

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE YOUTH OFFICER

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Lisgo)

CORPORATE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce the Corporate Child Protection Policy to the members of the Executive for approval.
- 1.2 The key pieces of legislation which underpin Child Protection are the Children Act (1989) and Working Together to Safeguard Children – A Guide to Interagency Working to Safeguard and promote the Welfare of Children (2000).
- 1.3 The protection of children and young people is integral to our Corporate Core Values that underpin our delivery of the Councils Corporate Priorities.
- 1.4 This policy also upholds Article 19, 34, 36 and 39 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Children and young people have the right to a safe environment. Taunton Deane Borough Council recognises the importance of working together with other agencies to protect children and young people.
- 2.2 A Child Protection Policy would protect any young person who accesses or receives any of the Council's services from abuse (physical, mental or neglect).
- 2.3 A Child Protection Policy not only gives protection to the young people, but employees who work or are in contact with them and the Council as a whole, by setting out guidelines and procedures regarding the identification and prevention of child abuse.
- 2.4 The Council works across all sections of society on an informal and formal level. Work with young people has increased through specified and regular consultation, events and projects e.g. VO!CE 24.7, Best Value and Community Planning.
- 2.5 Current research has yet to find any Corporate Child Protection Policies in any other Local Authorities. Usually they are departmental or they have been adopted by the Are Child Protection Committee Policy. Therefore, TDBC will have to be an innovative example of good practice to promote and share with other Local Authorities.

3. PROCESS

- 3.1 The issue regarding child protection was first raised by the Leisure Development Coordinator in early 2001 after discovering that the Leisure Child Protection Policy did not cover the work he was doing with young people.
- 3.2 A Child Protection Internal Officers Working Group was set up which investigated and researched the overarching implications and need for a policy. The Group consisted of:-
- Kevin Toller, Chief Personnel Officer
David Woolnough, Housing Manager
Jasmine Nelson, Community Projects Officer
Allison Cottey, Social Inclusion Officer
Darren Kendall, Corporate Youth Officer.
- 3.3 The group researched the need for such policies through an on-line questionnaire sent to all Service Unit Managers (see Appendix A). This highlighted the area in which the Council worked with children and young people, the frequency and also the current level of child protection training/awareness.
- 3.4 The results of the questionnaire are attached (see Appendix B) and satisfied the need to develop a policy. Nearly 40% of the staff in departments which has contact with children and young people reported their contact as weekly (16% have daily contact). However, only 5% of staff has received any child protection training in the past two years.
- 3.5 Using the research findings the Child Protection Internal Officers Working Group developed the policy which went out for wide consultation to all Members, Service Unit Managers, Unison and Staffside.
- 3.6 The Final Draft of the Corporate Child Protection Policy is attached (see Appendix C).

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The only financial implications of the Corporate Child Protection Policy are the training costs (yet to be confirmed).
- 4.2 These costs will be met from within existing budgets by the Corporate Training budget.

5. EFFECT ON THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 This policy contributes to a number of the Corporate Priorities, in particular, 'Developing Safer Communities' and 'Helping Communities Shape their own Future'.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Executive accept and support the Corporate Child Policy; and

6.2 The Executive recommends that the Full Council adopt the Corporate Child Protection Policy.

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email: d.kendall@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Child Protection Questionnaire for Unit Managers

This questionnaire is to assess the level and frequency of contact that council employees have with young people; give an indication of the level of risk and their knowledge of child protection issues.

Definitions:

Young People/Child – anyone under 18;

Contact – contact with children and young people (or family units) means any Council activity or provision whereby children, young people and families have the opportunity to participate and use any council service. This does not imply that this is solely for Council services which are regularly accessed by children, young people and families, but those services which have implicitly contained the right to access.

