

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

**FROM: HEAD OF LEISURE AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

REPORT NUMBER **E308**

**TO: **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(COMMUNITY SERVICES)****

DATE OF MEETING **28 MARCH 2006**

THE CHILDREN ACT 2004 – SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report seeks approval to a Safeguarding Policy for young people across the Council's services.

2. RECOMMENDATION TO STRATEGY COMMITTEE

2.1 That the Safeguarding Policy attached to this report be approved.

 The Committee is asked to recommend the Strategy Committee accordingly.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Staff training will be required which will be met from existing budgets.

4. KEY INFORMATION

4.1 At its meeting on 29 November 2005 this Committee received a report (Paper E212) on the Children Act 2004. Members approved an action plan which included consideration of the adoption of a corporate safeguarding policy at this meeting in accordance with Section 11 of the Act.

4.2 Attached to this report is a draft safeguarding policy which has been prepared by specialist officers in the field of safeguarding at district and county level.

4.3 It is intended that the policy is adopted countywide by all district and borough councils.

4.4 The policy sets out what should happen if there are concerns about the welfare of any child or young person with whom a Member or officer comes into contact. It is not intended that every Babergh member or officer becomes an "expert" in child protection matters, but rather that everyone understands their responsibilities as a member or employee of the authority towards safeguarding, and is able to respond appropriately if they have concerns as part of carrying out their duties.

4.5 Sport and leisure services necessarily require more specific documentation for their areas of responsibility and so will maintain their detailed existing policies and procedures.

5. APPENDIX

 Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Policy

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:

 None.

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BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY (AND GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES)

1. Introduction

1.1 Babergh District Council provides a range of services and facilities to the community. The nature of the provision means inevitably employees (permanent, temporary or contracted) and councillors of the organisation will come into contact with children, young people and their families in a variety of settings.

1.2 Babergh District Council recognises it has a corporate responsibility towards safeguarding children and young people in those settings, while retaining a sense of proportion and maintaining the welfare of the child or young person as paramount. In so doing Babergh District Council acknowledges it is not its responsibility to investigate whether a child or young person is in need or that abuse has taken place but that all employees and councillors should:

- act upon any concerns, by referring them to Suffolk Social Care Services as required by Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) now known as Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidance.
- record them according to ACPC (LSCB) procedure.
- log them with an appropriate person.

1.3 Babergh District Council will accept responsibility for ensuring its councillors and employees know the referral criteria and ensure that employees' concerns are received and understood.

2. Policy

2.1 Babergh District Council is committed to ensuring that any child or young person who comes into contact with an employee or any aspect of our activities or services is listened to, feels safe and protected and has their views taken into account. However, it must be understood that neither employees nor councillors can give absolute guarantees of confidentiality, or promises the information will not be shared. If a child is at risk of significant harm the "normal" rules of confidentiality do not apply.

2.2 Babergh District Council will endeavour to ensure the suitability of all employees appointed to work with children and young people through robust recruitment and selection procedures, appropriate training and other working practices and procedures.

2.3 Babergh District Council requires all adults in the organisation to understand their responsibility to share concerns about the welfare of any child or young person with the appropriate designated officer in their service area. Babergh District Council will endeavour to equip appointed officers with the necessary skills, information and confidence to carry out this role.

3. **Cultural Services**

Babergh District Council cultural services have a * ***“Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy”*** produced with the support of S.A.F.E. (Safer Activities for Everyone). The policy provides guidance on recruitment and supervision of employees and volunteers, reporting and recording procedures and guidance on the use of photography within sports/leisure facilities and at events. Cultural Services have also introduced a coach induction system which includes a code of conduct.

** available on Babergh District Council Intranet.*

4. **Information Computer Technology (ICT)**

The District Council * ***“Computer Users Handbook”*** is intended to ensure that technology provided to employees and councillors is used appropriately. The District Council’s “Good Communications Guide” provides clear guidance on use of telephones and faxes.

** available on Babergh District Council Intranet.*

5. **Licensing Authority**

Babergh District Council, as a licensing authority, complies with the terms of the Licensing Act 2003 in relation to protecting children from harm. The Act requires that robust mechanisms are in place to ensure licensing applications are examined by the appropriate agencies (see para. 14.5 of statement of *Licensing Policy).

** available on Babergh District Council Intranet.*

6. **Community Safety**

Safeguarding children and young people will need to be central to the authority’s community safety strategy. Where the authority has responsibilities for adults who may pose a risk to children they will need to ensure due account is taken of this when providing a service. eg - housing advice or accommodation.

7. **Recruitment and selection**

Babergh District Council takes all reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working in settings that bring them into close or unsupervised contact with children. Mandatory training for officers with recruitment and selection responsibilities ensures adherence to the Babergh District Council * ***“Recruitment and Selection Best Practice Guidelines”***.

* ***“The Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures policy”*** ensures information is sought to assess potential employees suitability for a post when applying for a position that may bring them into contact with children or young people.

