

Appendix 3

1. Decision of the Care Scrutiny Committee

- To note the work programme
- To request a progress report in 6 months on the work programme including information on the whistleblowing policy and its implementation
- To request a report on securing a Child Friendly County status and becoming a Trauma-Informed Council.
- To ask the Cabinet to consider
 - adding an external female contact name to the poster to share information about concerns and ensure contact details are available on school websites and the Council website
 - addressing the voice of the family as well as the voice of the child in work stream 1
 - amending the text under the heading '2.3 – Estyn inspection of the Council's Education Department' on page 18 of the Response Plan to include a sentence reflecting the context that, despite the commendation by Estyn, a school head was arrested a few months later
 - ensuring that grooming training is available to all who need it
 - providing external specialist safeguarding training for members and governors
 - adding the "well-being of children and young people" to the description of work stream 7 - Supporting and Stabilising Ysgol Friars

corresponding with Welsh Government to express concern about the challenges and risks surrounding the role of school governors

2. Decision of the Governance and Audit Committee

- To accept the detail of the Response Plan
- To thank the Officers for their work and welcome that the Response Plan was being discussed at several forums
- That a simple and definite summary/front cover of the main action points was needed
- That the Committee received regular updates on the actions that had been taken or were being considered as a suitable and appropriate response to the situation
- A request by the Committee for Estyn to acknowledge the weaknesses of their report on the Council's safeguarding arrangements, June 2023
- That Whistleblowing Arrangements and Safeguarding Arrangements need to be among the best - reviews to these policies are welcome - need an update on the work, timetable and manner in which they are adopted
- Note: Request to review the last paragraph of 2.5 of the Response Plan: 'Investigation into the events of 2019 that has been the subject of press coverage' – more context is needed about the independent investigation that was completed and what the reason was for the decision not to share the report/findings. Request to set out the context for Estyn's

commendation of the Council's safeguarding arrangements (June 2023). The wording as it is is inappropriate given the failures that later emerged.

3. Decision of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

- To accept and note the report and work programme, and request an update in 6 months.
- To recommend to the Cabinet:

Work Stream 1: Voice of the Child and Supporting Victims

- Measurable arrangements should be established that clearly show how the voice of the child and victims' experience directly influence decisions and outcomes;
- Long-term support for victims needs to be ensured without causing further trauma;
- Children facing challenges need to be given appropriate attention and unconscious bias should be avoided;
- Relevant information should be easy to read and accessible to children.

Work Stream 2: Managing Allegations and Concerns About Adults Working with Children

- The arrangements for managing allegations and concerns should ensure that any doubt about the suitability of adults to work with children and vulnerable adults is assessed at an early stage, is appropriately escalated, and independently challenged, regardless of the status of the practitioner;
- Clear safeguards are needed for individuals who raise concerns;
- Incidents that do not directly relate to children need to be examined;
- Evidence should be gathered to show that change is taking place and to enable future scrutiny;
- Consideration should be given to extending the time period for the audit in Part 5, Wales Safeguarding Procedures, by more than two years;
- Checks should be made that there is a mechanism in place to ensure, if necessary, that there is a transition from human resources processes to Part 5 procedures.

Work Stream 3: Training and Policies

- Policies and training should be rigorous and reviewed to support professional judgement and challenge;
- There needs to be evidence that training changes behaviour and decisions in practice, and is not solely a matter of attendance;
- Safeguarding records should be regularly reviewed and supervised by a specific officer to ensure that they are in accordance with the requirements;
- Grooming should be specifically identified in training arrangements and given timely attention.

Work Stream 4: School Governance

- School governance arrangements should be strengthened to identify patterns of risk over time, ensure clear pathways of escalation, and include an element of independent challenge or assurance;
- Appropriate support should be offered to equip governors to appropriately challenge and identify patterns;
- Consideration should be given to the training provided for Chairs and Designated Safeguarding Governors.

Work Stream 5: Reasonable Force

- It should be ensured that staff understand when the use of reasonable force is appropriate, and that they feel confident and supported to take action to protect children;
- It should be ensured that reviews focus on learning lessons rather than blaming.

Work Stream 6: Crisis Planning and Crisis Response

- Crisis planning and response should be treated as a live process that is part of the safeguarding process and should be tested regularly;
- Clarity is required in relation to roles;
- Effective communication with staff should be ensured;
- Arrangements need to be continually reviewed to ensure that lessons learned from Ysgol Friars remain operational over time.

Work Stream 7: Supporting and Stabilising Ysgol Friars

- Supporting and stabilising Ysgol Friars should be used as a basis for whole-system learning, proving that stability has led to sustainable improvement in safeguarding and cultural change across schools;
- Schools should be required to:
- include information about their safeguarding arrangements prominently on their websites;
- consider adapting the content of their relationships education curriculum to reflect what happened at Ysgol Friars.

General

- There is a need to ensure that there is an overview of the work streams in their entirety;
- Consider putting arrangements in place to ensure that the Council responds immediately and checks its systems when a significant concern arises which may be systemic in nature;
- Attention should be given to the arrangements for communicating information with parents and families to ensure effective communication;
- Consideration should be given to releasing as much information as possible to ensure transparency;

The 2023 Estyn Inspection Report of the Council's Education Department should not be quoted or referenced in the Response Plan.

4. Decision of the Full Council

- To reiterate the request to the Welsh Government for a public inquiry, and share the Government's response to the request with the Members of the Full Council.

- To emphasise the importance of the efficiency of Whistleblowing, Safeguarding and Reasonable Force Policies.
- To ask for the wider distribution of Safeguarding Referral Forms rather than only to Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies.
- To share information about expenditure on support, therapy and counselling for victims to give assurance that we are spending enough on this support.
- To emphasise the importance of the Reasonable Force Policy and that it is given due consideration in the response.
- To give consideration to how to ensure that the safeguarding policy is followed when the information is confidential and not known to all members of a school's governing body.
- To give consideration to ensuring that concerns are taken seriously and that this is reinforced in culture.
- To ensure that record-keeping arrangements, and any relevant training, are reviewed and that a dedicated officer be considered to verify the quality of records.
- The need for reassurance of what would be different if someone was to raise concerns today.
- The need to publish a concise and easy-to-read version of the document.

RESOLVED:

- To ask the Cabinet to consider the above observations, as well as those from the Extraordinary Meeting of the Care Scrutiny Committee (13 January 2026), the Extraordinary Meeting of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee (19 January 2026) and the Governance and Audit Committee (15 January 2026), in adopting the new Response Plan.