EXAMPLES – working in an environment where young people/children interact e.g. sports centre; specific project/consultation work in schools, communities or groups; working in peoples homes that have young people residing;

Risks – risk implies any situation whereby Council employees, volunteers and/or sub-contractors have contact with children, young people and families. So any service which the public have the right to access carries with it the possibility of harm to both children, young people and families, and equally to staff and volunteers. Exposure to situations where this occurs carries with it an element of risk.

EXAMPLES – low risk: working with families or groups in; high risk: working in an environment where being left alone with a young person/child is probable (this increases the risk of being accused of something) e.g. fraud investigation, visiting to assess house conditions or contractors doing repairs in tenants homes.

Name:

Unit Name:

CONTACT

1. Do the staff in your unit have contact with young people and/or young people in family units?

(Yes/No tick box)

If so, what is the nature of the contact? (Please tick any that apply):

- Home contact
- Telephone contact
- Contact on Council premises
- Other (please give brief details)

If not, please go to q.6

2. How many of your staff have contact with young people?

FREQUENCY OF CONTACT

3. How frequently are your staff likely to have contact with young people?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Infrequently
Number of employees					

LEVEL OF RISK

4. What is the level of perceived risk?

	1 (no risk)	2 (minimal risk)	3 (medium risk)	4 (increased risk)	5 (high risk)
Number of Employees					

EXISTING POLICY & PRACTICE

5. Are you aware of any examples of legislation, policy, guidelines or local practice that concerns and protects the young people, employees or the council which you refer to in your Unit?(please supply details)?
6. If you employ external agencies, groups, contractors, do you specify any child policies or police checks that they have to produce (if so, please supply details)?
7. Have any of your staff had any child protection training in the last two years (if so, please give details)?

Thank you for taking the time and completing this questionnaire.

Child Protection Questionnaire for Unit Managers

This questionnaire is to assess the level and frequency of contact that council employees have with young people; give an indication of the level of risk and their knowledge of child protection issues.

Definitions:

Young People/Child – anyone under 18;

Contact – contact with children and young people (or family units) means any Council activity or provision whereby children, young people and families have the opportunity to participate and use any council service. This does not imply that this is solely for Council services which are regularly accessed by children, young people and families, but those services which have implicitly contained the right to access.

EXAMPLES – working in an environment where young people/children interact e.g. sports centre; specific project/consultation work in schools, communities or groups; working in peoples homes that have young people residing;

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EXAMPLES – low risk: working with families or groups in; high risk: working in an environment where being left alone with a young person/child is probable (this increases the risk of being accused of something) e.g. fraud investigation, visiting to assess house conditions or contractors doing repairs in tenants homes.

Name:

Unit Name:

CONTACT

- 1. Do the staff in your unit have contact with young people and/or young people in family units?

(Yes/No tick box)

If so, what is the nature of the contact? (Please tick any that apply):

Home contact 22.2%

Telephone contact	33.3%
Contact on Council premises	33.3%
Other (please give brief details)	55.6%

If not, please go to q.6

- How many of your staff have contact with young people?

FREQUENCY OF CONTACT

- How frequently are your staff likely to have contact with young people?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Infrequently
Number of employees	16.7%	22.2%	27.8%	11.1%	27.8%

LEVEL OF RISK

- What is the level of perceived risk?

	1 (no risk)	2 (minimal risk)	3 (medium risk)	4 (increased risk)	5 (high risk)
Number of Employees	22.2%	77.8%	11.1%	5.6%	5.6%

EXISTING POLICY & PRACTICE

- Are you aware of any examples of legislation, policy, guidelines or local practice that concerns and protects the young people, employees or the council which you refer to in your Unit?(please supply details)?
- If you employ external agencies, groups, contractors, do you specify any child policies or police checks that they have to produce (if so, please supply details)?
- Have any of your staff had any child protection training in the last two years (if so, please give details)?

Yes	5.6%
No	94.4%

Thank you for taking the time and completing this questionnaire.