** available on Babergh District Council Intranet.*

8. **Training**

All employees should receive suitable information and/or training to raise awareness of their role in recognising, understanding and safeguarding children. Line Managers/designated officers should receive suitable training to enable them to deal with reported concerns and to support individuals reporting concerns.

9. Supervision

Babergh District Council will ensure that:-

- any concerns about abuse are acted upon at an early stage.
- Support, from an appropriately trained individual, is offered to those who report concerns.
- Confidentiality is maintained at all times and any issues are only shared with the appropriate people.

10. Recording Information

Babergh District Council will ensure that:

- information is recorded relating to initial sharing of concern.
- appropriate forms are made available for the recording of information for the police and social services where there is concern about the welfare of a child or young person.
- the designated safeguarding children officer follows up their report to Social Care Services in writing within 24 hours.
- any reported concerns are kept secure and only made available to authorised staff, Social Care Services and/or the police.

11. Allegations against employees/volunteers/councillors

All allegations will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary or Grievance Procedure or "Whistleblowing Guide". * (Social Care Services and/or the police will determine whether child protection or criminal investigations will take place).

Allegations against councillors will be dealt with through the monitoring officer and standards board mechanism. (Social Care Services and/or the police will determine whether child protection or criminal investigations will take place).

** available on Babergh District Council intranet.*

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

What to do if you are worried about a child's welfare.

This policy must be read in conjunction with DOH publication "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused". ** Please note this guide is intended for anyone who has a concern relating to a child or young person's safety and well being.

Concerns about a child or young person's safety and welfare may vary in seriousness and in nature and you may be unsure about whether or not this warrants reporting. You may be unclear about where your responsibility lies in relation to child protection. It is everyone's responsibility to act upon their concerns, but often it is only when information from different sources is put together that a clear picture, of the risks and needs of the child or young person emerges. Sharing your concerns with a designated officer who has been trained to support and advise you will help to focus on exactly what your concerns are and ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Whilst it is appropriate to respond to events, employees should never set out to interview or investigate themselves, because doing so is likely to make it difficult for police officers and social care workers to investigate and act to protect. Children should be listened to and not silenced, but they should not be interviewed.

It is important to keep an open mind about the possibility of abuse and to avoid giving the benefit of the doubt to an adult without having a sound basis for so doing.

If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child or young person you have seen during the course of your work, you should:

- Discuss your concerns with your line manager or designated officer.
- Inform Social Care Services and/or police where appropriate.

Telephone numbers – (Suffolk Social Care Services) Customer First 08456 023 023

Duty Social Worker – 01473 299669

Police – 01473 613500

If a child or young person is at immediate risk of significant harm, Dial 999 as in any emergency.

Be clear when you first make contact that you are making a child protection referral.

Whilst referrals can be made anonymously it is not recommended because it often means the eventual recipient of the referral is unable to check out the details and may even be unable to take any action. If you are in difficulty in identifying yourself please discuss this when you make the referral, or with your line manager or designated officer.

- Record concerns and actions on designated forms.

It is important to record accurately and in detail, especially regarding what a child (or an adult) actually says and what you have actually observed. You should make clear distinctions between fact and opinion, and between what you know from first hand experience and what has been told you by someone else. The form should then be sent to Suffolk Social Care Services and copied to the designated safeguarding officer – The emphasis is on no delay.

You will not suffer any adverse legal consequences if you pass on information and concerns honestly and in good faith, and in accordance with agreed procedures.

Conclusion

Babergh District Council, through the production of this document, has demonstrated its commitment to safeguarding children and young people. The policy recognises the diverse nature of the services and facilities provided by the council and the duty upon all employees and councillors to act upon their concerns relating to children and young people's welfare.

Babergh District Council recognises the important contribution that members and employees may make to the process of safeguarding children and will encourage and facilitate their employees to contribute appropriately to the child protection process – and in particular in respect of Child Protection conferences, Core Groups, formal Protection Plans and information exchange.

The policy will be implemented by way of an Action Plan setting out specific targets and actions. It will be a working document, reviewed annually or more frequently to reflect changes in legislation and best practice.

Further Information

Suffolk ACPC (LSCB) procedures and guidance for safeguarding children from harm are openly available on the internet at www.suffolkscb.org. Babergh District Council encourages employees to access these procedures and guidance.

***this publication can be accessed in hard copy from your service manager/ weblink www.teachernet.gov.uk search using reference 31553.*

RECORD OF CONCERN

<u>Your details:</u>	Date:
Name:	
Position: Division:	
Telephone: Email:	
Line Manager:	
<u>Details of the child or young person you are concerned about:</u>	
Name:	
Address:	
Male/Female:	
Parent(s) name:	
<u>Details of your concerns:</u> (try to limit this to fact only – date, time, location, what you saw or what a child or young person told you.)	
Who did you report your concerns to:	
Did you discuss your concerns with anyone else? Yes/No	
If Yes, who?	
<u>Details of actions taken:</u>	
Signature:	
Line Manager's Signature:	
Name:.....	