

CMT Overview

CMT Overview of the responses to the Safeguarding all ages Policy Public Consultation

Methodology:

The consultation was shared in a variety of way with stakeholders and members of the public:

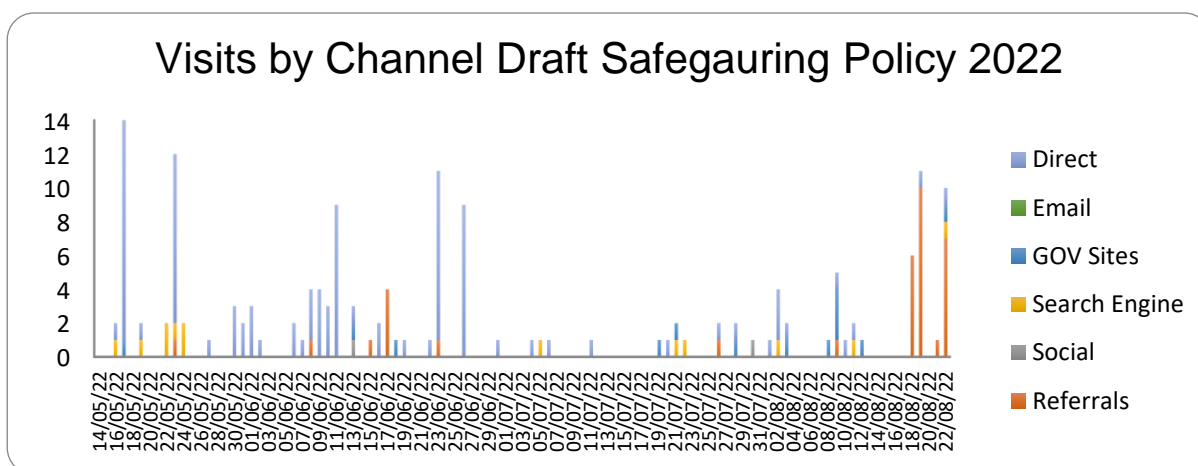
These include but were not limited to:

- Staff Via interlink
- Members of the SBNI Belfast panel (NSPCC, Banardos, Women’s Aid, BHT and PSNI)
- Local government Safeguarding Partnership (all 11 Councils + NIHE)
- Members of the Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership.
- Other groups associated with the Equality Team.
- Links via the public website to Your Belfast portal.

Results

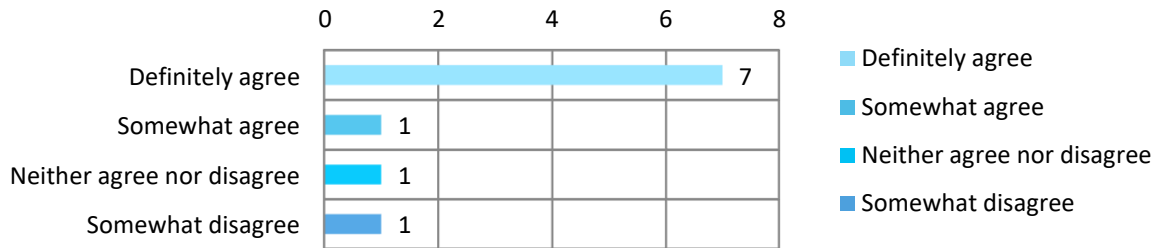
Below is a summary of the Data collected in the in the public consultation the ran from the 16th May 2002 to the 22nd August 2022.

There were 229 visits to the site which produced 10 written responses. The graph below shows the visits by channel.