Child Protection Questionnaire

Q3a

John Lewis, Service Support (Parking Services)

Contact in car parks and on highways whilst enforcing Parking Regulations

David Gary, Revenue Service

Staff come into contact with children when visiting homes in the course of their duties

Gill Kneller, Public Safety Unit

Not sure if any of this is relevant to you!! But here goes....Promotional initiatives

Malcolm Western, Private Sector and Development

Consultation, Meetings etc.

A.C. Turner Deane DLO

Public places during course of routine work.

Brendan Cleere, Community Initiatives

The Unit represents the Council in 2 regeneration partnerships in Taunton, where pr

Alan Itter, Leisure

At courses and events run by Leisure staff

Q4

<i>John Lewis, Service Support (Parking Services)</i>	23
<i>John Lewis, Service Support (Shopmobility)</i>	2
<i>David Gary, Revenue Service</i>	12
<i>Gill Kneller, Public Safety Unit</i>	30
<i>Paul Rayson, Cemeteries & Crematorium</i>	16
<i>Malcolm Western, Private Sector and Development</i>	All
<i>David Woolnough, Housing Policy and Strategy</i>	1
<i>M R E Hembrow, Deane DLO</i>	100
<i>A.C. Turner, Deane DLO</i>	100
<i>Ian Taylor, Legal Services</i>	5
<i>Brendan Cleere, Community Initiatives</i>	4
<i>Alan Itter, Leisure</i>	8
<i>John Seabrook Property Services</i>	9

Q7

John Lewis, Service Support (Parking Services)

None - direct contact is with driver of vehicle. This could be someone 16/17 years of age.

David Gary, Revenue Service - Rent collectors, Void Inspectors,

Fraud Investigators all call on homes when sometimes a child is left in an unsupervised situation.

Gill Kneller, Public Safety Unit

We enforce legislation regarding the health and safety of young people and children who work. Last year we ran a joint initiative with the County Council ref children in the workplace - details available from Stewart Brock on 2441

Malcolm Western, Private Sector and Development

We are closely involved and included in Social Services Child Protection issues. We also work closely in domestic violence with The Women's Aid Refuge. We run Homeless Hostels.

David Woolnough, Housing Policy and Strategy

Health and Safety risk assessments, Children's Act

A.C. Turner, Deane DLO

No specific policy, work with SCC and schools on necessary checks etc for employees undertaking grounds maintenance at schools.

Brendan Cleere Community Initiatives

Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Local Government Act 2000

Alan Itter, Leisure

The Leisure Services Unit currently has a policy relating to Child Protection.

Tom Noall, Planning Services

None. The only contact is occasional either in schools giving presentations or in conservation work groups on site.

Q8

David Woolnough, Housing Policy and Strategy

None, but am currently planning a contract where visits being arranged to 1000 local properties, so need to act on this.

A.C. Turner, Deane DLO

Only as above concerning schools.

Q9a

Malcolm Western, Private Sector and Development

We are sent Child Protection Manuals when they are amended or reprinted.

Alan Itter, Leisure

Darren Kendall - Youth Service course, Clare Morgans - Sports Coach UK course

DRAFT CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – DRAFT

1. Purpose of policy
 - 1.1 TDBC recognises the need to ensure the safety of children and young people and to protect them from abuse, those who access or receives any of the Council's services.
 - 1.2 To ensure that employees have sufficient knowledge and clear operating procedures, which they can follow if faced with a child protection issue, whilst receiving support and guidance from Taunton Deane Borough Council.
 - 1.3 To ensure that the training requirements of employees and members are fulfilled in relation to child protection issues and procedures.
2. Objectives
 - 2.1 To ensure children and young people are protected within the facilities, services and activities supplied and supported by TDBC.
 - 2.2 To ensure that TDBC has the training and mechanisms to support employees when faced with child protection issues.
 - 3.1 To become an example of good practice for other local authorities and organisations regarding child protection.
3. Scope of policy
 - 3.1 The policy applies to all employees' and contractors during the hours that they are working for TDBC. The policy also applies if the employee or contractor becomes concerned about a child at risk of abuse or is involved in a child abuse/protection incident (outside the working relationship) that damages the trust required in the working relationship. Other organisations that have contact with TDBC will also be encouraged to consider adopting the policy.
4. Support for the policy
 - 4.1 This policy has been developed following a full consultation with both UNISON and Staff Side representatives (tbc).
 - 4.2 This policy has the full support of Corporate Management Team and the Executive Committee (tbc).
5. General Principles
 - 5.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council views child abuse as a serious act that requires a response. The Council also recognises that early

