

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE | Finance Policy & Resources |
| DATE | 1 February 2018 |
| REPORT TITLE | Corporate Child Protection Policy and Procedure |
| REPORT NUMBER | ECS/18/007 |
| DIRECTOR | Bernadette Oxley/Helen Shanks |
| REPORT AUTHOR | Graeme Simpson |

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

To advise the Committee of the updated Child Protection - Corporate Policy and Procedure and its implications for all council staff and elected members.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee –

- (a) Note the updated Child Protection - Corporate Policy and Procedure and its implications for immediate implementation.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council has had a Corporate Child Protection Policy in place for a number of years. The existing policy required to be updated to take account of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014. This guidance sets out the duties on all local authorities to ensure that all its services “recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement.”
- 3.2 In addition, Aberdeen City Council is responsible for ensuring that its services, individually and collectively, work to protect children and young people as effectively as possible.
- 3.3 The updated **Child Protection Policy states that** “Every child and young person in Aberdeen has the right to be kept safe and protected from harm. Children need to be kept safe from harm in order to thrive and reach important developmental milestones, and to ultimately become responsible and contributing citizens. Keeping children safe means more than ensuring their physical safety; looking after their emotional and mental well-being is equally important.”

- 3.4 The procedure sets out what the responsibilities of staff/elected members are in the circumstance they identify a child protection concern. Simply put it is to See the Signs; Record it and Report it. The procedure makes clear that the investigation of child protection concerns is the responsibility of Police Scotland and social work staff.
- 3.5 In delivering this policy and procedure it will be important for all managers to ensure that they:
- Raise awareness amongst staff of this policy and procedure.
 - Ensure staff are aware of how they are expected to safeguard and promote the protection of children during the course of their work;
 - Provide access to training, professional development and support for staff to promote the protection of children. This requires to be appropriate for the roles and responsibilities of individual posts
 - Ensure staff are aware that failure to comply with this policy and procedure is a breach of their employment responsibilities and may result in the instigation of disciplinary or performance processes.
- 3.6 An existing online training course is in existence which all staff/elected members are required to complete as part of their induction in their role. A short life working group has been established involving colleagues from Organisational Development and the Communications Team to relaunching this course to support to refresh their understanding of their duties in relation to child protection.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no anticipated financial pressures as a result of implementing this policy and procedure.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Delivering on the above will ensure the Council fully complies with the duties set out in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 Financial – the early identification of child protection will enable services to be deployed to support the child and their family. Early intervention whether provided by universal services or from more targeted services is generally more cost effective both financially and from an individual perspective.
- 6.2 Employee – The National Guidance makes clear that the identification of risk of harm to children and young people is the responsibility of all Council employees. The updated Policy and Procedure provides scenarios to assist services which are not customer facing consider where they may come across child protection concerns. In addition it provides scenarios to customer facing services of the types of concerns they may come across. It will be for each service to support its staff operationalise this Policy and Procedure.

In addition we e providing all staff/elected members with a wallet sized card which sets their duties in relation to child protection. Level of risk low.

- 6.3 Customer / citizen – The aim of Policy and Procedure is to support the early identification situations of risk of harm to children/and young people. This will allow for the appropriate level of support to be put in place for the child and their family. Level of risk low.
- 6.4 Environmental – There are no environmental risks associated with this report.
- 6.5 Technological – There are no technological risks associated with this report
- 6.6 Legal – The protection of children and young people is a core responsibility of the local authority. Level of risk low.
- 6.7 Reputational – Harm to children has always been an issue which attracts significant media attention. Such events can also undermine the confidence of the public in how children are safeguarded. This policy and procedure clearly sets out the duty of all council staff to militate against this risk. Level of risk low.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

- 7.1.1 Effective management of the work across Children's Social Work is critical to ensuring that resources are being deployed to greatest effect. The successful implementation of the new duties is fully convergent with the Councils' Strategic Business Plan and will deliver a transformational change as to how Children's Social Work supports care experienced young people ensuring they are safe and responsible. This vision is fully consistent with "children are our future" priority of Local Authority Outcome Improvement Plan.

7.2 People

- 7.2.1 The Council's ability to recognise and respond to child protection concerns will deliver improved outcomes for the children and young people of Aberdeen.
- 7.2.2 The EHRIA did not identify any additional risks

7.3 Place

- 7.3.1 The vast majority of social work services are delivered to families who experience economic deprivation. Supporting staff across the city to better recognise and respond to child protection concerns will ensure support is directed to children/young people at the earliest opportunity enabling them to feel safe and secure in their home and local community.

7.4 Technology

- 7.4.1 Improving the use of technology to support staff understand their child protection duties is seen as central to delivering on this corporate policy and procedure. Work with Organisation Development and the Communications team will assist in progressing this.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**
Child Protection - Corporate Policy and Procedure

9. **APPENDICES (if applicable)**
None

10. **REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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