
**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INTERNET SAFETY
TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP**

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Jenny Chapman,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children’s Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report the findings and recommendations of Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee following a Task and Finish Review Group on Internet Safety.

Summary

2. All Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee were invited to attend a meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group on 16th November, 2009 to examine internet safety and to make recommendations to Cabinet providing the provision of internet safety advice to all children, young people, parents and carers.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Cabinet :-
 - (a) Endorse the following recommendations of the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee :-
 - (i) That e-safety be part of the school curriculum and it be included in the work of schools within Darlington.
 - (ii) That continuous improvements be made to education on e-safety and reviewed appropriately.
 - (iii) That every child be made aware of a named person within their school or public internet access site (college, library, community centre etc) to whom behaviour believed to be unacceptable or frightening can be reported and that appropriate advice and assistance will be given. This information should be available as a reminder as each young person logs onto the computer (pop-up screen).
 - (iv) Appropriate message on e-safety to be distributed to every household (via a Council publication and/or website message) providing all residents with advice and information and a named officer at the Council with whom they may raise

questions or concerns.

- (v) Parental workshops to be made available to all who care for children in our community, content of which would be based upon suggestions from parents/carers themselves. This could be gauged on the answers to a brief questionnaire in the Town Crier or other means of communication (with recommendation 13).
 - (vi) As a means of educating the wider community that varied text relating to e-safety 'pop up' at log on on all publicly provided computers in Darlington.
 - (vii) To hold a Safer Internet Day to coincide with European E-Safety Day held each year and this academic year held on 10th February, to involve all sectors of the community in its preparation (especially encouraging the involvement of young people and the Children's Forum and the most vulnerable in our Darlington community).
 - (viii) That work be undertaken to ensure that our Looked After and Fostered Children have the e-safety advice and supervision whilst out of the school environment that they may require, with appropriate pastoral care to reinforce this advice.
 - (ix) To call on all relevant parties within the Darlington community (including the Council, Children's Trust, Police, Community Partnerships, School Community etc) to establish an e-advisory committee where we can map the work that is currently done to deliver a safer internet and where we can respond to the e-safety needs of our citizens in a co-ordinated, efficient and effective way.
- (b) Note the comments of the Director of Children's Services.

Reasons

4. The recommendations are supported to ensure the provision of internet safety advice to all children, young people, parents and carers

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Allison Carling
Ext 2291

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	The recommendations in the report support the Council's approach to ensuring the well being of children and young people.
Sustainability	There are no issues relating to Sustainability which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to Diversity which this report needs to address.
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report contributes to the delivery of the objectives of the Community Strategy in a number of ways through the involvement of local elected members contributing to the Aspiring Darlington Theme Group.
Efficiency	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. Attached as **Appendix A**, is the final report of Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee established to examine internet safety.
6. The final report has been considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committees.

Recommendations

7. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the final report at its special Urgent Meeting held on 23rd November, and agreed that the report be submitted to Cabinet with the following recommendations:-
 - (a) That e-safety be part of the school curriculum and it be included in the work of schools within Darlington.
 - (b) That continuous improvements be made to education on e-safety and reviewed appropriately.
 - (c) That every child be made aware of a named person within their school or public internet access site (college, library, community centre etc) to whom behaviour believed to be unacceptable or frightening can be reported and that appropriate advice and assistance will be given. This information should be available as a reminder as each young person logs onto the computer (pop-up screen).
 - (d) Appropriate message on e-safety to be distributed to every household (via a Council publication and/or website message) providing all residents with advice and information and a named officer at the Council with whom they may raise questions or concerns.
 - (e) Parental workshops to be made available to all who care for children in our community, content of which would be based upon suggestions from parents/carers themselves. This could be gauged on the answers to a brief questionnaire in the Town Crier or other means of communication (with recommendation 13).
 - (f) As a means of educating the wider community that varied text relating to e-safety 'pop up' at log on on all publicly provided computers in Darlington.
 - (g) To hold a Safer Internet Day to coincide with European E-Safety Day held each year and this academic year held on 10th February, to involve all sectors of the community in its preparation (especially encouraging the involvement of young people and the Children's Forum and the most vulnerable in our Darlington community).
 - (h) That work be undertaken to ensure that our Looked After and Fostered Children have the e-safety advice and supervision whilst out of the school environment that they may require, with appropriate pastoral care to reinforce this advice.

