

Item 10

REPORT TO CABINET

3rd FEBRUARY 2005

**REPORT OF HEAD
OF STRATEGY AND
REGENERATION**

Portfolio: Supporting People

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council acknowledges it has responsibility with regard to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. This Policy has been developed following work carried out by the Children and Young Persons Service Review. Consultation has been undertaken with all Departments within the Council, the County Area Child Protection Committee and its Child Protection Procedures and Durham County Council Social Care and Health Department. Full reference has also been made to the Children Act 1989 and the Department of Health publication 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- 1.2 The policy seeks to ensure that in discharging its functions this Council will have full regard for the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff in relation to the welfare of children and young people with whom they come into contact through their work.
- 1.4 This report recommends the formal adoption of the Sedgefield Borough Council Safeguarding Children Policy, Procedures and Guidelines and seeks commitment to develop a corporate training programme in support of the policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Cabinet:
 - 1 Approves the attached Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.
 - 2 Agrees to the introduction of a corporate training programme designed to support the implementation of this policy.

3 SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Background

- 3.1 Lord Laming in his report into the death of Victoria Climbié concluded that the suffering and death of Victoria was a gross failure of the system. One of the key reasons why the system failed Victoria so badly and why it has failed other children over the years is because agencies that come into contact with children on a regular basis do not give sufficient priority to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This means that:
- The system does not always focus on the child's needs
 - Senior management do not know enough about and take enough responsibility for the actions of their staff in relation to safeguarding children
 - It is difficult for agencies to work together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
 - Many staff are not adequately trained in safeguarding children
- 3.2 The Children Act 2004 places a duty on key agencies, including District Councils to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 3.3 The duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people is part of a comprehensive programme of **Change for Children**, which began with the publication of **Every Child Matters** Green Paper in September 2003. At the centre of this programme is the recognition that protecting children from harm cannot be separated from policies to improve children's lives as a whole. The programme is designed to improve outcomes for children in terms of health, safety, enjoyment and achievement, the ability to make positive contributions and economic well-being.

Policy Context

- 3.4 The Council provides a range of services to families with children and young people that may be vulnerable or potential victims of abuse. The level of contact Council staff, members or representatives has with children and young people vary greatly across these services. However; all staff have a duty to act if they believe that a child or young person is suffering from, or may be a potential victim of abuse. Attached in Appendix 1 is the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures Statement.
- 3.5 This policy acknowledges and explains the Council's moral and legal obligation to provide a duty of care, safeguard welfare and protect from abuse for children and young people, especially vulnerable groups irrespective of age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, faith and/or sexual identity.
- 3.6 To ensure that all staff, members and representatives of the Council are fully aware of what constitutes abuse and what action should be taken if abuse is suspected or reported to them, this policy clarifies:

- The four main forms of child abuse
 - How to recognise the possible symptoms of child abuse
 - How the Council will work to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people
 - Council procedures relevant to child protection, such as staff recruitment, service specific child protection policies, training and reporting procedures
 - The role of the Area Child Protection Committee
- 3.7 Appendix 1 of the Policy provides a Code of Conduct and Good Practice, designed not only to protect children and young people but also to protect people working for and on behalf of the Council from situations where false allegations might occur.
- 3.8 Appendix 2 of the Policy provides a comprehensive list of support organisations and contact information to help staff, members or representatives of the Council should a child protection referral be necessary.
- 3.9 Appendix 3 provides more detailed background of the Legislative framework for Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- 3.10 In order that staff, members and representatives of the Council can build on their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues Appendix 4 contains a list of further reading.
- 3.11 The policy should not be seen as a stand alone document and should be used in conjunction with other Council Policy Statements:
- Equality Policy
 - Complaints Procedure
 - Disciplinary Procedure
 - Data Protection Policy on the use of photographs and videos
 - Confidential Reporting Policy
 - Employment of Ex-Offenders Policy
 - Policy for the use of the Internet
 - Guidance on Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures
 - Health and Safety at Work Policy
- 3.12 To ensure that all staff maintain a clear understanding of this policy and how it relates to their individual roles and responsibilities the Council will develop and maintain a structured training programme.

4. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Children and young people have been identified by Cabinet as a priority for investment. The structured training programme is needed to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and to meet the legal requirements of the Children Act 1989 and 2004. Estimated costs of £12,000 for the implementation of the training programme were submitted during the preparation of the medium term financial plan.
- 4.2 Durham County Council Social Care and Health Department (DCC SCH) have assisted in the development of this policy and are themselves developing a five level training programme for trainers. The timeliness of both developments provides an opportunity for the Council to nominate 5 members of staff, one from each

Department, to be trained on child protection issues level 1. This level covers general child protection issues applicable to all staff and would allow the Council to carry out its basic training requirements on Child Protection predominantly in house.

- 4.3 It is recognised that there will be a need in the future to provide bespoke training for those people across the authority requiring more than just a basic understanding of Child Protection issues, procedures and legislation such as Leisure Centre Staff, Community Wardens and senior management. The in house trainers will have the opportunity to extend their training through the 5 levels of the training programme. Cost associated with this further training have not yet been agreed, it is anticipated that a further £5,000 per year for years 2 and 3 will be required to take the in house training staff through the 5 levels of training.

5. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 This Policy has been developed following extensive consultation with all departments in the Council the County Area Child Protection Committee and Durham County Council Social Services Department. Key Partners have also made available their own Child Protection Policies and Procedures to allow best practice comparisons to be made.

6. **OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council has a duty of care for the children and families for whom they provide activities and services. Parents have a right to believe in all areas of the Councils work procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of their children and young people.

7. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None

8. **LIST OF APPENDICES**

- 8.1 Sedgefield Borough Council Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures Statement.

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Wards: Not Applicable

Key Decision Validation: Not a key decision

Background Papers:

Area Child Protection Committee: Child Protection Procedures.

DH Working Together to Safeguard Children.

DH: What To Do if You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused.

Durham Sport: Child Protection Policy.

Ground Work East Durham Youth Project Good Practice Guidelines.

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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