

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	16 JANUARY 2024
Report Title:	ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2022-23
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	CLAIRE MARCHANT CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report provides details of the corporate safeguarding activity undertaken for the year 2022-23, including data on the number of safeguarding referrals to both adults and children's services this year and in comparison to previous years. It outlines the way in which Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has worked collaboratively with the regional safeguarding board, the implementation of new models of practice and provides details of Education Safeguarding activity including audit information.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Cabinet with the 2022-23 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It is a corporate responsibility for BCBC to safeguard vulnerable individuals from harm, abuse, and neglect.

2.2 Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Section 7 refers to safeguarding and created new legislation against which the Council is required to function regarding safeguarding. It provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report attached as **Appendix 1** provides details as to how the Council has performed against those statutory duties.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report includes details on:

- Safeguarding (Adults & Children)
- Regional Safeguarding Boards
- Bridgend Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- Exploitation
- Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS)
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- Children and Adult Practice Reviews
- Education and family support
- Partnership and community safety
- Workforce
- Housing
- Out of country placements and Operating Without Registration placements

3.2 The report highlights the increase in demand on both Adult and Children's Social Care. Referrals have increased in both areas, which has resulted in higher caseloads of work and pressures placed upon social work teams. However, this increased demand continues to be processed and managed successfully within compliance targets.

3.3 The report details information regarding the number of safeguarding referrals made to both adults and children's teams, including those where thresholds were not met. It provides information relating to the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) that have been applied for, as well as detailing information regarding children that have been required to be deprived of their liberty. This can be for a number of reasons such as if they are in a residential setting requiring high staff ratios or if they are unable to access the community without constant supervision.

3.4 Provided in the report is information as to how many children have been placed on the Child Protection Register (CPR) throughout this time period, as well as providing information relating to how Public Law Outline (PLO) and Care Proceedings (CP) have been processed and supported.

- 3.5 The report contains details as to how the new model of practice, Signs of Safety, has been adopted and implemented into Children’s services.
- 3.6 The report outlines the process that was required relating to the review of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy which has been updated and strengthened in terms of the approach to self-evaluation, management of risk and governance arrangements.
- 3.7 The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report was presented to the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 on 6th of December 2023, following which a recommendation was made to present this report to Cabinet in order for members to be fully sighted and aware of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and the need to ensure appropriate scrutiny over scrutiny activity and to request that adequate resource is allocated in order to discharge our functions appropriately, especially in light of the ongoing budget pressures. Alongside this, Scrutiny requested comparative data to be included within the full report from the previous 5 years to allow a trend analysis of the data to be able to be provided and for the full picture as to how the Council is responding toward its statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts because of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report.

Involvement	Colleagues from across the Directorate from both adults and children’s services and safeguarding teams have fed into the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.
Long term	This Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report provides an overview of the safeguarding activity for the

	previous year. This allows the Council to project what future safeguarding activity and requirements may be required of the Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB) Directorate and thus provide additional safety to our most vulnerable individuals in Bridgend.
Prevention	The report highlights developments by the Directorate in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. These developments help the Council to improve its safeguarding processes and responses to safeguarding matters and thus preventing the likelihood of additional harm coming to vulnerable individuals.
Integration	The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and updated to provide all staff with up-to-date information relating to their safeguarding requirements. In addition to this, safeguarding is a mandatory corporate training module for all to complete and to integrate the learning and understanding across the Council.
Collaboration	Work continues in collaboration with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTMSB), as well as multi-agency working with South Wales Police, social landlords, health colleagues, and the third sector.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 Details provided within the Annual Report on how staff are supported and continue to improve and strengthen safeguarding arrangements is a key theme throughout the Annual Report and remains a key priority for 2023-24. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all Council Directorates. With a view to promoting awareness of this and raising the profile of Safeguarding across the whole of the Council, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and reimplemented.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this report, the medium- and long-term sustainability of social services, well-being and prevention, presents growing challenges on the Council to meet these responsibilities and deliver a balanced budget.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the 2022-23 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.

Background documents

None