- (i) To call on all relevant parties within the Darlington community (including the Council, Children's Trust, Police, Community Partnerships, School Community etc) to establish an e-advisory committee where we can map the work that is currently done to deliver a safer internet and where we can respond to the e-safety needs of our citizens in a co-ordinated, efficient and effective way.

Director of Children's Services Comments

8. The Director of Children's Services welcome the speed, commitment and efficiency of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in formulating a response to the tragic death of Ashleigh Hall. The Internet Safety Task and Finish Review Group examined relevant evidence and has identified a set of relevant recommendations.
9. The Director of Children's Services welcomes the recommendations set out in paragraph 7 above and will ensure that resources are made available to support their implementation.

INTERNET SAFETY TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

1. This is the final of the Internet Safety Task and Finish Review Group established by this Scrutiny committee to examine internet safety.

Information and Analysis

2. At the meeting of this Committee held on 9th November, 2009 Members received an urgent report on Internet Safety following the tragic events reported in the news recently which involved a young Darlington women and a social networking website.
3. John Steel, the Lead Improvement Officer, Learning Technologies Team attended Scrutiny to advise us on what is being done in our schools and colleges to keep our children and young people safe. The presentation highlighted the benefits of the internet but contrasted this with the risks that children and young people face when interacting with others on the internet. Members were particularly concerned to learn that no specific advise is contained within the national curriculum and that the Council relies on advice from other resources.
4. Resources currently relied upon included: Childnet have produced a DVD providing internet safety advice to parents and children and young people, which has been circulated to all Year 7 households in the borough. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) also publish a very useful website, catering to all ages www.thinkuknow.co.uk. There is also advice and support for children via Childline on Tel. 0800 1111 or visiting the NSPCC's website www.there4me.com.
5. In Darlington internet provision is accessed through a regional network funded through a consortium of local authorities, the Northern Grid. This internet provision provides the most stringent of filtering and security systems to safeguard, as far as possible, its users against accessing internet content that display: As part of its security policies, social networking sites such as 'MySpace', 'Facebook' Bebo, Twitter, etc. as well as 'Chatrooms' and 'instant messaging' sites, like MSN which have become so very popular with young people, are routinely blocked.
6. It was agreed at that meeting of Scrutiny for Members to commence additional work in the form of a Task and Finish Review Group in order to make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet regarding the provision of internet safety advice to all children, young people, parents and carers.
7. A meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group was held on Monday, 16th November, 2009 to which all Members of this Scrutiny Committee were invited to attend along with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Service and the notes of that meeting are attached (**Appendix 1**).

Conclusion

8. Members agreed that the emergence of the internet as potentially the most versatile aid to learning can not be disputed, however, the internet has evolved without proper control and for every 'legitimate' website there may be a hundred or more that prey on the vulnerable.
9. Members concluded that they were in no doubt that adequate safety measures and elaborate filtering security systems are in place in our schools and colleges but this does not necessarily extend to homes and young people have other access to the internet via their personal mobile phones which can be even harder to regulate.

