

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	<i>Safeguarding Policy Review (2026)</i>
Cabinet Member:	<i>Councillor Dewi Jones, Cabinet Member for Education and Chair of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel</i>
Relevant officer:	<i>Dylan Owen, Statutory Director of Social Services</i>
Date of meeting:	<i>7 July 2026</i>

1. Decision Sought:

1.1 That the Cabinet adopts the revised **Safeguarding Policy 2026** and approves the awareness-raising actions set out in the report.

2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision:

2.1 The Safeguarding Policy sets out how the Council intends to fulfil its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults at risk in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

2.2 The Strategic Safeguarding Panel agreed that the Safeguarding Policy should be reviewed every two years to ensure that it continues to reflect legislative requirements, national guidance and good practice.

2.3 This report presents the outcome of the 2026 review of the Policy. Cabinet approval is sought in order to adopt the revised Policy.

3. Introduction / Background

3.1 Between January and March 2026, a comprehensive review of the Policy was carried out. A sub-group was established to lead the review, including the Director of Social Services, Safeguarding Children and Adults Managers, Learning and Development Manager, Head of Adults Department, Community Safety Officer, and Senior Executive Officer.

3.2 Several changes were made to the Safeguarding Policy following the review, including strengthening the clarity and usefulness of the document. More emphasis was placed on explaining the pathway for raising concerns, highlighting it clearly at the beginning of the document.

- 3.3 More practical procedures were developed for reporting and recording concerns, including a detailed, new section, noting the information that should be recorded when seeing or hearing about a safeguarding matter.
- 3.4 The accountability and lead role of senior officers was strengthened, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals and different groups of staff were also made clearer.
- 3.5 The training requirements were explained more explicitly, emphasising the mandatory and regular (every three years) training expectations for staff and elected members, as well as strengthening the compliance monitoring arrangements.
- 3.6 Further steps were taken to strengthen accountability across the Council in the safeguarding field. The Policy now includes the following requirements:
- Including data (%) on the number who have completed safeguarding training and domestic violence training as a part of the Performance Challenge process in each department.
 - Establishing safeguarding as a permanent item on the agenda of the Corporate Management Team.
 - Asking every department to include safeguarding as a standing item on the agendas of our departmental management team.
 - Continuing with the procedure of submitting the Annual Report to the Care Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet and the full Council.
- 3.7 An informal consultation on the revised Policy was undertaken with members of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel and members of the Safeguarding Operational Group. A number of valuable comments were received during the process, including suggestions to move the reference numbers and flow of actions to the front page to improve accessibility, and to further clarify and strengthen the role of the Designated Safeguarding Person within the policy.
- 3.8 Discussions were also held with the Procurement Team to review and amend the clause relating to commissioned services, to ensure that safeguarding expectations and responsibilities are clearly and consistently reflected within commissioning arrangements.
- 3.9 The draft Policy was also presented to the Care Scrutiny Committee on 4 June, where a constructive and useful discussion took place. Following the discussion, two points were raised for consideration:
- A specific reference to online safeguarding should be included to reflect the contemporary challenges and risks facing children and vulnerable adults. **This**

has been addressed through the inclusion of a reference to the relevant safeguarding procedures.

- The definitions of safeguarding should be highlighted earlier in the document to improve clarity. **As a result, the definitions have been moved to the first page of the Policy.**

3.10 The adoption of the new Policy will ensure that the Council has a robust safeguarding procedure in place, and fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults at risk.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

4.1 In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) (including the Welsh public sector equality duties), when making decisions the Council must have due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination; (2) advance equality of opportunity; and (3) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Due regard must also be given to relevant socio-economic impacts.

4.2 No new Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for this review, as the statutory requirements and the Council’s core responsibilities remain unchanged. The proposed amendments primarily provide further clarity for staff and Elected Members regarding their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

4.3 However, given the length of time since the original policy was adopted, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the next review of the Policy to ensure it continues to reflect good practice.

5. Next Steps

5.1 If approved by Cabinet, a copy of the Policy will be presented to the next meeting of Full Council as an appendix to the Strategic Safeguarding Panel Annual Report 2025/26. This is considered an important step in raising awareness amongst elected members.

5.2 Further work will be required to promote the revised Policy amongst all Council staff to ensure a consistent awareness and understanding of safeguarding responsibilities. The Council has appointed a Corporate Safeguarding Champion, and promoting the Policy, safeguarding training, and awareness of its contents will form a key part of their work programme over the coming months.

6. Views of the Statutory Officers

6.1 Chief Finance Officer

No objections to the decision sought from the perspective of financial propriety.

6.2 Monitoring Officer

The Safeguarding Policy supports the range of responsibilities which relate to the safety and wellbeing of our residents. It meant that the Council's commitment to safeguarding and the expectations around this important issue are clear and available in one document. I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought.

List of Appendices:

- Safeguarding Policy (2026 Review)