

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 MARCH 2003

REPORT ON: USE OF COUNCIL PROPERTY BY OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS FOR SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

REPORT BY: DIRECTORS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES & DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, LEISURE & ARTS, AND SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 5-2003

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Council approval to amend letting conditions in order to meet new Scottish Executive requirements with regard to the care and protection of young people. This recommendation will operate from 1 April 2004 to allow adequate time for organisations to complete registration and for the Council to honour current letting commitments.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the arrangements made by the Scottish Executive to encourage parents and young people to use youth provision from voluntary and public bodies which meets approved standards for care and protection, vetting of workers and public accountability and open governance.
- 2.2 Amend letting conditions of Council property to be met by voluntary and public agencies on a rolling programme from 1 August 2003 to 31 March 2004 to allow individual Departments the opportunity to manage this change.
- 2.3 Encourage the display of literature within Council property advising parents of the Scottish Executive's Parent Checklist regarding quality/safe provision (see Appendix 1).
- 2.4 Support the voluntary sector and the Central Registered Body in Scotland to offer support and training locally for organisations to keep them registered, access and operate disclosure vetting of volunteers.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications involved for the Council in meeting these recommendations.
- 3.2 The Neighbourhood Resources & Development Department part funds a development worker from Youth (Scotland) to support voluntary youth clubs, improve quality standards and obtain Central Registered Body in Scotland recognition (Report No 98-2001).

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendations contribute to the Council's priorities under Community Safety in the promotion of a safer environment for young people.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The recommendations will include work with minority groups, some of which are at greater risk.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Scottish Executive has tasked Disclosure Scotland, formerly the Scottish Criminal Record Office, to extend access to vetting of potential workers and volunteers to public and voluntary sector. A separate intermediary body, The Central Registered Body in Scotland has been established from 29 April 2002 to offer free access to disclosure checks for volunteers for this purpose.
- 6.2 This body in conjunction with Disclosure Scotland have widely advertised their remit and offer free training and assistance to organisations, offering services to vulnerable participants, to develop safe personnel recruitment procedures, encourage the rehabilitation of offenders and the development of quality care and protection policies.
- 6.3 The Executive has also produced for parents a checklist of youth activities (see Appendix 1 attached) which encourages checking and vetting prior to supporting young persons participation.
- 6.4 These initiatives are part of an overall programme of good practice guidelines and legal requirements arising from Lord Cullen's report on the Dunblane tragedy. The initiatives have the support of YouthLink, the national Youth Agency in Scotland, SportsScotland and the Scottish Arts Council together with local Committees for Child Protection.

7.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 7.1 The Council is registered with Disclosure Scotland and processes relevant disclosure checks as per the criteria.
- 7.2 Most major youth organisations, Church Groups and voluntary organisations are well advanced with registration under the Central Registered Body in Scotland criteria re volunteer checks.
- 7.3 National governing bodies of sports/arts have issued guidance to accredited instructors/coaches regarding care and protection standards and vetting arrangements.
- 7.4 Most Council Departments make reference to the need for safeguards within letting but do not at present seek proof of registration from outside letting agencies/organisations offering regulated youth provision.

8.0 PROPOSED ACTION

- 8.1 The Council is in an ideal position to support parents, the Scottish Executive and the national governing bodies by making it a pre-condition of all lets that the organisation provides:
- Its registration number at the Central Registered Body in Scotland (re volunteers) and Disclosure Scotland (re paid personnel).
 - Confirmation of a care and protection policy and working procedures.
 - Confirmation that workers/volunteers have been vetted as per the vetting criteria.
- 8.2 Such requests would be confined to organisations requesting letting to offer provision of services to young people under 18 years of age. They would not extend to groups of young people accessing provision as a peer or friendship group with no adult supervision. Such groups are adequately supervised under existing letting criteria.
- 8.3 Verification of registration codes can be obtained from the regulatory Disclosure Bodies.

