

MEETING	Full Council
DATE	24 September 2026
TITLE	Strategic Safeguarding Panel's Annual Report 2025/26
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dewi Jones
CONTACT OFFICER	Dylan Owen, Director of Social Services

1. Background / Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on what has been achieved by the Strategic Safeguarding Panel during 2025/26. It also presents for information, a review of the safeguarding policy undertaken during 2025/2026 to all council members.
- 1.2. The Council's main priority is to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse, neglect, radicalisation, slavery, domestic abuse and exploitation. **Everyone** in Cyngor Gwynedd has a responsibility to create an environment that ensures this, and that children and adults are less likely to be abused.
- 1.3. It is the Strategic Safeguarding Panel that ensures that suitable and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place, and it is important that all members are able to satisfy themselves that the Panel has undertaken the work required thoroughly and conscientiously. It is believed that the Annual Report (**Appendix 1**) summarises the Panel's work for 2025/26 accurately and fairly, whilst also including references to observations from external auditors in relation to this work.
- 1.4. This year, elements of the Annual Report have been presented in a format that is more accessible to children and young people (**Appendix 3**). This has been done to help raise awareness of safeguarding and ensure that information about the work is easier to understand to a wider audience.
- 1.5. It is vital that all Council members are aware of the Panel's work on safeguarding and are satisfied that the Panel has undertaken the required work in a thorough and conscientious manner.
- 1.6. As well as overseeing safeguarding activity across the Council, the Panel also led a review of the Safeguarding Policy between January and March 2026. The Safeguarding Policy sets out how we intend to fulfil our statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults who are at risk in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014). This review was carried out as part of the policy's regular review cycle, which takes place every two years.
- 1.7. 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.

1.8. Several changes were made to the Safeguarding Policy following the review, including:

- Highlighting the pathway for raising concerns and the relevant contact details have been made clearer at the beginning of the document.
- Introducing more practical procedures for recording concerns, including guidance on the information that should be recorded.
- Clarifying mandatory and regular safeguarding training requirements (every three years), as well as strengthening the compliance monitoring arrangements.
- Explaining the role and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Person.
- Strengthening the safeguarding requirements and expectations for commissioned services.
- Simplifying the appendices, including providing links to useful guidance and information.
- Strengthening safeguarding governance arrangements by:
 - monitoring completion rates of safeguarding and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) training in each department's performance challenge processes;
 - establishing safeguarding as a permanent item on the agenda of the Corporate Management Team;
 - including it as a regular item on the agenda of departmental management teams;
 - continuing to present the Safeguarding Annual Report to the Full Council.

1.9. An informal consultation on the revised Policy was held with members of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel, the Safeguarding Executive Group and the Procurement Service. The draft policy was also presented to the Care Scrutiny Committee on 4 June 2026, at which a constructive discussion on its content was held. Several valuable comments and proposals were received during the process, and these have been incorporated into the revised version of the Policy.

1.10. On 15 July 2026, Cabinet approved the Strategic Safeguarding Panel Annual Report 2025/26 Revised Policy, and therefore the above changes have now been adopted.

1.11. We recognise that further work is needed to promote the revised Policy amongst all Council staff. It is felt that presenting it to you in Full Council is an important step in order to raise widespread awareness of the Policy.

1.12. Equality Impact Assessment

1.12.1. In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 ("The Act") (including Welsh public sector duties) when making decisions, the Council must give due

attention to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) promote equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics as well as addressing socio-economic impacts.

1.12.2. No new Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for this review, as the statutory requirements and the basic responsibilities placed on the Council have not changed. The proposed amendments mainly provide further clarity to staff and Elected Members about their responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

1.12.3. However, as a significant period has elapsed since the adoption of the original policy, it is planned to undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment as part of the next review of the Policy to ensure that it continues to reflect good practice.

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Council is asked to:

- accept the Report presented on the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel for the 2025/26 year (**Appendix 1**).
- note the revised Safeguarding Policy (**Appendix 2**)

3. Statutory Officers' Views

3.1. Views of the Monitoring Officer

As a member of the Panel I welcome the report which is an appropriate summary of the work. It is a means of providing assurance to the Council about this key responsibility.

3.2. Views of the Head of Finance

The report presents information to the Council on activities undertaken over the past year. The decision sought does not create any new spending commitment and, therefore, I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.