

Our Bravery Brought Justice

Cyngor Gwynedd's Response Plan

A summary



Hello

This is Cyngor Gwynedd's Response Plan.

A response plan explains what we'll do after something serious happens. It helps staff work together with other services to keep people safe.

➡ Why do we need this plan?

In 2023, something serious happened at Ysgol Friars in Bangor. A headteacher, who was in a position of trust, used that power to harm and sexually abuse young people.

We're responsible for schools across this area. What happened at Ysgol Friars should never have happened and we are deeply sorry.

In 2024, an independent investigation began. It looked at:

- what went wrong
- what opportunities were missed to keep children and young people safe
- what needs to change so it never happens again.

The investigation published a report called Our Bravery Brought Justice. You can read that report here: [link](#)



We've used that report and advice from experts to create this Response Plan. This explains:

- what we have done so far to improve and keep children and young people safe
- what we will do next to make sure this never happens again.

This is a living plan – and we'll keep moving forward.

i Child sexual abuse – when a child is forced or pressured into sexual activities. It's a serious crime. **It's never the child's fault.**

Your rights

All children have rights. The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** says every child has the right to be safe and the right to be listened to. You can find out more about your rights here: [Your Rights](#)

You can speak up — and we will listen.



What we want to do

Be honest about what happened

Be clear this should never have happened and that no child should go through this.

Say sorry

Apologise to the children and families.

Give support to people who were affected

Help the children, families, school and community to recover.

Understand all the facts

Understand everything that happened.

Learn from what went wrong

Learn from mistakes and from what the reports tell us.

Make real changes and improve

Act quickly to make things better and safer, so this does not happen again.

Be open and show our progress

Be clear and honest about what we are doing and show how things are improving.

To do this we'll focus on 7 areas
that we want to improve.



1 Listening and giving support to children and young people

What we've done

We have:

- apologised clearly for what happened
- made sure children and young people have support from trained counsellors and workers
- given Ysgol Friars extra support with specialist counsellors and a wellbeing centre
- made sure each victim has a personal support plan.

Not everyone wanted support, and we have respected their decision.

What we will do next

Improve how we listen to children and young people

They will have chances to share their views, including speaking to a social worker if they want to. We will train staff so they know how to listen and involve children and young people in decisions.

Spot and stop harm

Staff are being trained to:

- recognise signs of abuse, including grooming
- spot risks early and take action.

We will keep improving this training.

Improve support for children and young people who've experienced trauma

Staff are being trained to respond with care and understanding.

i Trauma – when something very upsetting or frightening happens. It can affect how someone feels, thinks or behaves for a long time.

Respect children's rights and make them a more important part of our work

Our aim is for children and young people to feel heard, respected and safe.

Make it easier for children and young people to report concerns and speak up

Create safe and private ways to share worries and concerns.



2 Keeping children safe and acting on concerns about adults

What we've done

We have:

- updated our safeguarding rules to better protect children and young people
- made sure staff are trained
- made sure there are clear ways to report concerns
- carried out checks to make sure adults are safe to work with children and young people
- updated safeguarding rules and training in schools
- worked with Estyn's inspectors to improve our work.

i Safeguarding – protecting children from harm and making sure they feel safe, supported and looked after.

What we will do next

Check schools more often

Visit schools every year to check they are safe and to offer support.

Check our work

Do more checks to make sure safeguarding rules are followed in all schools.

Work with experts

Keep working with the Children's Commissioner and other organisations to guide and challenge our work.

Improve how concerns are handled

We will:

- improve how concerns about adults are reported and reviewed
- make it easier for the police to share information
- make sure all information is looked at when deciding if someone is safe to work with children
- make sure staff understand their roles and what to do if they are worried.

Safety decisions will never rest on the judgement of just one person.

Record and act on concerns

Improve how we record and respond to concerns about adults, even if they seem small. We're creating a clear system to keep track of concerns so patterns can be spotted.

Make it easier to raise concerns

Make it easier for people to report concerns, including speaking to someone directly.

Make sure people can learn from the Our Bravery Brought Justice report

Make the report easier to find and read online so more people can learn from it.

Work better with schools and other services

Improve how we work and share information with schools, services, organisations and other councils.



3 Training staff and improving how we work

What we've done

We have:

- improved safeguarding training for all staff
- checked that staff have completed this training
- checked that staff understand their training and know what to do if there's a safety issue
- continued to review training to make sure it is up to date by listening to feedback from schools and other organisations
- shared clear information about what happened but made sure we protect young people and personal information
- made sure an independent group of specialists checks our systems are working so we see where we need to improve.