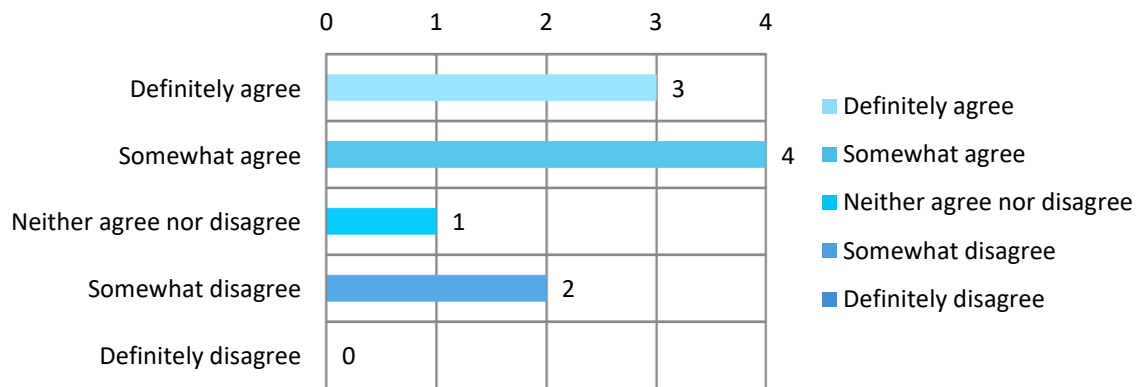


The limited response was no unexpected, given the specialist nature of the policy and the fact that it is a non-contentious subject.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility?

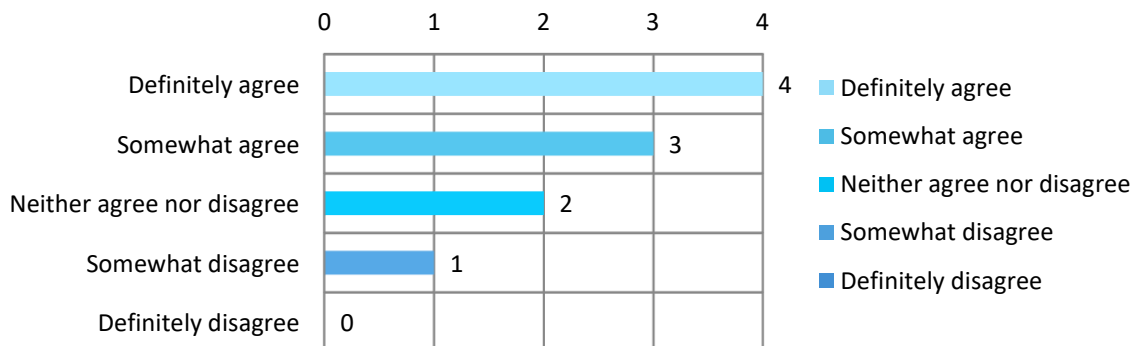


To what extent do you agree or disagree that our draft policy is 'easy to understand'?

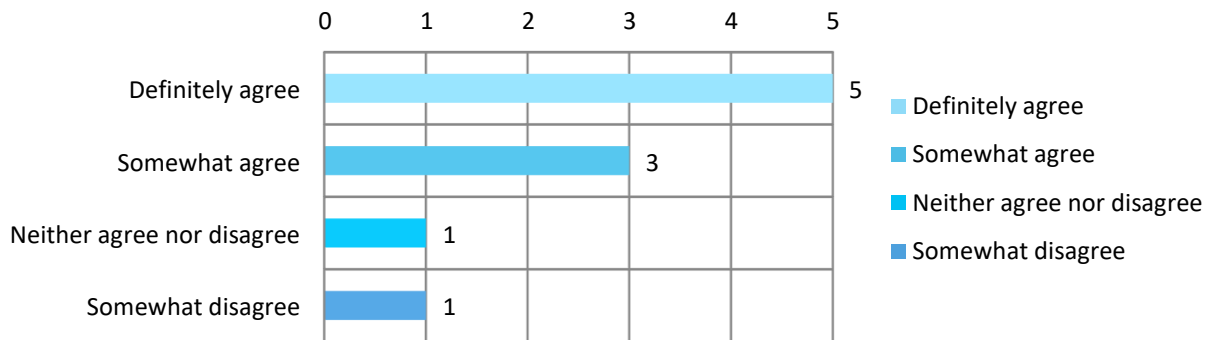


The tables below provide a breakdown of the responses:

