



Derby City Council

Corporate Parenting Board
11 February 2014

Report of the Strategic Director for Children and
Young People

ITEM 8

Computer and Internet Access for Children in Care

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Children in care are able to access the internet wherever they are placed and it is the Council's role as corporate parent to ensure that they are protected. It is recognised that children in care are more vulnerable than other children and young people to risks that the internet and social media presents..
- 1.2 Partly as a result of improved participation and engagement, children in care have raised both formally and informally their concern that they are being disadvantaged in their access to the internet and social media sites. Work is currently underway jointly by the CYPD and ICT team to consult with a range of stakeholders about this and to find an agreeable solution.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the report and receive a further report in three months.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Stakeholders are currently being consulted to ascertain their views on how to achieve the correct balance between allowing children to enjoy the benefits of information technology and protecting them.
- 3.2 The ICT Department are currently considering how to replace the on-line protection software previously provided.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Children in care need access to information technology and the internet in order to enjoy the same educational and social benefits as their peers. Parents should take all necessary steps to protect their children when they are using the internet and children in care are more vulnerable than most to the risks

- 4.2 The Council ensures by a variety of means that children in care are able to use a computer and access the internet wherever they are placed. Arrangements for on-line protection are different in different settings. Children also use a variety of social networking and messaging media using mobile devices.
- 4.3 On-line protection previously provided through the schools IT network needs to be replaced and is, in any case, no longer needed in the majority of foster homes, where foster carers themselves are responsible both for providing access to IT and ensuring children's safety when they use it.
- 4.4 Some children in care have said that their access to the internet and social networking sites is too restricted and this has been a particular concern for the children in care council. Supporting and empowering young people to make their voices heard is a priority for the Council.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None at this stage.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Hazel Lymbery, Service Director, Specialist Services Glyn Peach, Head of ICT
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Rod Jones, Head of CIC Regulated Services 01332 643815 rod.jones@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Council provides a grant of up to £500 where necessary to provide a computer to a child in a foster home or living in their own accommodation.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council is required to promote each child's educational attainment and their personal and social development. It is also required to assess and manage any risks or threats to their safety and well-being.

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None arising from this report.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 The council is required to assess and manage any actual or potential risks that arise in children's placements.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None arising from this report.

Property and Asset Management

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 8.1 See 5.1.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 Extending access to information technology supports the Council's aspiration

“Working Together to Narrow the Gap”.