What we will do next

Improve ways for staff to raise concerns and speak up

There will be clear and safe ways to report worries. Staff will be trained so they know how and when to speak up.

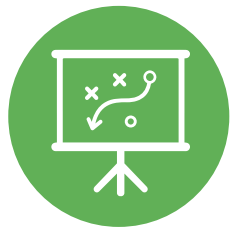
More training about grooming

Provide more training to help staff understand how abuse can happen, including grooming. This will help staff recognise warning signs earlier.

Give better support for safeguarding staff

Make sure there is support for school staff who are responsible for safeguarding. This may include extra guidance and support from experts.

i Grooming – when someone pretends to be kind or friendly to gain a child's trust, so they can harm or abuse them.



4 Supporting school leaders and governors

What we've done

We have:

- given school governors training and support to help them do their role
- checked how concerns were handled and the actions that were taken so we can learn from mistakes.

i School governors – people who volunteer to help run schools and make important decisions.

What we will do next

Continue to improve support for school governors

This includes improving training so school governors feel confident in their role and able to keep children and young people safe.

Improve how schools are run

We will:

- improve training so it is easier to access support
- give clearer guidance to people who support governors
- look at ways to provide better support across schools.



5 Understanding and improving restrictive practices

What we've done

We have:

- made sure schools have clear rules about restrictive practices
- made sure staff have training about when and how to use restrictive practices
- increased the number of staff in our team so we can visit schools every year and check they are following the rules.

i Restrictive practices – physically stepping in to keep someone safe, for example, holding them or guiding them away from danger. It should only ever be used as a last resort, for the shortest time possible and never as a punishment.

What we will do next

Make sure rules and training are clear and consistent

Continue to review and improve the rules so they stay up to date. Staff will receive the same training so everyone knows their roles and responsibilities.

Understand restrictive practices

Help people understand what restrictive practices are and when they can be used.

Check our systems for restrictive practices

Ask an external organisation to review our rules, training and support.

Support pupils

Review how schools support pupils when restrictive practices are used.



6 Planning for emergencies and acting quickly

What we've done

We have:

- given schools training on how to deal with emergencies
- made sure staff understand they should act quickly and call 999 in a serious situation
- shared guidance with schools and governors on what to do in an emergency.

What we will do next

Improve our emergency plans

Improve our plans to deal with all types of emergencies. This includes situations where the person in charge may be the one causing harm.

Set clear roles and actions for emergencies

Make sure everyone knows what to do and who should take control in these situations.

Make it clear what to do if there is a safeguarding emergency

Create clear steps for responding to emergencies involving harm to children and young people. This means keeping them safe and taking the right action quickly.

Use the emergency plan across all services

Use these improved plans in other places like care settings and community services, not just in schools.



7 Supporting Ysgol Friars to recover and be stable

What we've done

We have:

- supported the school to help it recover and become a safe place
- brought in experienced staff to guide and support leaders, teachers, staff and pupils
- made sure Ysgol Friars has improved its safeguarding rules and policies
- met with staff to listen to concerns and share information
- made changes to school leadership. A new team is now in place, including changing who's responsible for safeguarding
- made sure the school has new governors that are trained and supported
- put in place an experienced headteacher to lead the school.

What we will do next

Appoint a permanent headteacher

The school has appointed a new permanent headteacher. This will help the school move forward and begin a new chapter.

Continue to check how the school works

We will work with the school to review how it operates. Our aim is to help the school feel safe, stable and a positive place for learning.



Next steps – this plan is just the beginning

Real change takes commitment. A group of independent experts will:

- check our progress
- challenge our thinking
- make sure we are doing what we say we will do.

We will review this plan regularly to make sure it is making a real difference. We'll share updates openly so young people, families and the community can see exactly how things are changing.

This is a living plan – and we'll keep moving forward.

Thank you for reading this

If something is worrying you, you don't have to keep it to yourself. You have the right to speak to someone you trust — and to be heard.

Visit our website for helplines and details:

➡ gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Residents/Schools-and-learning/Attendance,-behaviour-and-welfare/Our-Bravery-Brought-Justice/Child-Practice-Review-Outcome-November-2025.aspx

You can find out more about the Children's Commissioner for Wales here: childcomwales.org.uk



Our progress

We've already started work on these actions

Use the links below to see a visual summary of:

- ➡ [What has changed so far?](#)
- ➡ [What still needs to be done?](#)