

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Safeguarding Policy Review
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Menna Trenholme, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
Relevant officer:	Dylan Owen, Corporate Director Social Services
Date of meeting:	20 February 2024

1. Decision sought:

Adopt the amended "Policy and Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect" ("Safeguarding Policy") (Appendix 1) together with the Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Strategic Panel (Appendix 2).

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

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

In June 2023 the Statutory Director of Social Services began the work of reviewing the Council's current Safeguarding Policy, together with the members of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel. Because the current version is an adaptation of a Policy created in 2013, it was decided that it was timely to prepare a new policy rather than updating the document in accordance with the usual procedure.

Because of that we ask for Cabinet approval in order to adopt the new Policy.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background / Introduction

Cyngor Gwynedd's main priority is to ensure that children and adults at risk are safeguarded from abuse, neglect, radicalisation, slavery, domestic abuse, and exploitation.

The whole of Cyngor Gwynedd has a responsibility to create the environment that assures this, making it less likely that a child or adult is abused. These safeguarding arrangements are outlined in this policy and are the responsibility of all services within

Cyngor Gwynedd. The Safeguarding Strategic Panel is responsible for ensuring that suitable arrangements and procedures are in place at a corporate level in order to ensure the protection of children, young people and adults. This Panel is accountable to the Cabinet.

In October 2023 a workshop led by the Statutory Director of Social Services was held. Representation of officers from across the Council departments attended, including the Deputy Head of Children Services - Safeguarding and Quality and the Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager.

During the workshop several changes were agreed:

- The revised Safeguarding Policy confirms that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard, but also notes specific responsibilities for Councilors and members of staff, as well as detailing how safeguarding should be reflected in contracting and commissioning arrangements.
- Highlighting the expectations for Cyngor Gwynedd staff and Councilors to act according to the principles set out in this policy at all times, whether during working hours or otherwise.
- There was a lack of clarity in the old Policy between safeguarding and protection, and this has now been addressed. The Policy makes it it is safeguarding which is under consideration, and that other procedures are to be followed when "protecting".
- The revised Policy highlights the role of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel. The Terms of Reference of the Panel has been modified, and further attention was paid to its membership in order to make sure that senior officers across the Council as well as experts in the field of safeguarding Children and Adults are invited.
- Strengthen the reporting and monitoring arrangements. An Annual Report will be presented to the Cabinet annually. That report will also go before the Full Council annually.
- Regarding the Safeguarding Policies of the Council's individual departments, it was noted that the Council has one corporate Policy. However, department can introduce their own specific policy if it is deemed necessary.

3.2 The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

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 who are at risk.

There was informal consultation on the revised Policy with members of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel and members of the Operational Safeguarding Group. No public

consultation was held on the policy as the changes do not directly affect the services offered to the public.

In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 ("The Act") (including Welsh public sector duties) when making decisions the Council must pay due regard to the need (1) to abolish unlawful discrimination (2) promoting equal opportunities and (3) fostering good relationships based on the protected characteristics together with paying attention to socio-economic impacts.

A new equality impact assessment was not prepared, as the statutory requirement on the Council remains the same, but that the changes proposed gives clarity to staff and Elected Members regarding their responsibility to protect children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect.

3.3 Next steps

- If the Cabinet approves the Policy, a copy will go before the next Full Council meeting. This is felt to be an important step in order to raise the awareness of elected members.
- Further work will be needed in order to promote the revised Policy amongst all Council staff.
- There are several appendices to the Policy and the Panel intends to commission the Operational Safeguarding Group to review these, for example, re-examining the way we measure impact and monitor data.

4. Views of the Statutory Officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

I support the decision sought. There are no matters which involve financial propriety that need to be brought to the Cabinet's attention.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

The Safeguarding Policy supports a range of matters which relate to the safety and wellbeing of our residents. I am supportive of the recommendation.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Draft Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Strategic Panel Terms of Reference