiny Performance Panels** - Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel receives the Monthly Child and Family Services Performance report, and a work programme looking in more depth at key issues. Similarly, Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel receives the Monthly Adult Services performance report and has a work programme to cover off key issues.

**2.1.7 Regional Safeguarding** <http://www.wgsb.wales/>

Swansea Council is working within effective regional safeguarding board arrangements. Regional Safeguarding board publishes an annual plan setting out priority areas for the coming year. There is shared accountability for this plan across a range of partners, with targeted focus on preventative approaches, improving quality, performance reporting and learning lessons from practice reviews. [wgsb-annual-report-2022-23-final-24072023.pdf](#)

2.1.8 **Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee** has been reconstituted to support the impact of the Council's Transformation Programmes and policy commitments. Chaired by Cllr Ceri Evans, this new Committee has put together a work programme to focus on development work on targeting help and support to the most vulnerable people in Swansea.

2.1.9 **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 (p16-17). [Inspection report City and County of Swansea 2022 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/inspection-report-city-and-county-of-swanse-2022)

### 2.1.10 **Corporate Parenting**

When a child has experience of care, they become 'looked after' by a local authority under a Care Order, the council becomes a 'corporate parent' with legal and moral responsibility for safeguarding that child's welfare and rights. Swansea's Corporate Parenting Board is a group of councillors who have a lead role in promoting the role of corporate parenting within and outside the local authority and additional formal responsibilities relating to corporate parenting.

<https://staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/corporateparenting>

Welsh Government has just produced a Corporate Parenting Charter: [Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/corporate-parenting-charter-a-promise-from-wales)

Swansea Council is the first Local Authority in Wales to sign up to this Charter, and through the Corporate Parenting Board has coproduced with Children and Young People, our own set of corporate parenting pledges.

#### **Swansea's Corporate Parenting Pledges**

- No barriers to opportunity
- Good education/good job
  - Healthy relationships
  - Safe place to live
  - Mental health
- Love, family, and friendship
  - Happiness

'As corporate parents we have a collective responsibility to ensure that care experienced children, young people and care leavers can have the outcomes every good parent would want for their children

### 2.1.11 **Other**

**National Safeguarding Week:** West Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board and Swansea Council support a range of campaigns and learning events throughout the year, and with focused activities during National Safeguarding Week, this year taking place between 20th - 26th November 2023.

### **Housing & Public Health Safeguarding group**

Housing and Public Health hold own safeguarding group meetings to share good practice, discuss difficult, sensitive cases, training opportunities etc

#### **2.7.6 Work identified for year ahead:**

- To continue the annual review of performance, quarterly performance monitoring of key indicators, performance reporting at service level (to P&FM and scrutiny performance panels) and annual reporting on corporate safeguarding.

## **2.2 Safe Employment**

Safe employment is a set of corporate practices that help make sure our staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. For example, all employees, volunteers and contractors are committed to safeguarding and the 'duty to report' when they join the Authority or work on its behalf. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm.

**2.2.1 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006). This Act** still applies in England and Wales. This Act aims to promote safe recruitment and to prevent those deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults, from gaining access through work (whether paid or unpaid). The Act also addressed failings identified by the Bichard Inquiry (2004). Safe employment is a continuing process of policy and practice improvement, reaching across all Council Services, into business or organisations who carry out work or services, on the Council's behalf, and that may involve contact with vulnerable children or adults.

