

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date:</b>	25 June 2025
<b>Title of report:</b>	Member Safety
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To receive the Committee's comments on member safety issues.
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**Background**

1. This report explains the guidance and support available to members regarding their personal safety and includes a proposal for guidance to be shared with members more broadly.
  
2. Cases of violence against public figures in Wales are rare, but verbal threats and online harassment are on the rise. County council members have a prominent role in engaging with the public and the community, so it is important that they understand the steps they should take to keep themselves safe.
  
3. As community leaders, members are likely to:
  - a. Visit people in their homes
  - b. Deal with those who have called at their home
  - c. Hold surgery meetings in their ward
  - d. Participate in public meetings
  - e. Travel, whether by public or private transport
  - f. Communicate online.
  
4. If a member has specific concerns about personal safety by virtue of their role on the Council, it is important that they inform Democratic Services or the police in serious circumstances. Advice and support is available to assist members if needed.
  
5. It is important to note that statutory guidance published by the Welsh Government under the Local Government and Elections Act 2021, states that local authorities have a duty to support the privacy of elected members by not

publishing home addresses unless the member wishes to do so. On the Council's website, the address of the Council's office in Llangefni is used as the contact address for many of our members.

## Support

6. In 2024, the Defending Democracy Policing Protocol was published by the Home Office, and funding was secured to expand the safety offer to elected members of local government through 'Operation Ford'.
7. As part of this, the role of Elected Official Advisor was created in North Wales Police. The specific role of the officer is to advise county councillors on security matters, and the officer has been providing safety briefing sessions for members over the past few months. More sessions are planned for the second half of 2025.
8. In addition to the Police, there are a number of other organisations that offer advice on safety, including:
  - a. Welsh Local Government Association – advice on how to deal with instances of on-line harassment - [180328 - WLGA Guidance - Online Abuse of Councillors](#)
  - b. The Electoral Commission – guidance for electoral candidates on how to keep safe - [Joint Guidance for Candidates in Elections](#)
  - c. Suzy Lamplugh Trust – advice on personal safety and how to deal with stalking - [Personal Safety & Lone Working advice and information](#)
  - d. Get Safe Online – general advice on how to stay safe on-line - [Protecting Yourself - Get Safe Online](#)
  - e. Crown Prosecution Service – advice on how to respond to intimidating behaviour against someone in public office - [Responding to intimidating behaviour in elections and public office: a CPS guide | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)
9. In order to keep safe, the general advice is to:
  - a. Keep a record of any threatening behaviour – what, where, and when
  - b. Avoid engaging with individuals who harass you / troll online or in person
  - c. Use reporting and blocking resources on social media websites
  - d. Review your online information to reduce the amount of personal information available
  - e. Contact Democratic Services if you want advice or to report concerns.
  - f. Contact the Police immediately if you feel you are in danger.
10. Concerns about safety and harassment may have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of members. If so, the Council's counselling service provided by Medra is available to members. It is a confidential, professional service available in Welsh or English.

11. Democratic Services will develop a concise guidance document for members over the summer, which will include the information above. We will also recommend that any member who has not yet attended the North Wales Police safety briefing session does so as soon as possible.
12. We welcome input from the committee regarding anything else to be included in the guidance for members, or any other issues on member safety for us to consider.

### **Recommendation**

13. The Committee is asked to:
  - a. note the contents of the report and offer comments on member safety matters
  - b. agree to Democratic Services encouraging every member to attend the Police safety training
  - c. agree to Democratic Services sharing a short guidance document with members.