8.4 It is suggested that the above proposed actions would contribute to safer provision for young people within Council property, increased parental assurance and strengthen the Council's "duty of care" provision.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Chief Executive, Directors of Support Services, Corporate Planning, Finance, and Personnel & Management Services have been consulted on the content of this Report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

Fraser R Patrick
Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development

27 February 2003

Anne Wilson
Director of Education

27 February 2003

Steve Grimmond
Director of Leisure and Arts

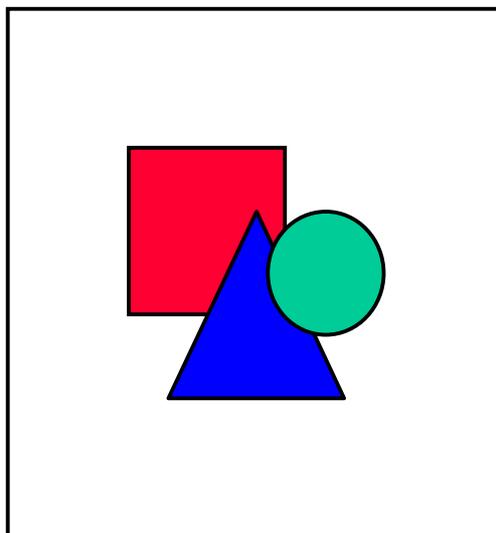
27 February 2003

Alan Baird
Director of Social Work

27 February 2003

FRP/ADB/AHPH

PARENT CHECKLIST FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH STANDARDS OR HAVE A COMPLAINT

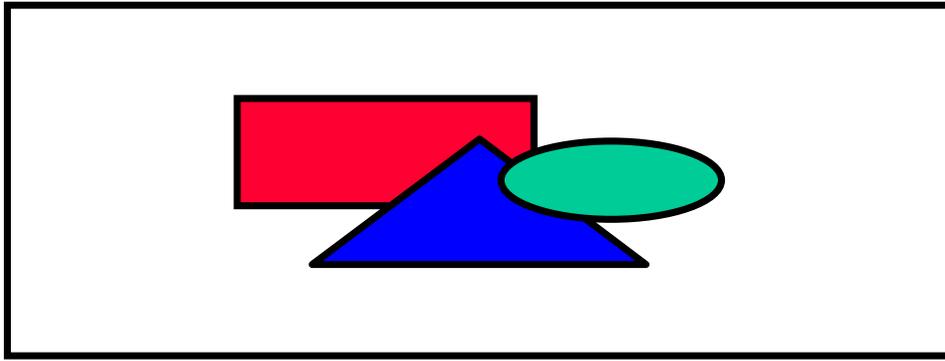
These sample questions are based on things which every worthwhile youth club or group should have. If you are not satisfied that the club or group has addressed these issues, or does not have the necessary controls and procedures in place, you could contact the management committee or the named individual who is responsible for dealing with complaints. If no complaints procedure exists, or if you fail to receive satisfaction, you should pass your concerns to the national organisation to which the club is linked or advise the local council community education or community services department. You could also talk over your concerns with Parentline Scotland - the hotline for parents on issues concerning them. Tel: 0808 800 2222.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Over half a million young people take part in Scotland's 11,000 youth organisations and clubs. These organisations play a vital role in helping children and young people develop, learn and have fun. 80,000 volunteers and 2000 paid workers provide this essential service, representing a huge investment in our young people.

While youth organisations are constantly trying to strengthen their selection processes for recruiting leaders and improving their training provision, parents should assure themselves about standards before allowing their young people to join a club or group for organised activities ... AND MAYBE - YOU COULD VOLUNTEER TO HELP!

The following information sets out some basic questions parents might ask about the status and credentials of the club and its leaders. Youth organisation leaders, many of whom are parents themselves, encourage and welcome this kind of parental interest.



FIFTEEN QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Is the youth group/club affiliated to a larger organisation like the Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Youth Scotland, sports council or out of school network? If so, does it have good contact and a good relationship with the umbrella organisation?