**2.2.2 Swansea's safe recruitment and selection** - In working safely with Swansea citizens, the Council has recently updated the Recruitment and Selection Policy and working on updating the safeguarding elements within all HR policies within the staff handbook. The updated policies will aim to ensure that the new national safeguarding guidance is fully embedded into our procedures. Safeguarding roles responsibilities and expectations are now reflected with the Council's job descriptions, and staff expected to undertake the mandatory safeguarding awareness training (children and adults)



## 2.2. **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)-**

The Council has to ensure DBS checks are undertaken for all roles that have been risk assessed as needing one. Safeguarding policy expects that job requirements for all new starters, for each position to be filled, are risk assessed to ensure a DBS check is completed where a requirement has been identified. The DBS Policy has recently been updated and published. Alongside this, work is underway reviewing the procedures, guidance and standard letters for Managers/Schools. Work in this area is carried out by a dedicated DBS service centre, to assist Council Headteachers, School Governors, and Managers in making safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. A subgroup is looking at improvements for ensuring DBS checks for contractors are completed in line with new DBS Policy and Risk Assessment.

**2.2.3 DBS Service Centre/ helpdesk** – in early 2020, the Service Centre Helpdesk took over all ID applications and verifications previously carried out in the contact centre. Alongside this, there is daily monitoring of compliance to ensure that verifications are tracked to completion. Lists of renewals and overdue DBS documentation are sent to Heads of Service, every month reports and copied to Human Resources to allow them to raise any queries/issues directly with the business areas and to School Challenge Advisors.

**2.2.4 Volunteers** – Tackling Poverty Services have been working with Swansea Council for Voluntary Service to complete a corporate policy and resources for employing, supporting volunteers. Progress is being reported to the Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee.

### 2.2.5 **Work identified for year ahead:**

- To publish, communicate and implement revised HR policies relating to recruitment and selection, DBS reflecting national procedures.
- To ensure council-wide volunteering policy currently in development led by Tackling Poverty Service and to reflect wider safeguarding responsibilities expectations and training offer.

## 2.3 Safe Workforce

All staff employed by Swansea Council, including new staff are expected to have an awareness and understanding of their own corporate safeguarding role, as a Council employee, and as a citizen. All Council workers, and any individual, business or organisation we commission work from, have a vital role in ensuring that we work closely together to protect children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect through, both, responses to specific situations through a duty to report, and, also, by putting in place broader prevention measures.

2.3.1 **Named Safeguarding Persons** – all Council staff are expected to be aware of the Named Safeguarding Persons in their respective service area. This group of trained lead officers provide support to their staff teams in helping them identify, discuss and raise any signs of potential abuse, and to access the training and support they need. [Named safeguarding persons](#)

### 2.3.2 Corporate Safeguarding Operational Group

This is now an established cross-Council working group that reports directly to the Corporate Safeguarding group to ensure that the work programme is progressing, communication on safeguarding issues and good practice is shared across all service areas.

### 2.2.3 Communication

There are some imaginative examples of how messages on corporate safeguarding are communicated to our staff, some who are as yet are unable to regularly access the intranet. **For example: Waste, Parks & Cleansing.**

## Waste, Parks & Cleansing Safeguarding News

May 2023

[www.swansea.gov.uk/safeguarding](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/safeguarding)

### Safeguarding is Everyone's Business.

Doing nothing about abuse is not an option - See it, Report it

Whether you are in work or outside of work.

If there is an immediate risk of harm to the person or you believe a crime may have been committed, you must call the Police immediately on 999.

Adult Services Safeguarding Team - Phone on 636854 or email them on [adultsafeguardingteam@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:adultsafeguardingteam@swansea.gov.uk)

Children Safeguarding Team - The Emergency Duty Team is available outside normal working hours on: 01792 775501. During working hours 01792 635700



### Staying Safe Online

[www.staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/staysafeonline](http://www.staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/staysafeonline)



### MENTAL HEALTH & MONEY WORRIES



Having so much to deal with can affect your mental health. The charity, MIND, can't fix the cost of living crisis, but they can help you feel more able to cope.

If this speaks to you, speak to MIND.

