

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**YOUTH and CHILDREN ADVISORY BOARD**

**12 March 2008**

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Council Decision**

**1 CORPORATE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Summary**

**This report identifies improvements in safeguarding children practice and brings forward a proposed amendment to the reporting procedure within this Council's Corporate Child Protection Policy (CCPP).**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Members will be aware of the CCPP which was formally adopted by this Council in 2004 (Decision CB 04/045). The aim of the Policy is to safeguard young people from potential abuse, as well as protecting Council staff from potential false allegations. To date the CCPP has served the Council well, focussing as it does, not only on specific activities for young people such as the Playscheme, Activate and courses within the leisure centres, but also on the needs of all other Services within the Council where staff come into direct contact with young people.

1.1.2 Copies of the current CCPP will be available at the meeting.

1.1.3 At the last meeting of this Board in September 2007, Members may recall a report on the Safeguarding Children Framework. This report explained how the Council will meet its statutory duties to co-operate to improve children's wellbeing and safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The report included a Safeguarding Action Plan which identified the need to update and refresh the CCPP on an annual basis.

**1.2 CCPP Review**

1.2.1 Liaison has taken place with OFSTED, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and KCC Children, Families & Education Directorate regarding the existing CCPP. As a result of this liaison one area for revision has been identified.

1.2.2 In the existing CCPP, up to five levels of internal reporting of a suspicion of abuse are required, before action is taken or the matter is referred to an external agency. Changes in practice on reporting procedures make it necessary to revise this, with all suspicions or allegations of abuse now being reported immediately to Social

Services, or the Police, if out of hours. This procedure cannot be delayed beyond 24 hours.

- 1.2.3 In order to bring our policy in line with this current best practice, an amendment will be required to the current 'Reporting procedure' and 'Annex F – Reporting Child Protection Concerns'. A copy of the current procedure is shown at **[Annex 1]**. The proposed change will indicate the need to reduce waiting time and for direct reporting, and will include the contact details of the 'Area Children's Officer' (KCC) for Tonbridge and Malling as well as Social Services Duty Officer and the local Police.
- 1.2.4 It is also felt that this issue of reporting should be given a higher profile in the document, and staff should be notified of the changes and reminded of the need to follow the guidelines when in contact with children.
- 1.2.5 Kent & Medway Safeguarding Children's Board has recently produced a manual relating to safeguarding children. This manual is being distributed throughout the area and contains helpful advice for staff that have regular contact with young children.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

- 1.3.1 Under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the Council has a statutory duty to cooperate with Kent County Council (the Children's Service Authority) in its arrangements to improve the wellbeing of children so far as relating to physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing; protection from harm and neglect, education, training and recreation, the contribution made by them to society; and social and economic wellbeing.
- 1.3.2 Under Section 11 of the Act, the Council has a duty to make arrangements itself for ensuring that its functions are discharged in such a way as to have proper regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that any services provided by another body or person pursuant to arrangements made on our behalf are also provided having proper regard to that need.

### **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.4.1 None.

### **1.5 Risk Assessment**

- 1.5.1 Risk assessment of all activities and venues for children and young people is undertaken in liaison with the Council's Health & Safety and Insurance Officers.

### **1.6 Policy Considerations**

- 1.6.1 Young People, Safeguarding Children Framework

## 1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the proposed amendment to the reporting procedures within the Corporate Child Protection Policy, as outlined in the report be approved.

Background papers:

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File Y.1/6/1

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