APPENDIX 1a: Cyngor Gwynedd's journey to become a child-friendly, caring and trauma-informed Council.

The trauma-informed and child-friendly areas of work have gained momentum within the Council over the past few years, particularly following the publication of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report. Following a request from the Scrutiny Committee in January, this paper provides an update on the progress to date and outlines the next steps for developing this agenda across the Council.

1. Trauma-Informed Work in Gwynedd

1.1. Mapping work and understanding the current situation

1.1.1. The mapping and engagement work carried out across the Council's departments shows that levels of awareness, confidence, learning needs, training provision and barriers vary significantly between services.

1.1.2. Trauma-informed work has already developed strongly in some areas of the Council, particularly in Social Services, the Homelessness Service, the Early Years and within schools and teams in the Education Department. These services have invested in specialist training, including diploma-level training and Trauma-Informed Schools training programmes.

1.1.3. In developing the work programme, models, training and good practice from other organisations have been reviewed. There is no single solution or single approach that will achieve this vision, so the programme includes a range of courses of action that complement each other and will continue to evolve as we learn and develop.

1.2. Setting up a tiered training programme

1.2.1. A tiered training programme is planned to be developed which aligns with the National Trauma Aware Framework for Wales, and builds on existing arrangements across the Council to take the agenda forward.

1.2.2. Our approach to workforce development recognises that different levels of knowledge and skills are required according to the role and responsibilities of staff. At the bottom of the framework is compassionate practice providing the foundation for all, reflecting the Council's values and linking directly to our Learning and Development Framework.

1.2.3. Moving through the layers, the framework provides opportunities to develop more specialist knowledge and competencies, including trauma-informed practice where appropriate. This approach emphasises the importance of understanding people's experiences and circumstances without rushing to label individuals or situations as being trauma-related. Rather, the aim is to build the confidence of staff to respond in a compassionate, curious and considerate way, seeing the individual first and focusing on their strengths, needs and unique experiences.

1.2.4. The table below explains the tiers involved:

What?	How?
Tier 1: Senior leadership and understanding	Further training is commissioned for specific groups such as Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers and Cabinet Members. This will strengthen their understanding of the impact of trauma and the implications for service leadership, decision making and policy development. In addition, shorter awareness sessions will be offered to managers through the Managers Network, drawing on the expertise of Early Years officers.
Tier 2: Raising general awareness	A corporate e-learning module, *"An Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma-Informed Practice"*, is now available to staff and councillors via the E-learning Portal. It aims to provide a basic understanding of trauma, ACEs, and the impact that adverse experiences can have on individuals throughout their lives. To date, over 300 individuals have completed this training.
Tier 3: Compassionate skills for frontline staff	The third tier will focus on staff who work directly with residents and service users on a day-to-day basis. The aim is to give staff the tools and confidence to respond in a positive, empathetic and supportive way to people facing challenges or trauma. (Compassionate Service Delivery)
Tier 4: Specialist trauma training	Theproposal does not interfere with the good work already taking place within services with specialist requirements. Services such as Social Services, Homelessness, Early Years and schools will continue to organise and commission the training best suited to their specific needs, building on the strong foundations already in place.

1.3. <u>Culture</u>

1.3.1. Initial discussions have begun with Bangor University to explore good practice that supports the creation of the environment and culture needed to deliver services in a compassionate way. This work will inform training development, policy reviews, and the way procedures and processes are interpreted and implemented across the organisation.

1.3.2. The Learning and Development Service will review the current Learning and Development Framework to ensure that it aligns with the Council's values and provides a solid foundation for the development of compassionate practice across all services.

1.3.3. As a further sign of commitment to leading by example, the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families is completing a Trauma-Informed Practice Diploma, supporting the promotion of a trauma-informed understanding and culture across the organisation.

1.4. Monitoring and Learning

1.4.1. It is planned to re-run the mapping questionnaire with Gwynedd Heads of Department and School Headteachers in November 2026 in order to assess the extent to which the desired principles and behaviours are embedded across the organisation, and to use the findings to inform further work.