[www.mind.org.uk/cost-of-living](http://www.mind.org.uk/cost-of-living)

## Waste, Parks & Cleansing Safeguarding News

January 2023

The Family Information Service (FIS) is a free impartial information and advice service for ALL parents / carers of children and young people aged between 0-20

They can provide information, assistance and advice to help you find and choose:

- Registered childcare
- Unregistered childcare
- Children and young people's activities
- Family support organisations.
- Help with the costs of childcare

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/fis>



Gwasanaeth Gwybodaeth Ddiwyddol Abar-tare  
Swansea Family Information Service

### NSPCC

Together we can make sure it's safe for every child to go online. The NSPCC are there to support parents/carers with online safety advice, and they're here for children – to protect them and help them recover from abuse.

[www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/)

### Help for problems with gambling

Be Gamble Aware offer free, confidential help and support to anyone who's worried about their – or someone else's – gambling.

[www.begambleaware.org/](http://www.begambleaware.org/)

Thank you to Steve Emmett from the Waste Collections Team who raised a Safeguarding concern he had about a resident last month. The concern was raised to his Supervisor, Darren Morgan, who then contacted the Waste, Parks & Cleansing Safeguarding Person, Rebecca Tribe.

The Adult Safeguarding Team were immediately notified of this concern. **Have any concerns? Spot it, Report it!**



Named safeguarding persons are in place to make sure that teams and services are kept informed about Council policy and safeguarding expectations.

#### 2.3.4 Training Programme

The fully updated programme implemented to reflect the National safeguarding training, learning and development standards (October 2022): [National safeguarding training, learning and... | Social Care Wales](#)

It is important to note that within the new, national safeguarding training framework there is now a *practitioner groups hierarchy*:

- Group A (basic)- increased awareness of safeguarding
- Group B (intermediary) to know what to look for and clear knowledge of reporting process, and own responsibilities.
- Group C (advanced) to become involved in protection planning and decisions around individuals in these processes.
- Group D (specialist)- mainly statutory agencies or professionals with a specific duty to safeguard through child or adult protection process.
- Group E (consultancy or sector leader)- as above. mainly statutory
- Group F (all public service leaders)

Swansea Council has been actively involved in the development of this framework and a timetable for the new training programme consistent with this approach is being drawn up.

#### 2.3.5 New Mandatory Training

Our safeguarding awareness training offer has also to include face to face, e-learning and class-based training approaches to meet the needs of a diverse workforce, for example to staff that do not have regular PC access. Staff are required to attend these mandatory courses a minimum of every 3-years. New mandatory Safeguarding e-Learning has just been launched (**Oct 2023**), and all staff and all councillors are expected to complete the adults and children courses, regardless of whether or not they have done the previous course recently. With fully refreshed content, the courses will help everyone understand their duty, in line with the new Social Care Wales Safeguarding Standards.

**2.2.6 Named Safeguarding Persons Lead Training** – this new programme is vital to Swansea’s approach in supporting service areas leads to gain knowledge and know- how which can be passed through to their own teams. This training has now been transferred to virtual training and delivered this year.

**2.6.7 Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)** training within a National Training Framework is one of the key mechanisms for delivering the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015. As part of this act, the Council has a duty to train all our workforce, which is also a mandatory expectation on staff and elected members. We need to ensure that the training offer is accessible to all staff across the Council and within schools.

### 2.3.8 Oracle Fusion

Oracle is the Council's system for managing staff employment and training records, together with other resources such as budgets and assets. The new system was launched in April 2023. Through Oracle Fusion employees and managers can access their own and their teams corporate learning account eLearning training and report on progress. The new Safeguarding e-learning courses, covering Group A (basic awareness) and Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) training are all now available on Oracle Fusion Learn.

### 2.3.9 Compliance

Swansea's corporate safeguarding policy states that all managers are responsible for ensuring compliance in ensuring that all staff within their own teams, are completing mandatory training. The roll out of the new mandatory training programme, and the implementation of Oracle will be important enablers progressing to full compliance.

