



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Council Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults
Date:	7 th August, 2009
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Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Council Child Protection Policy and Procedures were adopted by Council on 3rd June 2002. An internal review has taken place over the past two years to assess how the policy has been implemented and used in practice within the Council. Developments in the external environment, including legislative changes, have been taken into consideration.

An internal working group have now completed the review exercise. The amended draft policy and procedures is attached in Appendix 1 for the attention and approval of Committee. The working group led by the Play Development Officer (Council's Designated Officer) comprised representatives from Corporate Human Resources, Key Workers and Child Protection trainers.

Belfast City Council's Policy and Procedures are supported by a comprehensive training programme which has been delivered to staff that work or have contact with children and young people across the Council. The training is delivered by three Community Services staff that are accredited child protection trainers.

Belfast City Council networks across Northern Ireland and is represented on a range of forums as detailed in Appendix 2.

Key Issues

The main amendments to the Council's policy, arising from the review, include:

1. The incorporation of protection for vulnerable adults.
2. Introduction of AccessNI and the Vetting & Barring Scheme.
3. Guidelines for reporting concerns regarding staff employed through an agency.
4. Changes to the training programme including introduction of refresher training.
5. Changes to the reporting structure.

The changes to the reporting structure have included the introduction of two Deputy Designated Officers, revised roles for the Key Workers, and an outline of the level of commitment required.

The overall responsibility will remain within Community Services (Development Department) with the Play Development Officer taking on the role of Designated Officer.

Increased awareness of the Child Protection Policy is required through an agreed publicity strategy targeted at both staff and the general public. This will take place through:

1. The display of posters in all BCC facilities.
2. The development of leaflets aimed at the general public to be made available at all BCC facilities.
3. The display of the BCC Child Protection leaflet, flow charts (for reporting concerns) and contact information to be displayed on all staff notice boards.
4. The Reporting forms to be made available in a central location within each Department to enable access by Staff.
5. The policy, reporting forms and contact information to be made available on Belnet.

Resource Implications

Financial

To take place within existing resources.

Human Resources

No implication on the current allocation

Asset and Other Implications

There is no impact on any physical BCC asset.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Approve the amended Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- c) Approve the incorporation of Vulnerable Adults within the Policy and Procedures.
- d) Approve the associated publicity strategy, training and support programme.

Key to Abbreviations

Appendices

1. Belfast City Council Child Protection Policy and Procedures (amended version)
2. Belfast City Council representation on external forums