

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 14 February 2017
Report Subject	Safeguarding policy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wales Audit Office (WAO) published a report in July 2015: 'Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils'. They reported that corporate safeguarding responsibilities within local authorities across Wales were not always well understood and identified that corporate safeguarding responsibilities needed to be fully integrated with the work of other services.

Safeguarding is a wider concept than the protection of children and adults and deals with the promotion of:

- Physical, emotional and mental health;
- Protection from harm and neglect;
- Education, training and leisure;
- Contribution to society

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Whilst Social Services is the lead Service within the Council for dealing with enquiries and allegations / concerns that children and adults may be suffering significant harm, everyone, whatever their role, has a responsibility to safeguard the well-being of children, young people and adults.

The purpose of this report is to set out the work being undertaken to ensure that the Council fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities and to present the draft Corporate Safeguarding policy for consideration prior to wider consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet is assured that work is being undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding children and adults.
2.	Cabinet to approve the draft Corporate Safeguarding policy for wider consultation.
3.	Cabinet to receive annual reports on work carried out to improve corporate safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant policies.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING
1.01	Safeguarding is the responsibility of all services across the Council, not just those that work directly with children and vulnerable people. It is everybody's responsibility. The Council's responsibilities for safeguarding is set out in legislation including the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This Act was implemented in April 2016 and created a duty on all local authority employees, elected members and relevant partners to report any actual or suspected incidents of abuse or harm.
1.02	In 2015, the WAO examined the corporate assurance arrangements within councils and the extent to which they are operating, effective management and assurance processes and controls for safeguarding children. The WAO found that many of the corporate safeguarding responsibilities within local authorities across Wales were underdeveloped and not well understood. The report by the WAO identified eight recommendations for councils, including ensuring there is "a corporate county wide policy on safeguarding covering all council services": The WAO report is attached as Appendix 1.
1.03	An internal Corporate Safeguarding Panel was established in December 2015 to ensure that there are robust arrangements for protecting children, young people and adults. The Panel will ensure that the Council fulfils its safeguarding duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies. It is jointly chaired by the Chief Officer, Social Services and Chief Officer, Education and Youth and comprises a designated Safeguarding Lead from every Portfolio. The Cabinet Member, Social Services and Cabinet Member, Corporate Management are also members of this Panel.
1.04	The Terms of Reference of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel are attached as Appendix 2. This Panel does not replace the existing arrangements that are already in place in Social Services and schools; this Panel supports the Council, across all of its functions, to deliver its

	safeguarding duties.
1.05	<p>The Corporate Safeguarding Panel undertook a self-assessment against the checklist set out in the WAO report and has developed a work programme to address the findings. Actions in the work programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of a full Corporate Safeguarding policy. The policy will set out how Flintshire County Council will meet its obligations towards the safeguarding of children and adults; • developing and implementing a corporate safeguarding training programme aimed at all employees and elected members within the Council (there will be different levels of training according to role and function); and • producing an annual safeguarding report to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.
1.06	<p>The draft Corporate Safeguarding policy is attached as Appendix 3 and provides a framework to safeguard and protect children and adults. The policy describes the roles and responsibilities expected of every employee, as well as the role of elected members, volunteers and contractors. It includes information on the types of abuse, recognising abuse and how to report any concerns. The policy does not replace existing arrangements within Social Services to safeguard children and adults; it has been produced to set out the duty of the Council as a whole organisation, making clear the responsibilities at all levels, regardless of their area of work. Social Services will remain responsible for co-ordinating investigations into any concerns.</p>
1.07	<p>The implementation of the policy will be measured through the following performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of employees receiving safeguarding training as they receive induction • % of relevant employees attending safeguarding training • % of councillors attending safeguarding training • Referral rates from services other than Social Services • % of adult protection Referrals completed where the risk has been managed • % of reviews of children on the Child Protection register due in the year that were carried out within the statutory timescales • % of initial child protection conferences that were due in the year and were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion • Number of referrals from non- specialist teams
1.08	<p>The Corporate Safeguarding Panel will report to Cabinet on an annual basis. The Corporate Safeguarding Panel Annual Report will draw attention to the Council's performance in complying with the Corporate Policy and Guidelines. The Annual Report will be reviewed by Chief Officer Team, the Cabinet and to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In addition, on behalf of the Council as a whole, the Safeguarding Panel will report to the Regional Safeguarding Board.</p>

1.09	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have reviewed this report. Verbal feedback will be provided at the meeting.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are financial implications for rolling out a training programme to ensure employees have the skills and knowledge for the Council to identify potential safeguarding issues and know how to make a referral. This training is embedded within Social Services but will need to be cascaded to employees in other Portfolios.
2.02	Employees need to understand that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and any concerns should be reported to Social Services for them to co-ordinate investigations.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	This draft policy has been circulated to the Corporate Safeguarding Panel for their comments. It will need to be circulated internally for wider consultation.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	An equality and Welsh language impact assessment is being undertaken on the Corporate Safeguarding policy. It is anticipated that this will have a positive impact on all protected groups.
4.02	The work programme of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel supports the Council to meet its statutory obligations in the safeguarding of all children, young people and adults. Not having appropriate, clear policies and procedures in place, and lack of awareness and knowledge of safeguarding within the organisation, could put children, young people and adults at risk.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Wales Audit Office " Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils ".
5.02	Appendix 2: Corporate Safeguarding Panel Terms of Reference
5.03	Appendix 3: Draft Corporate Safeguarding policy

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Fiona Mocko, Policy Advisor, Equality and Cohesion Telephone: 01352 702122

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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Safeguarding: is about protecting children and adults from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.