

 Chester-le-Street District Council	
Report to:	FULL COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	18/09/2008
Report from:	Director of Development Services
Title of Report:	Children and Young People Policies

1. Purpose and Summary

1.1.1 To seek Members approval for the introduction of a suite of Children and Young People policies and related guidance. These will enable the Council to have in place policies and procedures relevant to the latest legislation (Children's Act 2004). They will also ensure that relevant staff are fully prepared to join the Children Services Authority.

1.1.2 It is recommended that Members approve the proposed suite of Children and Young People policies and related guidance.

2. Consultation

2.1 The concept of introducing children and young people safeguarding policies in chester-le-street has been discussed with and supported by the Leader, Deputy Leader, the Director of Development Services, senior officers of the Council, senior officers of the Children Services authority and the Chair of the Local Children's Board. Detailed consultation as to the content of the policy has taken place with all relevant senior officers of the Council who are working directly or indirectly with children and young people, the Health and Safety Manager, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the senior HR Officer. There was unanimous support from relevant officers to introduce these policies. Some officers have already updated some of their forms/procedures to comply with latest guidance.

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

3.1.1 The proposed policies support the Council's Transition Plan and People and Place priority. There are a number of young people related activities and events over the last few months of this authority, promoted under the banner of Young People and Place. Therefore the introduction of policies reflecting the most up to date legislative framework will be beneficial to both officers delivering Young People and Place and to service users.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

The only financial implication relates to a cost of approx. £600 for some basic training for relevant officers through the Durham Local Safeguarding Children's Board. However, we have begun negotiations on the LSCB potentially waiving the training fee.

4.2 Local Government Re-organisation Issues

There are no LGR issues affecting the introduction of these policies. They are in accordance with those of the Children Services Authority and the Durham LSCB guidance. This means that when children and young people related officers transfer to the new authority, they will be fully up to date with new legislation.

4.3 Legal

The introduction of children and young people policies ensures that the Council will be complying to new legislation around children safeguarding and will be better equipped to deal with relevant incidents.

4.4 Personnel

As mentioned above there is a need for some basic training for officers. However, relevant staff and managers need to be aware that from October 2009 all personnel working with children and young people need to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

4.5 Other Services

A number of Council services will be positively affected by the policy framework presented in the report. These include the youth development team, Leisure officers, Selby Cottage and regeneration/community development.

4.6 Diversity

A special Children and Young People equality and Diversity Statement is included as part of the Safeguarding Policy Guidance.

4.7 Risk

The Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy minimises risks arising from working with children and young people. New legislation has been introduced and the proposed policies mean that the Council

has the most up to date procedures to deal with children safeguarding issues.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

The policies proposed support the Crime and Disorder agenda through special guidance statements on anti-bullying and drugs disposal.

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that it complies with the council's Data Quality Policy.

4.10 Other Implications

There are no other implications from this report.

5. Background, Position Statement and Option Appraisal

- 5.1 In terms of child protection the Council has to date followed practices similar to other authorities i.e. those officers working with children and young people followed the standards of the County Council (the main education and other children services provider).
- 5.2 This meant that although every care was taken to ensure the safety of children there was no corporate framework to deal with child protection/safeguarding issues in a holistic and proactive manner, since District Councils were not viewed as Children Services providers.
- 5.3 The New Children's Act (2004) changed the term Child Protection to Safeguarding and replaced the local Child Protection Committees with Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (one has been set up for Durham). These are designed to have a much more proactive approach and ensure that all partner agencies are proactive in safeguarding issues rather than simply acting as an examining board for child protection cases.
- 5.4 One of the other main changes introduced by the Children's Act (2004) is that it places a statutory duty on District Councils and a number of other partners to co-operate in children's services provision and safeguarding. District Councils are therefore now viewed as main providers and as equal partners to the County Council, the Police, PCT Probation, etc. when it comes to providing services to children.
- 5.5 In this context, there is a need for this Council, albeit in its last few months, to engage more proactively in this agenda and most importantly comply fully with new legislation. This will ensure that we have the right framework in place to deliver our Young people and

Place programme. It also means that our relevant staff will be fully aware of the new legislation when they join the new authority and will be in a better position to capitalise on potential promotion opportunities.

- 5.6 In the above context, we propose two main actions. Firstly, to introduce a suite of the most up to date policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and provide basic training to relevant staff. This will complement the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) training to be shortly delivered by the Children Services Authority. Secondly, we propose to join the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, since the Act specifies that District Councils should be members of the LSCB.
- 5.7 This report deals mainly with the introduction of a suite of Children and Young People policies and related guidance. Joining the local Safeguarding Children's Board is also in progress through communications between the Assistant Director of Development Services and the Durham LSCB.
- 5.8 The policies¹ attached to this report for approval by members are the following:
- **Safeguarding Children Policy** – it reflects new legislation and replaces child protection arrangements with the safeguarding framework proposed by the Durham Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
 - **Children and Young People Anti-bullying Policy and Guidelines** – this is to be used in conjunction with the above Safeguarding policy but provides more detailed guidelines and focus on anti-bullying which is a major issue for children and young people in general.
 - **Children and Young People Detached and Outreach Work Policy** – a policy adapted from the original County Council document for use by outreach/detached workers
 - **Children and Young People Drugs Misuse Guidelines for Drugs disposal** – the County Council guidance to be used in the event of a need to dispose of drugs.
 - **Children and Young People Equality and Diversity statement** – this will be used in conjunction with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy but will provide a focus on young people.

¹ The policies have been adapted from approved policies of Derwentside District Council and Durham County Council based on recent legislation and Durham LSCB guidance

- **Sexual Health Policy** – it will be used in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children Policy to provide a focus on sexual health issues.

As part of implementing the proposed suite of policies, the Council needs to designate a named Officer for Safeguarding Children within the District Council to be the primary point of contact and advice in any Child Protection matters pertaining to the District Council and its activities. This person may also be the main contact to Durham's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), the statutory body for the co-ordination of promoting and safeguarding children's welfare in the area. It is proposed that the Assistant Director of Development Services undertakes this role over the last few months of our authority.

6. Recommendations

6.1.1 It is recommended that Members approve the proposed suite of Children and Young People Policies and related guidance.

7. Background Papers/ Documents referred to

7.1 www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040031_en_1

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