### 2.3.10 Workforce Strategy

Effective workforce planning is vital to ensure we are looking to the future, to ensure there are appropriate numbers of high-quality staff, with the right skills, experience and professional competencies to deliver safe, and effective public services. A Council-wide workforce strategy and plan have been published: Workforce Strategy and Plan: [Workforce Strategy and Plan](#)

2.3.11 **New Workers** - all staff employed by Swansea Council, including new staff are expected to have an awareness and understanding of their own corporate safeguarding role, as a Council employee, and as a citizen. On commencement of employment, all Council employees have a corporate induction and to undertake a mandatory corporate safeguarding training; to be ready to prevent or report their concerns of possible abuse, when they work for the Authority or work on its behalf.

### 2.3.12 Work identified for year ahead:

- Continue roll out of new blended programme of mandatory and progression training courses across Council available to meet diverse needs of service areas, employees learning needs and responsibilities.
- Managers to work within Oracle Fusion to ensure safe and accurate reporting on staff learning records, keeping records updated and tracking compliance.

## **2.4 Safe Practice**

Safe practice is applying the standards expected within the All-Wales Safeguarding procedures, and corporate safeguarding policy. The Council can be assured that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place, and that all safeguarding practice within the wider workforce (including partners, providers and volunteers) is continuously improving and working towards enhancing the lives well-being and safety of Swansea citizens.

**2.4.1 Safeguarding as “everyone’s business”** Swansea Council expects that vulnerable people in Swansea are kept safe, protected from abuse and neglect. To best achieve this, safeguarding vulnerable adults and children is seen as “everybody’s business” Safeguarding practice has to be delivered timely and effectively, to expected standards and with consistency in practice. The Council can be assured that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place, and that all safeguarding practice within the wider workforce (including partners, providers and volunteers) is continuously improving and working towards enhancing the lives well-being and safety of Swansea citizens.

### **2.4.2 Duty to Report**

A concern may involve any child or young person under the age 18 years old or a vulnerable adult. There is a statutory duty places on all Council workers and elected members to report their concern regardless of whether the child or adult is living permanently in the Swansea area or not. If you think, there are child protection concerns, then you should seek immediate advice from your safeguarding lead, or from the Child and Family Service Single Point of Contact. Similarly, there is a duty to report any concerns about an adult at risk, and for a local Authority to make enquiries if it has reasonable cause to suspect that a person within its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) is an ‘adult at risk’.

**2.4.3 Person at the centre of each concern-** We have to ensure all agencies, services and individuals work together to give timely and proportionate responses, where possible occurrences of abuse or neglect of children and adults at risk has been noticed. In Swansea, safeguarding practice and process aims to be fully focused on the needs of the child or person as the subject of the concern, and on working towards a set of agreed safe outcomes. By working collaboratively, firstly on how we identify and prevent abuse and neglect, then how we understand and achieve safety goals and in reach decisions collectively with the safeguarded person at the centre.

#### 2.4.4 Swansea as a Human Right City

Swansea Council has been committed to the 1945 Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. In December 2022, Swansea become Wales's first Human Rights City, following a year of action to recognise their importance to the lives of all residents and organisations.

Together with Swansea University, the council had produced a guide to help organisations embed human rights into their day-to-day activities and there would be a series of training events with the British Institute of Human Rights which will be on offer to organisation across Swansea.

- 2.4.5. **Rights of a Child-** the Council is committed to the 1945 Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) has recently reviewed national guidance on safeguarding practice in Wales to ensure that children are safe and protected, and vulnerable people are able to live their lives fully, and to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes.