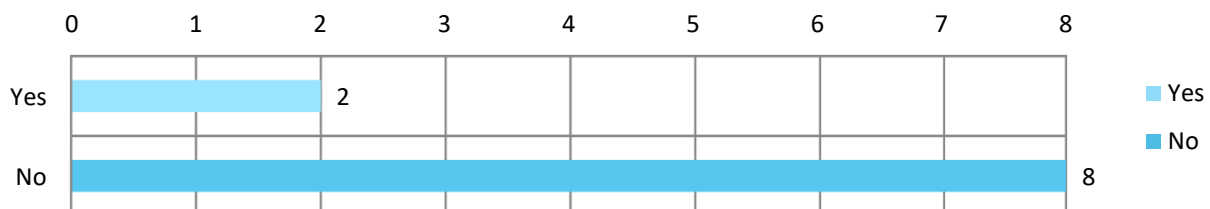
Clear in its aims



We have split the policy into two sections - Child Safeguarding and Adult Safeguarding as we feel there are differences between the two fields of operation. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?



Do you have any comments or suggestions for improvement in relation to our Equality screening?



In relation to the above question the two comments detailed below were offered by way of explanation from those responders who answered YES.

“As a sign language user, British Sign Language is my first language and I struggle to understand this. I would like this to be translated or plain English.”

“There should be an easy read or plain English version for both Child Safeguarding and Adult Safeguarding policies. Also, it would be great if both policies were translated from English to British Sign Language.”

In reply, it is possible to translate the policy in to sign language, although costly and time consuming.

I have spoken with the equality team and as matter of practise this would be completed on request.

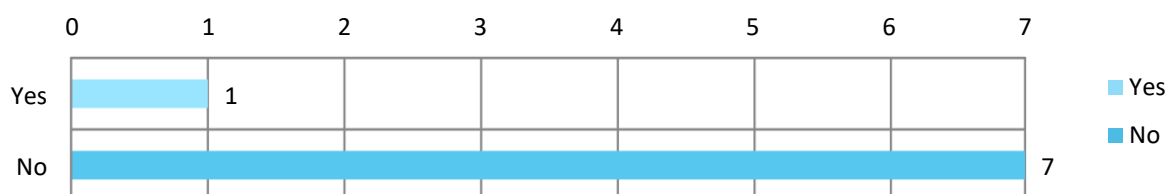
In relation to the comment regarding plain English, unfortunate a large proportion of the policy is governed by legislation and policy documents which are statutory requirements we are duty bound to follow. The language is therefore fixed, however should an individual request it, one of the safeguarding team would be happy to meet with the service user or group to go through any particular questions.

“If on the microscale an institution wishes to be seen as being meritocratic then said institution should endeavour to always seek out the best candidate for the job regardless of political, religious, racial or sexual characteristics. As regards to vetting people there is no need for a robust system, the reality ought to be if an adult has committed a depraved act against a minor then said adult should not get a look in, in short such an individual ought to be thrown out to the wolves for such atrociousness. However, given the escalation in violence in society particularly from the youth an adult should not be castigated for defending oneself against a pernicious section amongst this cohort. In years gone by things being done on a case-by-case basis was indeed fitting, this required work and scrutiny. There is indeed too much in the way with legislation being carefully crafted these days to promote an agenda that is not in-keeping with traditional social norms and values, which existentially still apply to the masses in their daily lives but for a select few the unwritten rules and social mores are being inverted in such a way to allow for the opportunity of a sense of elevated status given an individual's unique set of circumstances. This is counter to what has gone before. Pigeon-holing and playing into identity politics should be abandoned with vigour as this type of thing erodes social bonds and heightens friction.”