These umbrella organisations provide the group/club with access to professional support, training and advice ... not all youth groups/clubs belong to an umbrella organisation or network ... and not all umbrella organisations have control over the practices of affiliates; in either case you should ask for details about who runs the club, are they local parents/teachers; do they have any contact with other youth groups or the local council, and if so what type of contact?

2. Can the group/club give a named contact within the local council's community education or community services department who is aware of the group's operational practices?

Not all groups will - it should be sufficient to be satisfied in relation to either questions 1 or 2.

3. Is the group/club subject to regulation and inspection by an outside body?

The majority of groups and clubs will probably not fall within this category ... however, some groups such as after school clubs may require registration with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.

4. Is there a leaflet which gives basic information about the youth group/club, its aims, leaders, nature of the activities, cost, meeting day(s) and times of meeting (start and finish) including holidays?

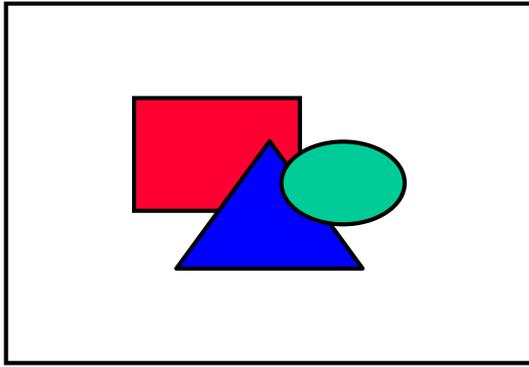
5. Is it established practice that parental consent is sought for outside visits, adventure activities, etc.?

6. Does the youth group/club have set procedures on the recruitment (e.g. vetting arrangements such as Criminal Record checks), training and management of workers/ volunteers including training on protecting children and personnel?

These may have been established by the national organisation but local workers/volunteers should be aware of the criteria, have met the recruitment standards, have access to relevant training and have documented evidence.

7. Are there adequate numbers of leaders/adult helpers (volunteers/paid staff) and is there a clear policy that there should be a minimum of two adult leaders/helpers for an activity/meeting to operate safely?

Safe practice requires that there should always be at least two adults present to



ensure that no adults find themselves working alone with children. It is desirable that there are adults present of the same sex as the young people involved in the club.

8. Are there clear procedures and guidance for staff and volunteers in respect of behaviour towards children?

This could be in the form of a written Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers so that parents know what standards of behaviour to expect - this might cover things such as the appropriateness of physical contact with children, comforting children and accompanying children to toilets.

9. Does the club/organisation have a formal constitution setting out its aims, management and financial policy and procedures?

Most youth groups and clubs have a management committee which meets on a regular basis with local parents among its members and an annual rotation of membership with nominations invited from parents of the young people involved in the group. This ensures a degree of parental supervision and input into the group's activities.

10. Are parents encouraged and welcomed to visit the club, to meet those in charge and to view activities?

If not, you as a parent, should consider whether this gives cause for concern.

11. Does the youth group/club have a health and safety policy, a First Aid kit, a First Aider and adequate procedures for recording and notifying accidents? Is it insured?

12. Does the club have a policy to ensure the protection of children and young people and is the policy made available to parents? Is the policy maintained and reviewed?

Leaders should have a clear understanding of the organisation's criteria for recruiting and selecting staff and guidance on planning work to minimise opportunities for abuse.

13. Does the organisation have established procedures to handle complaints?

This may be through a nominated member of a management committee or an independent party who is not directly involved in the running of the activity but there should be a named person within the organisation who can be contacted.

14. Is this complaints procedure made clear to club members?

Parents should encourage their children to tell them if there are any occurrences

about which they are unhappy or uncomfortable.

15. Have you asked other parents about the group/club and the leaders?

Any concerns about the group/club will often be picked up by talking to other parents with first-hand knowledge.