#### 2.4.6. Work with Children, Young People and Families

To be successful in making a difference we must continue to work collaboratively with children, young people and families, fully understanding what matters to them. This will enable us to better allocate work so that *service users get the right service, from the right person at the right time* and are more engaged and involved in the decisions that affect them. Child and Family Services has developed a strategy that describes the way we work and demonstrates our commitment to this strategic priority. It outlines how we have and will continue to develop our services to support children, young people and their family network - ensuring that individual needs can be addressed as quickly and as well as possible in order to attempt to prevent children and young people from entering, or remaining within, the care system wherever safe alternatives can be identified:

[Strategy to support children and young people to live safely at home with their family.](#)

By working in new ways, the Council is in a stronger position to focus resources on more preventative and contextual approaches. Child and Family Services places practice excellence at the centre of our work with the most vulnerable children: <https://staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/cfssafeguarding>

#### 2.4.7 Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding -the lives of hundreds of young people are being made safer, thanks to the Contextual Safeguarding pilot led by our service, but involving a whole range of partners. Swansea Council are working with Bedford University on Contextual Safeguarding Risk to improve our child exploitation work and practice, in the area of risks to children outside of the family (such as criminal or sexual exploitation). The Covid-19 lockdown has not stopped the

project from pressing ahead with preventing exploitation and disrupting criminal networks and behaviour within the context in which the harm occurs.

A contextual approach to safeguarding requires us to look beyond the family to assess neighbourhood and peer group factors in considering risks to children and young people. Swansea's Contextual Missing Exploitation Trafficking multi-agency forum (CMET) tackles referrals, which can potentially impact on hundreds of young people. Youth workers have been doing vital outreach harnessing their skills to identify contextual risks and potential solutions.

#### **2.4.8 Rights of Adults**

The embedding of human rights as part of the Council's approach. This can be demonstrated by our commitment to the Dublin Declaration which requires a whole Council approach to involvement, engagement and coproduction. The Pandemic means that more thought needs to be given to how we live and how we safeguard our wellbeing both as individuals and within communities. We are continuing to work closely with the Older Person's Commissioner's Office and CADR at Swansea University to ensure meaningful mechanisms for engagement of citizens 50+ within the "Live Well, Age Well Forum".

#### **2.4.9 Adult Safeguarding Team**

The new Adult Safeguarding team are working hard to ensure that all concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity, risks are managed effectively with partners using our practice approaches that place the person at the centre, with full involvement and engagement. More cases are being closed and Safeguarding concern investigations are now more likely to be followed through to conclusion, and where necessary supporting police to achieve a conviction.

#### **2.4.10 Collaborative Communication**

A 'What matters to you' conversation is now central to how we work, across social services. Through a 'warm' front door we can help promote wellbeing and prevent rapid escalation of needs. In Adult Services there is the Common Access Point (CAP), which is set up to help people explore what they need to enhance their personal wellbeing, taking in their strengths as well as risks in their situation, and the outcome they are looking for. Adult Services are using collaborative communication and narrative based approaches to help professionals and service users reflect together on their experiences, the outcomes achieved and what could be done better.

<https://staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/collabcommscaseexample>

#### **2.4.11 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards**

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards were introduced in 2009 to protect against arbitrary deprivations of liberty in hospitals and care homes. These safeguards provide a legal framework that helps to ensure that human rights are protected. Once notified by a Managing Authority, the Local Authority has a duty to assess whether the restrictions are necessary in order to prevent harm to the person and proportionate to their needs. Swansea has significantly improved performance in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) through implementing these dedicated team arrangements. Feedback suggests this has not only improved professional knowledge but is driving up standards and response times.

#### **2.4.12 Capturing stories of good practice**

Safeguarding and protecting our most vulnerable citizens whilst ensuring their own voice is at the centre of our work remains a priority. Within a sustainable model of social care, we must target our efforts to where there is significant risk of harm and abuse and ensure we are working in a timely way, with the vulnerable person at the centre. The Director of Social Services Annual Report sets out more detail on the achievements and stories of impact in many of the areas highlighted in this report:

#### **2.4.6 Work identified for year ahead:**

- To continue to implement quality assurance frameworks within child and family and adult services.
- To continue to refresh the work programme using self-assessment and involving leads from all Council Departments within the Corporate Safeguarding Operational group.



