

<b>Report on</b>	Use of Meeting Rooms
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Liam Glavin
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Liam Glavin

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	For Council to consider allowing the use of meeting rooms in Council Leisure facilities by Health Trusts for meetings between Social Workers and their client for the purposes of child contact arrangements made under an order of a Court.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have requested permission to book a room at Greenvale Leisure Centre for Social Workers visits with clients for the purposes of child contact arrangements made under an order of a Court.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Officers have taken advice from the Policy and Equality Officer. The Trusts have no formal policy on where contact should be held other than it is a safe space. Trust guidelines suggest types of contact, appropriateness of locations and levels/frequency of contact. Any contact is usually as the result of a care order from the Courts. The Trust has a statutory responsibility to ensure that contact is carried out as directed by the care order. There can be an element of risk associated with supervised visits, however the social worker in charge has the ultimate responsibility for the outcome of the contact and what happens during it. It can be difficult for Trusts to get meeting space for supervised contact. Venues such as family centres, Barnardo's etc. can be used when available. However weekend contact can be difficult to facilitate.
3.2	Older children and very young children can prefer quiet private space rather than public areas hence the need for a private meeting room. Not all children are placed in the same Trust area as their parents/siblings etc. so Trusts may need to source meeting space outside of their own Trust area. It is also likely that Council facilities such as parks and play facilities are used on a non-booking basis for less formal contact sessions. Given that these meetings are discreet there's no way for Council to be aware of it.
3.3	Council's room hire policy states that 'controversial' events have to go through Full Council for approval. However given that the use of Council facilities in this

	<p>case is a booking by another statutory agency it probably wouldn't fall into this category. In relation to our safeguarding practices, Council contact social services with any concerns generally. Given that there are social workers involved in these contact sessions there shouldn't be any additional risks posed by hosting supervised visits.</p>
3.4	<p>Council's Health and Safety Manager has also advised that: "The understanding from reading The Children (NI) Order 1995 - Section 46 (extract attached) is that the Council would be expected to co-operate with Social Services requesting the use of Council meeting rooms/ facilities for the purposes of child contact arrangements made under an order of a Court, provided that the request is compatible with the Council's statutory duties or other duties and obligations and does not unduly prejudice the discharge of the functions of the Council."</p>
3.5	<p>As part of the booking process for rooms/ facilities it is important that the Council would have a record of a named Social Worker who will have supervisory responsibility for these meetings in Council facilities. It is therefore proposed that Trusts be allowed to book rooms in Council Leisure Facilities for use by Social Workers and their clients for the purposes of child contact arrangements made under an order of a Court subject to the named Social worker being the responsible person.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Financial: N/A</p> <p>Human: N/A</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>That Members consider allowing booking and the use of meeting rooms in Council Leisure facilities by Health Trusts for meetings between Social Workers and their clients for the purposes of child contact arrangements made under an order of a Court subject to the named Social worker being the responsible person.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	N/A