Summary of Draft Policy

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and safeguarding all ages is important to us.

The Council recognises everyone has a fundamental right to be safe. Whatever the cause, or wherever it occurs, harm caused to children, young people or adults by abuse, exploitation or neglect is not acceptable. In response to Keep Safe Children – Our duty to Care (2017) and Keep Adults safe – A shared responsibility (2015) published by Volunteer Now to reflect development in Safeguarding and changes in legislation and guidance, we reviewed the current policy and procedure and recommended some improvements.

In summary, the revised policy is designed to improve the safety and minimise the risk of harm of people of all ages living in Belfast (including staff) with whom Council may come into contact. It seeks also to enable all Council staff and Members to recognise and know how to respond to concerns about abuse. The policy provides definitions of the forms of abuse for both young persons and Adults at risk and details the steps that need to be taken by all staff, and others, if they have a concern about anyone potentially being abused.

The policy also enables Council staff to identify those adults within the community who may use Council services and who may be defined as being "at risk." The policy details how staff can get support and advice in situations where they have concerns about an older person or an adult who may be vulnerable as a result of learning disability, illness or physical or mental infirmity.

The policy is aligned with the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people produced by the DHSSPS "Cooperating to safeguard Children and Young People" (2016) and with the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) "Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures" (2016).

The draft policy is divided into 2 sections which set out Council's commitment to safeguarding people of all ages:

Section 1: Is specifically child and young person's safeguarding
Section 2: Is specifically adult safeguarding

Both sections cover: Safeguarding Policy statement, Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers, Effective management of staff and volunteers, Reporting Concerns, Assessing and managing risk, Dealing with comments, suggestions and complaints, Information sharing, Code of behaviour, General safety and management of activities, Implementation and Monitoring Procedures.

Additional information for staff is included in an Operational procedures document that compliments and works alongside the policy. By keeping the operational procedures as a live, but separate document it will allow the Safegaurding panel and operational group to develop these procedures in line with operational need.