identification is more likely to lead to successful results. A checklist can never be exhaustive, but will help employees clarify child abuse see Appendix A.

- 5.2 TDBC will maintain the strictest confidentiality when dealing with child protection issues or concerns, within the limits of what is practicable and within the law. TDBC recognises that it is not their responsibility to investigate or deal with child protection issues but to consult with and refer to the Social Services or Police – details of which will be given in the Child Protection training.
- 5.3 Employees dealing with child protection issues will be supported and every effort will be made to assist them in their efforts by offering them counselling.

6. Education and training

- 6.1 Education and training in child protection issues and awareness is an essential and an ongoing part of the Council's approach to the issue of child protection – safe practice guidelines are attached as Appendix B along with Local Procedures for Specific Departments in Appendix C, however, more detailed discussions/advice will be given during the training.
- 6.2 All employees and members will receive the appropriate level of training attributed to the level of contact they have with young people. The level will be identified through the employee and their manager undertaking a joint risk assessment. Duties involving contact with young people will be identified in the job description of each post (where they exist).
- 6.3 Information and publicity regarding the child protection policy will be conveyed through the managers of each Service Unit, via pamphlets, e-mails and notice board information.
- 6.4 Guidance and training will be provided to managers to enable the policy to be effectively communicated and implemented.

7. Staff appointment

- 7.1 Before staff are appointed, the post will be reviewed to determine the level of contact with children and young people, which will determine the level of Police Check required.
- 7.2 New employees will not normally be permitted to take up post before the Police Checks have been completed. The only exception to this may be where the Criminal Records Bureau has a significant backlog. In this circumstance the appointment must be discussed with the Chief

Personnel Officer and the appropriate Child Protection Support Officer.

- 7.3 In a case where Police Checks lead to the discovery of child protection issues, then management will discuss and take the appropriate actions regarding the employment of the individual in question. Once a person has commenced employment normal Disciplinary Procedures will apply.
 - 7.4 A shortened version and an explanation of the policy will be provided to every employee and to new employees as part of the induction process. The policy will also be included in the staff handbook and on the Personnel website.
8. Employee assistance
 - 8.1 Due to the emotional nature of child protection issues counselling will be made available to those employees who have been involved in a case(s) and require support.
 - 8.2 The Council will have two designated Child Protection Support Officers (one based in TDBC and the other in the Leisure DSO). These appropriate officers will have undertaken the Area Child Protection Training Course and become a point of contact for those employees and members who have concerns regarding any child protection issues.
9. Responsibilities
 - 9.1 All employees are responsible for ensuring adherence to the policy and for reporting breaches of the policy as set out in the Staff Handbook.
 - 9.2 Managers are responsible for ensuring that visitors, partners and contractors are made aware of the terms of the policy and the responsibilities within it.
 - 9.3 The Child Protection Support Officers are responsible for administering, monitoring and reviewing the operation of the policy in consultation with personnel, managers and staff representatives.
10. Complaints/Appeals
 - 10.1 Employees who have concerns about any aspect of the application of the policy should follow the agreed grievance procedure as set out in the Staff Handbook.
11. Review process

11.1 Unison and Staff Side representatives plus Council Members will be consulted during the review of the policy and prior to the implementation of any amendments.