## 2.5 Safe Partnerships

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It's fundamental to high-quality health and social care. By working together with citizens, and other agencies, we better support children, their parents, carers and vulnerable adults to achieve the best possible outcomes.

### 2.5.1 Cost of Living Crisis -a community response

Swansea Council's Tackling Poverty Service with the support of the Poverty Partnership group and Poverty forum have a coordinated a city and county wide response to recently challenges that are pushing families, adults and children below poverty threshold. More families are struggling to pay for increasing housing, food, fuel and energy costs, and being forced into debt. These intense pressures can lead to more family and social problems and place additional demand for public and voluntary services, which are also under pressures as budgets are constrained and impacted by inflationary pressures. During this time, services have adapted and transformed themselves and used funding to support new ways of working, and to safeguard vulnerable people and families, such as Swansea Spaces, COAST (Creating Opportunities Across Swansea Together) and the Holiday Food Fund.

### 2.5.2 Safer Swansea strategy

Harm is sometimes more related to place than people, and this also requires a more joined up approach. Harm, exploitation or victimisation may target or impact on the most vulnerable in our communities and the Council has access a range of approaches from prevention, duty to report, and possible criminal investigation. Swansea Housing Service are working in partnership with social services, the police, community safety and other housing providers to safeguard the vulnerable by highlighting issues, concerns and taking necessary action: [Safer Swansea advice - Swansea](#)

2.5.2a **Hate Crime** - the prevention and reduction of Hate Crime and Community Tension Monitoring is one the five strategic priorities identified, which aims to prevent Hate Crime, support victims and improve our multi-agency response to the problem. Our Hate Crime Stakeholder Action Plan' continues to be managed and monitored through the Hate Crime Stakeholder Group and the Safer Swansea Partnership Steering Group.

2.5.2b **Victim Support**- the Council continued to support Hate Crime awareness week in October 2020 and signed up to Victim Support's Charter. The Charter sets out in detail the rights of victims, and the commitments of organisations such as the Council in tackling Hate Crime, providing support and information for victims, and raising awareness of Hate Crime.

2.5.2c **PREVENT** Our PREVENT strategy and interventions programme target support to vulnerable individuals who may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism. This is managed through a multi-agency (channel) partnership made up of organisations that have a legislative duty under the Counter Terrorism Act 2015

**2.5.3 Working with contractors and suppliers-** - We expect that all contractors to confirm that they comply with Swansea Council corporate safeguarding policy, their staff and/or their sub-contractors staff are aware of their responsibilities and duties and when required provided or able to provide safeguarding awareness raising and training. We carry out a suitability questionnaire to ensure that all expectations, in relation to safeguarding, are fully understood. We have also developed a Safeguarding policy specifically for Contractors of the City and County of Swansea to detail the Council's expectations of partners and providers, and this is annexed to the contract. Safeguarding clauses are placed in all social care contracts and inserted into other contracts where there are seen as relevant. All external employees working on our behalf are therefore expected to be made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and duties; and when required provided with safeguarding awareness raising training.

#### **2.5.4 Lessons Learned events (Regional Safeguarding)**

To coincide with National Safeguarding week, West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board are to host an annual Learning Event where learning from recent practice reviews is shared and discussed to help shape and influence future practice. This year's event will be held at Mercure Hotel, Llansamlet, Swansea on Thursday, 16 November.

#### **2.5.5 Work identified for year ahead:**

- To continue to embed corporate safeguarding policy procedures into how we work with suppliers in carrying out checks, specifying contracts, building awareness in the wider workforce and contract monitoring.

## **2.6 Safe Voice**

Swansea is aiming to ensure individuals have a “safe voice” on safeguarding matters by providing stronger voice, meaningful control over the support they receive and remove any barriers to achieving their wellbeing outcomes. Each citizen must feel that they are an equal partner in their relationship with Professionals, in discussions about their safety and well-being.

