

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	10 DECEMBER 2024
Report Title:	ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2023/24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JOE BOYLE POLICY OFFICER SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report provides details of the corporate safeguarding activity undertaken for the year 2023-24 including data on the number of safeguarding referrals to both adults and children's services. It outlines the way in which Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC) directorates have worked to safeguard its citizens along with information on future planned work.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report for 2023-24 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 Section 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, refers to safeguarding and created 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:

- Adults Social Care
- Children and Family Services
- Education, Early Years and Young People
- Workforce
- Housing
- Partnership and Community Safety and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- Placement Sufficiency, Out of County Placements and Operating Without Registration (OWRs)
- Other areas of key focus

3.2 The report highlights the changes to both Adults and Children and Family Services operating models and restructures that have been completed. Referrals continued to be high across both services, which resulted in continued high levels of caseloads pressures placed upon social work teams. However, this increased demand continued 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 relating to concerns held by the Education, Early Years and Youth Services directorate relating to increasing rates of both Permanent and Fixed Term exclusions from schools, along with details of the number of children and young people that are Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) and Electively Home Educated (EHE).

3.6 The report provides information relating to the new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process being followed in relation to DBS renewals and how Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR/OD) continue to provide workforce information to the Corporate Safeguarding Board, including data on training completion rates.

3.7 The report highlights the leveling off of numbers of people living in temporary accommodation, and where work has been completed to cross reference these individuals with the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate.

- 3.8 The report contains information relating to work completed by the Community Safety Partnership, including about the Assia Domestic Abuse service achieving the “Leading Lights” accreditation, making it the only council-led provision in Wales to hold this standard.
- 3.9 Details of placement sufficiency, out of county placements and placements operating without registration are contained and discussed within the report as well as details relating to the work undertaken to support reductions and interventions for child exploitation.
- 3.10 The draft report was presented to the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 on 14th November 2024 for comment and consideration. For future Corporate Safeguarding Reports, the SOSC requested that comparable data be included from neighbouring local authorities in order to provide the picture as to how Bridgend is performing on a national scale.

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. An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

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	In the formation of this report, relevant officers from the Corporate Safeguarding Board, which is formed of officers and representatives from across the Council’s directorates, have contributed to the final version.
Long term	This Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report provides an overview of the safeguarding activity from 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 improve its

	safeguarding processes and responses to safeguarding matters and thus preventing the likelihood of additional harm coming to vulnerable individuals.
Integration	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 2024/25. 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.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this report, the medium- and long-term sustainability of statutory services provided by the Council continue to present 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 2023-24 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.

Background documents

None