11.2 There will be an annual review of the policy by member involvement and an internal staff group.

12. Timetable

12.1 **This policy will be effective from**

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Definitions of child abuse taken from the Somerset Area Child Protection Committee, Child Protection Procedures Handbook, June 2000

“Children may be harmed by a parent, a relative, a sibling, a carer (ie persons who while not parents are looking after a child, such as a foster parent, a staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger. The harm may be the result of a direct act or by a failure to act to provide proper care, or both.

These following categories of abuse are not necessarily exhaustive nor are they mutually exclusive. Any of them may result in a child failing to thrive (ie failure to gain appropriately). The descriptive classification given below provides the basis for the Somerset Child Protection Register. Professional staff consider systematically whether all or some of these categories of abuse are present, as well as the degree to which they are present, in the situation faced by each child in the household. Multiple abuse registration should not be used just to cover all eventualities.

PHYSICAL ABUSE: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

SEXUAL ABUSE: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contacts, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways for their age.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse affects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, racially inferior or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

NEGLECT: The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

BULLYING: This can be defined as repeated abuse be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying are teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, extortion. In extreme cases of bullying one would regard the abuse as physical or emotional.“

Glossary of terms used:

Children/Young People referred to in this policy is only individual under the age of 18.

Harm means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development.

Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Health means physical or mental health.

Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and forms of abuse, which are not physical.

Where **harm** relates to impairment of health or development, the child is compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child (with similar physical attributes).

APPENDIX B

SAFE PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Consideration should be given to the following good practice guidelines to ensure the establishment of a safe environment for work with children and young people. The list is obviously not exhaustive. If at any time you are unsure then please contact the Child Protection Support Officer.

Number of leaders/staff

TDBC staff (and contractors) should not work alone with children or young people or enter a property without another adult present. The ratio of adults to children is vital to ensure safety. The standard ratios based on the Children's Act are as follows:

- Under 2 years – 1 adult to 3 children;
- Under 3 years – 1 adult to 4 children;
- Under 8 years – 1 adult to 8 children;
- For children over eight the recommended ratio is two adults for up to twenty children and one additional adult for every ten extra children;

*NB however, TDBC stipulates that the ratios are all subject to a minimum of 2 adults, however, please check the local procedures pertaining to your service as there might be other stipulations.

It is also important to have a gender balance of adults if possible.

If at any time it is unavoidable that you are alone with a child or young person ensure that your line manager is aware to maximise safe practice discusses specific protocols and working guidelines.

If a child or young person needs/wants to speak in private for whatever reason, make sure that an appropriate person is close by and are aware of where you are.

Physical Contact/Behaviour

Children and young people as well as other adults can easily misunderstand engaging in physical contact with young people. Do not engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child or young person.

Travel

Never transport children or young people in your car without the explicit parent/guardian consent (usually in writing).

First Aid

A first aid kit should be available and all adults should know where it is located. It also the responsibility of the Location Manager to ensure that it is properly stocked. A trained individual should always administer First Aid.

Shared facilities

Where possible, never use the same toilets or facilities as children or young people where alternative facilities exist.

Useful Contacts

Taunton Deane Borough Council Child Protection Support Officers:
Darren Kendall, Corporate Youth Officer, 01823 356553 (ext 2747)
Allison Cottey, Inclusion Officer, 01823

Somerset Social Services Intake Team – 01823 325283

Somerset and Avon Constabulary Child Protection Team – 01823 363003

NSPCC - 0808 800 5000

Childline – 0800 1111

APPENDIX C

LOCAL PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC DEPARTMENTS

Each department or service unit that has contact with children and young people will have their own specific local procedures. These will give practical guidelines by outlining operating procedures and covering discourses specific to the department/service unit. It will also include the referral routes and procedure in a flow diagram.

Each local procedure will be developed with the Service Unit Manager and the Child Protection Support Officers.

(to be developed)