### **2.6.1 Making safeguarding personal**

In all, of the above, service developments and safe practice, Swansea is aiming to ensure individuals have a “safe voice” on safeguarding matters within the safeguarding and protection processes, the care and support they receive and to remove any barriers to achieving their safety goals and wellbeing outcomes. Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is a UK wide initiative which aims to develop an outcomes-focus to safeguarding work, and a range of responses to support people to improve or resolve their circumstances. The development of Making Safeguarding Personal is not simply about a focus on personalised, safe practice at the front line. It requires a whole system approach across and within organisations, to promote the voice and control of the person at the centre. We want to ensure we are treating people with 'lived experience' as equal partners and with dignity and respect.

### **2.6.2 Junior Safeguarding Board**

Established in January 2019, the JSB comprises of representatives from secondary school across the West Glamorgan region including schools for children and young people with additional and complex needs. The purpose of the JSB is for children and young people to have the opportunity to voice their concerns about safety in their school, online, at home and in their communities.

“I like the JSB because they are very real. They don't try to sugar coat issues that affect children & young people, and they seriously care about trying to fix the problems.” Oisín, JSB member. [Junior Safeguarding Board \(wgsb.wales\)](http://wgsb.wales)

### **2.6.3 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Becoming ACE aware and promoting trauma informed responses will also require a whole system shift in public services approach to ensuring all people are listened to and treated with kindness and compassion. Building on work undertaken by the People P.D.C, and then incorporated into the Council's Integrated Well-being Strategy for Children and Young People 2018 – 2021. The Safeguarding Operational group has now set a Task group to reconsider how we are applying ACE framework and practice within our work, and to set a vision to shape future practice.

### **Our ACEs Vision**

How we respond to situations matters, it is our aim to promote trauma informed responses in all circumstances.

We want all officers to be provided with ACES awareness training and practical support in order to break down barriers and create a kinder and tolerant society.

All people should be treated with respect, kindness and understanding and this should be reflected in the language we use, both in written documents and when providing advice verbally.

We will create a language guide document and share good practise across departments and directorate. We are mindful that trauma informed practises should be applied between officers as well as to the public.

#### **2.6.4 LGBTQ+ Awareness**

Within their work on “Equali-Tea” Junior Safeguarding Board have been raising awareness about LGBTQIA+ issues. They have co-created, listened to young people, delivered sessions online, shared a colourful resource to young people, schools, Councillors & Senior Managers across Swansea.

Adult Services Service Provision in line with the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales have developed our own LGBTQ+ strategy/action plan to ensure individuals from the LGBTQ+ community that work, attend, or live in services, feel a sense of security and confidence to be themselves. [ASnews - Adult Service Provision LGBTQ+ Action Plan](#)

#### **2.6.5 Quality Assurance**

Adult Services and Child and Family Services are implementing a quality assurance framework that articulates the high standards of service we expect in all work with vulnerable children and adults. Recognising that we need to focus on understanding the lived experience of those who receive a service. To achieve this, Child and Family Services are expanding how we get information both qualitative and quantitative to help identify improvements.

#### **2.6.6 Advocacy**

Both Child and Family and Adult Services continues to improve the Council’s advocacy offer made to vulnerable children, adults and their families, who can now access Independent Professional Advocacy to help ensure that they are fully informed and engaged in decisions about their care and support and that plans are in their best interests and with regard to safety.

#### **2.6.5 Work identified for year ahead:**

- Working within families, communities and schools to promote safeguarding awareness.
- Continue to develop language and communication guidance and training opportunities for Council employees to support ACE awareness, promote inclusivity and embed trauma informed practice.
- Continuing to improve our advocacy offer, best interest decisions, equalities, inclusion and promote human rights.

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1. CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE CHART

Appendix 1. Corporate Safeguarding Governance Chart (updated July 2023)