Recommendations

10. That e-safety be part of the school curriculum and it be included in the work of schools within Darlington.
11. That continuous improvements be made to education on e-safety and reviewed appropriately.
12. That every child be made aware of a named person within their school or public internet access site (college, library, community centre etc) to whom behaviour believed to be unacceptable or frightening can be reported and that appropriate advice will be given. This information should be available as a reminder as each young person logs onto the computer (pop-up screen).
13. Appropriate message on e-safety to be distributed to every household (via a Council publication and/or website message) providing all residents with advice and information and a named contact officer at the Council with whom they may raise questions or concerns.
14. Parental workshops to be made available to all who care for children in our community, content of which would be based upon suggestions from parents/carers themselves. This could be gauged on the answers to a brief questionnaire in the Town Crier or other means of communication (with recommendation 13).
15. As a means of educating the wider community that varied text relating to e-safety 'pop up' at log on on all publicly provided computers in Darlington.
16. To hold a Safer Internet Day to coincide with European E-Safety Day held each year and this academic year held on 12th February (each year to involve all sectors of the community in its preparation (especially encouraging the involvement of young people and the Children's Forum and the most vulnerable in our Darlington community).
17. That work be undertaken to ensure that our Looked After and Fostered Children have the e-safety advice and supervision whilst out of the school environment that they may require, with appropriate pastoral care to reinforce this advice.
18. To call on all relevant parties within the Darlington community (including the Council, Children's Trust, Police, Community Partnerships, School Community etc) to establish an e-advisory committee where we can map the work that is currently done to deliver a safer internet and where we can respond to the e-safety needs of our citizens in a co-ordinated, efficient and effective way.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers

Report of the Director of Children's Services, Safeguarding Children and Young People When using the Internet 9th November, 2009.

Allison Carling: Extension 2291

Internet Safety Task and Finish Review Group

16th November, 2009

PRESENT – Councillors Armstrong, Chapman, Hughes, Davies and Curry. Mr. Egan

OFFICERS – Andrew Dunn, John Steel, Ruth Bernstein.

ALSO – Jeremy Musseell, ICT Manager, Darlington College.
Mike Shorten, Vice Principal Carmel College.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Burton, Francis and Long. D. Moyes and Canon Bamber.

Introduction

Following the report received at the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 9th November, 2009, it was agreed to hold a Task and Finish Review Group meeting to address some of the issues raised regarding internet safety and for the Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the provision of internet safety advice to all children, young people, parents and carers in Darlington.

Points Raised/Discussed

- Carmel College are delivering e-safety information to parents and carers employing materials provided by Orange and the Police as part of an evening event (second year this has been held) designed to help young people achieve and aspire. Carmel College is seen to be delivering best practice and would be willing to share their approach with other schools.
- There are numerous resources and available on e-safety on the internet and Orange have a free dvd which is available.
- There is a report going to the December Children's Services Joint Consultative Group to propose an e-safety policy for the Council and the introduction of a curriculum scheme of works which it is hoped all schools sign up to. Work is also ongoing to prepare a video aimed at young people to help them identify with the issues of internet safety and the dangers of 'grooming'.
- Jeremy advised the Members on the new safety measures that are in place at the Darlington College and the various software to monitor online behaviour to protect students. Staff at the College have been trained on how to monitor their own students.
- Ruth Bernstein gave an overview of community learning at the Library and the access restrictions for IT at the library. There are restricted access permissions dependant on age and every user has to sign up to an acceptable use policy.

- Ruth Bernstein also highlighted the importance of educating the vulnerable young people and the NEET.
- General discussion on the parents role in educating young people and also themselves to the dangers of internet safety. In schools and colleges there are filtering systems in place however these are not always in place in the home environment.
- The role of the parent/carer is key to the safety of young people and it is vital that information and advice is made available to parents. Ruth advised Members that she would be willing to offer informal e-safeguarding training for adults at the Library.
- General discussion around the dangers of ‘facebook’ and other social networking sites which are restricted to over 18’s, however, younger children do have access to these sites, and sometimes with parental permission.
- Internet access is not just via computers, most young people can access the internet via their mobile phones which have less control.
- There is a need for better policing of social networking sites.
- Councillor Hughes advised the Members of monies available through the European Commission to give advice on e-safety and the E-safety day which is planned for February, 2010 aimed at raising awareness. This may be an opportunity for the Council and its partners to provide an awareness raising event in Darlington.
- The Northern Echo is currently running a Safety Net Campaign.
- Reference was made to the Byron Report on internet safety.
- The group proposed that The Local Strategic Partnership be involved in any “Safety Day” agreed which could include input by the Darlington College.