Whilst the intensions of the responder are no doubt rooted in fundamental societal belief of self-regulation, the reality of the situation is that there are people in society that have and do harm others intentionally. Therefore, we do need a robust system in place to gather as much information as is legally allowed to make informed decisions when it comes to employment and Safeguarding.

This is not to pry on those who apply, but to act as a deterrent to those with nefarious intention and to reduce the risk to service users and staff as is our duty under legislation.

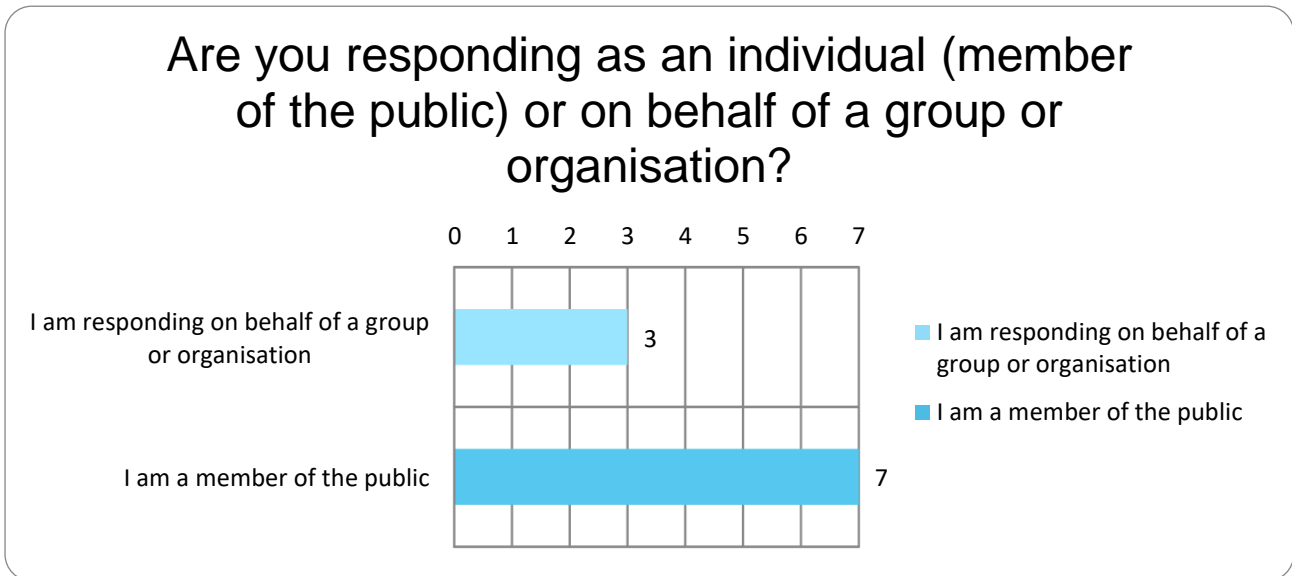
Do you have any comments or suggestions improvements in relation to our Rural needs impact Assessment?



The response below was received in relation to the above question:

“Belfast has been expanding for years into rural areas, there is indeed a blurring of the boundaries between what was once the countryside and beside it a city. The amount of employees particularly office based employees that are indeed from rural areas coming into the city to work or working from home possibly 40 miles away from their employer will demand something of the city in the not so distant future but for now I would be content for the city to keep its agenda away from rural areas. I can only surmise that into the future with energy being deemed incredibly precious to all European nations that there will be a shift regarding policy here, how much it ought to impact safeguarding and rural needs is anyone's guess.”

It is my contention that the responder has mis-understood the question and therefore, the response is somewhat tangential to the process we are engaged in.



Conclusion.

The consultation exercise has not suggested any amendments or changes to the published Documents. The responses were largely positive and endorsed the content and strategic direction of the policy.

To add some context a similar exercise was completed by Lisburn and Castlereagh Council at a similar time and they only received one response.

Given the responses it is my recommendation that we move forward to implementation