1.5. Work Programme

Action	By when?
A trauma-informed Virtual Reality (VR) workshop and training was held in June 2025.	June 2025
A questionnaire sent out to Heads of Department to understand Council Departments' awareness of trauma-informed working.	November 2025
Discussed and planned potential options for trauma-informed training with the Learning and Development Service.	December 2025
Introduced an E-module Training on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma-Informed Practice.	March 2026
Prepared a work programme to present to the Leadership Team.	March 2026
Submitted a Cabinet Report stating the corporate commitment setting out the ambition to develop the Council as a child-friendly, caring and trauma-informed organisation.	May 2026
Training sessions held **Collaborative Conversations** have been held for frontline staff who work directly with residents and service users.	May 2026
Explored how the Council's policies, procedures and processes can be reviewed through a trauma-informed lens.	July 2026
Conducted a trauma-informed training session using VR for Cabinet Members and the Corporate Management Team.	October 2026
Hosting a trauma-informed training session using VR for the Assistant Heads' Forum.	November 2026
Awareness-raising session on Trauma-Informed Practice in the Managers' Network (requesting a presentation from the Early Years Unit).	November 2026
Re-assessing the level of Departmental awareness by circulating a further questionnaire to Heads of Department.	December 2026
Scoping and commissioning the work of policy proofing and developing a more detailed work programme following the feedback of the Departmental questionnaire for Year 2.	March 2027

2. Gwynedd Child-Friendly Work

2.1. As members will be aware, ensuring that the voice of children and young people is heard and considered is central to the work of the Response Plan Programme Board. A solid foundation has already been set through the work of the Youth Forum and the development of the Children and Young People's Voice Strategy, which provides a clear direction for this area of work.

2.2. This workstream is intended to build on existing work and support Council departments to understand their role in promoting children's rights and ensure that the voice of children and young people is given due consideration in the development of policies, services and decisions.

2.3. Mapping Work

2.3.1. Research has been completed into the various accreditation schemes in place in other areas. While UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities and Communities accreditation has been considered, that scheme is not currently available. As a result, it is intended to adopt the principles of *The Right Way*, which is promoted by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

2.3.2. This approach provides a practical framework for embedding children's rights into policy, practice and decision-making across the organisation, without the need for a formal accreditation process.

2.4. Familiarising with "The Right Way" Training

2.4.1. To support this, a training programme is being developed. Work has already started through sessions for Heads held through the Response Plan Programme Board and the Public Services Board. In addition, an e-learning module on Children's Rights is available on the E-learning Portal to raise awareness and a basic understanding across the workforce.

2.4.2. The next step will be to work with the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and use *The Right Way* framework to carry out a self-assessment in three services. This will provide a basic understanding of the level of awareness and understanding of Children's Rights across those services and inform further steps to strengthen practice.

2.4.3. In order to strengthen capacity and ensure the ability to maintain the momentum of this work in the longer term, it is planned to appoint an additional resource to support in equality. It is expected that this will increase the ability to co-ordinate, support and develop the Children's Rights agenda across the Council, complementing the arrangements already in place.

2.5. Work Programme

Child-friendly Outcome	By when?
Desktop Research for UNICEF's "Child-friendly Cities" accreditation	December 2025
"Children's Rights" Workshop held for Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Chairs and the Management Team	February 2026
Prepared a work programme to present to the Leadership Team	March 2026
Corresponded with the Welsh Government in relation to a request for funding to hold a second "Children's Rights" workshop in conjunction with the Public Services Board	March 2026
A second "Children's Rights" workshop held in conjunction with the Public Services Board	March 2026
Submitted a Cabinet Report stating the corporate commitment setting out the ambition to develop the Council as a child-friendly, caring and trauma-informed organisation	May 2026
Held a "The Right Way in Action" workshop in conjunction with the Public Services Board	July 2026
Self-assessment in three Services in terms of awareness and understanding of "Children's Rights" using the "The Right Way" Framework	October 2026
Holding a "children's rights" session at the Managers' Network	November 2026

3. Progress and Next Steps

3.1. The work programmes are now under the care of the Supporting People Working Group, which is a cross-departmental working group that brings together officers from a range of services to support, co-ordinate and monitor the work. The Supporting People Working Group will continue to take responsibility for overseeing the progress of both work streams, providing a constructive challenge and appropriate support to ensure that the principles of Children's Rights and compassionate practice are increasingly embedded in the Council's culture, arrangements and practices.

3.2. In addition, the working group already oversees the Gafael Llaw pilot and the Collaborative Conversations programme, ensuring coherence between the different pieces of work and learning opportunities across the whole programme.

3.3. This is recognised as being an area that is still developing. As a result, the work programme will evolve over time as we learn from our own experiences, evaluate the impact of the activities and take into account good practice and new developments.