

Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

1 July 2009

LEISURE & ARTS SERVICES – SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

(Report of the Head of Leisure and Arts)

1. Summary of Proposals

To seek adoption of a new enhanced Safeguarding Children's policy for Leisure and Arts Services in line with the guidance framework of The Children's Act 1989 and 2004 and partnership with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) the attached Safeguarding Children's Policy be adopted for the Leisure and Arts Service; and

RESOLVE that

- 2) a working group of Officers be set up to progress a corporate safeguarding policy for Redditch Borough Council.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 Training costs will be provided from existing training budgets with a bid through the new procedure.

Legal

- 3.2 To ensure protection of children that attend facilities and programmes undertaken by this Council and to ensure the safeguarding of this Council's officers and employees particular to this Directorate, in line with the requirements of The Children's Act 1989 and 2004.

Policy

- 3.3 Adoption of an enhanced policy to replace the current Child Protection Statement and Policy recommended by Members at the Executive Committee on 8 June 2005.



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Risk

- 3.4 In view of recent high profile cases the Council's reputation, in not adopting this policy, will be open to question and challenge.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.5 There are no sustainability / environmental implications arising from the report.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 The Directorate currently works with many partners including the Local Education Authority through Extended Schools Service, further education institutions and Governing Bodies of Sport. These institutions currently work within child protection and safeguarding arrangements set out in The Children's Act 1989 and 2004. This guidance draws on information from the network of investigation, referral, support and research from many different represented organisations.
- 4.2 The Directorate has worked to its own policy and guidelines in line with:
- a) The NSPCC;
 - b) Sports coach UK "Protecting Children- a guide for sportspeople";
 - c) Worcestershire Safeguarding Board;
 - d) Social Services - enhanced checks through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB);
 - e) The Institute of Sport and Recreation Management – best practice support;
 - f) SureStart – linkage to national policy;
 - g) Hereford and Worcester County Sports Partnership – Code of Conduct and Ethics framework
- 4.3 Officers feel that following a lengthy review of the current policy a new enhanced policy that is fully up to date and more user friendly for staff and managers should be adopted to bring this Council in line with our partners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

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- 4.4 Key definition – *“a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday”. “The fact that a child has become sixteen years of age, is living independently or is in formal education, or is a member of the armed forces, or is in hospital, or is in prison or a young offenders’ institution does not change their status or their entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.”*

5. **Key Issues**

- 5.1 There is a need to show full Member support for the current practice by formulating and adopting an updated enhanced policy.
“Understanding and commitment to the aims of and objectives of RBC”
“Awareness and understanding of current national initiatives for children and families, including an awareness of the needs of parents, carers, and children”.
- 5.2 The need to show our partners and the general public that this Council will not tolerate issues of Child Abuse from what ever quarter.
“We will co-ordinate our child protection procedures with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children’s Board in accordance with The Working Together under the Children Act”
“We will take prompt and open action to investigate accidents, incidents, complaints or concerns of any kind”.
- 5.3 That all programmes run by this Directorate are done so with the knowledge that staff have been enhanced checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and are aware of the issues of child protection and safeguarding.
We state “that all staff have the required qualifications, skills, experience and personal qualities to carry out their duties”.
“We will not employ any person who is unsuitable to work with children and therefore all workers are carefully selected and vetted”.
- 5.4 That staff have a defined policy and ongoing training in handling suspected cases of child abuse leading to a consistent approach by all levels of supervision and management.
“We will regularly train staff to a high standard and ensure continual professional development around putting young people first”.
- 5.5 We expect all partners, clubs, teams, societies and hirers to have a level of understanding of child protection with checks and guidelines in place for their coaches, volunteers, leaders and helpers when using Council facilities.
“We will promote meaningful and effective partnerships amongst all those working with children including parents and carers”.

- 5.6 We will continue to give advice and run training sessions for associated partners, sports clubs, hirers and volunteers as appropriate, where using Council provided facilities.
"Our child protection policy statement will be openly available to all who become involved with the programme".

6. **Other Implications**

- Asset Management - None.
- Community Safety - The adoption of this policy will enhance community safety for certain vulnerable groups of residents.
- Human Resources - Explained within the report.
- Social Exclusion - Explained within the report.

7. **Lessons Learnt**

- 7.1 There have been a number of much publicised inquiries and investigations and in view of these Redditch Borough Council must be seen to have a formal policy for the protection and safeguarding of children in place that is fully supported and adopted by the Council. The investigation of a serious case of abuse could result in embarrassment for the Council should it be found that there is not a current up to date formal policy in place that staff are trained to deliver.
- 7.2 Should the Executive Committee be minded to recommend adoption of this Leisure Services policy, it is recommended by officers that the policy should be adapted into a full corporate policy and the appropriate training rolled out across each Directorate to ensure compliance with legislation.

8. **Background Papers**

Worcestershire Safeguarding Board guidelines.
A Practitioners Guide to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children.
County Sports Partnership Code of Conduct and Ethics.
The Independent Safeguarding Authority Guidance.

9. **Consultation**

- 9.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.
- 9.2 Other consultees were:-

Worcestershire Safeguarding Representatives
County Sports Partnership officers
Regional Colleagues

10. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Ken Watkins (Head of Leisure and Arts Services), who can be contacted on extension 3384 (e-mail: ken.watkins@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Redditch Borough Council Safeguarding Children Policy Document.

Appendix 2 – The Sports Partnership Hereford and Worcestershire -
Code of Conduct and Ethics
Coaches, Officials and Team managers
Parents, Carers and Other Spectators
Children
Managing Challenging and Unacceptable Behaviour