



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Date:	25 October 2011
Subject:	Consultation: DHSSPS Minimum Standards For Childminding And Day Care For Children Under Age 12
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Council has been asked to respond to the Health, Social Services and Public Safety's standards on Childminding and Day-care for children under 12.
1.2	These standards set out the minimum requirements for registration and inspection of child care providers. They aim to ensure that children and their parents, along with service providers, can have confidence that all services will be measured against the same benchmark. HSC Trusts are responsible for registering and inspecting these services against the requirements laid down in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The standards have been developed in this context, and aim to clarify the requirements contained in the legislation.
1.3	There are 17 minimum standards and they are grouped under 4 headings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quality of Care- Quality of Staffing, Management and Leadership- Quality of the Physical Environment- Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation
1.4	There are three categories of childcare setting that are required to register with HSC Trusts – childminders, full day care and sessional day care.

1.5	Childminders are self employed day care providers who work in their own homes to provide care and learning for other people's children in a family setting. Childminders are required to register when they look after one or more children aged under twelve for reward on domestic premises.
1.6	Full day care is care for children for a continuous period of four hours or more in any day in premises which are not domestic.
1.7	Sessional day care is defined as day care for children that is less than a continuous period of four hours in any day and covers crèches, preschool sessional care, out of school clubs (including breakfast clubs) and the Development Programme for 2 year olds.
1.8	The Full proposal is attached as appendix 1.
1.9	The consultation document was made available to us on the 11th August and comments are required to be returned by the 24 th October. We have agreed an extension until after Committee can review the document.
1.10	The consultations document was distributed to officers across Council and their responses have been included in the provisional draft response attached as appendix 2.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The document relate to services that provide childcare. Neither Community Services nor Play Services run childcare services and therefore these regulations do not apply.
2.2	However, our CYP unit have reviewed the guidelines and feel they are useful and comprehensive. They will refer to the standards in future when developing or reviewing new procedures. Additionally, both the Environmental Health and Building Control services provided input for Full Day care and Sessional Day care providers regarding the physical environment of premises and food safety issues.
2.3	In particular, they suggested that more could be done to provide guidance on the legislative requirements for food safety. They also highlighted some of the information as out of date. The list of policies required is also incomplete and does not include, for example, H&S Risk Assessments. They also suggested that the Early years Team (who will do the inspections) and Environmental Health Services should work closely together to share information and ensure better regulation. In some low-risk areas it may be more effective, and significantly reduce the regulatory burden on childminders, if the Early Years Teams were to take the lead for ensuring food hygiene standards and adequate Health and Safety arrangements. Finally, infection control, especially Ecoli 0157 should receive greater prominence in the regulations.
2.4	Full details of the recommended response are contained in Appendix 2.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no resource implications.

