



**North Ayrshire  
Child Protection  
Committee**

**Staff Survey  
2015**

# Introduction

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is a strategic partnership involving North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, North Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, and the Voluntary Sector. It has strong links with other strategic partnerships with responsibility for public protection issues; namely. North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership, North Ayrshire Adult Protection Committee and North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee provides strategic leadership and direction for child protection across North Ayrshire, supporting all partners in working together effectively to protect children and young people. The Committee develops, implements and monitors a Joint Self Evaluation Strategy for child protection services with the key aim of continuous improvement. A critical part of this strategy is the involvement of stakeholders in evaluating services and in driving forward improvements. One way in which the Committee engages with stakeholders is via a biennial multi agency child protection staff survey. Findings from these surveys are carefully considered by North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and they help inform our ongoing improvement planning.

This is the report of the 2015 multi-agency child protection staff survey.

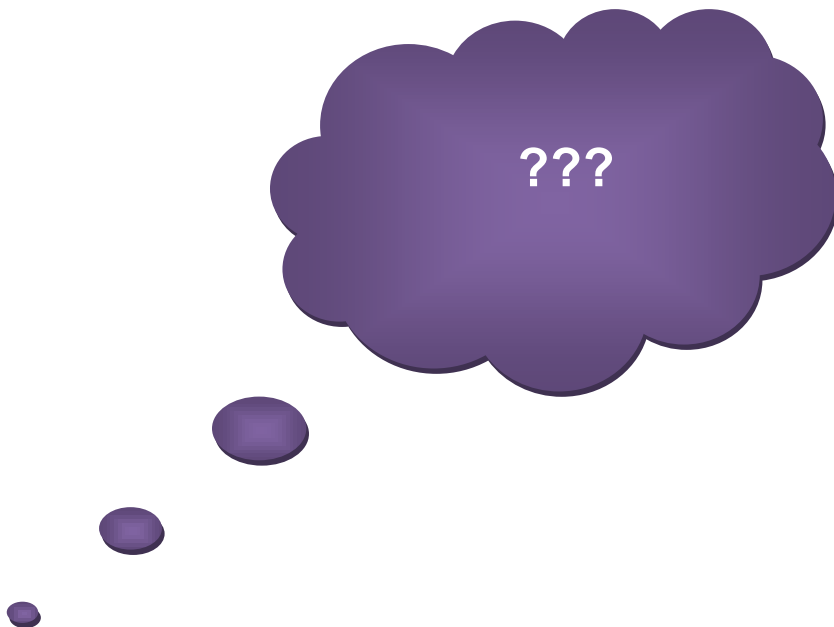


## What We Asked

Staff across all key agencies were asked to complete an online child protection survey which asked questions related to three priority areas: **information sharing, assessment of risk and staff support**.

Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statements below on a four point scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and invited to make comment in relation to how these areas could be improved.

1. **Services share information well**
2. **Services work well together to assess risk**
3. **The support and advice available to me, with regard to child protection, is effective**



## Who Responded?

Nearly 350 staff from social services, health, education, housing, police, and SCRA completed the survey, with a full range of comments made in relation to each of the questions.

Overall, fewer staff responded to this year's survey in comparison with the 2013 survey. Reduced return featured particularly from Health, Police and Social Services. Education had a slightly lower return than previously, however made up over 50% of the respondents. Housing provided a higher rate of response than previously.

It should be noted that the survey was not distributed to the third sector – this gap will be addressed through strengthening the link between North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and the Third Sector Interface.

Agency	2011		2013		2015	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Education	42.7%	88	50.8%	215	54.5%	189
Health	13.6%	28	14.7%	62	11.2%	39
Housing	31.6%	65	11.1%	47	23.6%	82
Police	0.0%	0	5.2%	22	1.7%	6
SCRA	0.5%	1	0.5%	2	0.3%	1
Social Services	11.2%	23	16.3%	69	8.4%	29
Voluntary Organisation	0.5%	1	0.5%	2	n/a	n/a
		206		423		347

How often are you involved in child protection at work?	2011		2013		2015	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	41.7%	86	46.8%	198	37.5%	130
Sometimes	41.3%	85	37.1%	157	37.8%	131
Rarely	17.0%	35	16.1%	68	24.8%	86
		206		423		

In terms of the frequency of involvement in child protection, proportions are similar to the 2011 survey, with an equal proportion of staff frequently or sometimes involved in child protection. A higher proportion of those rarely involved in child protection responded to this years survey.

# What You Told Us...

## ...about information sharing

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:

**SERVICES SHARE INFORMATION WELL?**

	2011		2013		2015	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	12.1%	25	13.5%	57	10.4%	36
Agree	67.5%	139	73.5%	311	74.4%	258
Disagree	19.9%	41	12.3%	52	14.1%	49
Strongly Disagree	0.5%	1	0.7%	3	1.2%	4
		206		423		347

- **85% of staff agree or strongly agree that services share information well – this compares to 79% in 2011 and 87% in 2013**

While the majority of staff are positive about information sharing, the majority reflected this continued to be an area for ongoing attention and improvement. Progress was generally recognised but it was also acknowledged that there was room for improvement.

Several respondents made comments about how information sharing could be improved.

Many staff made comments in relation to AYRshare. Most of these related to the desire to rollout AYRshare further and for all partners to use AYRshare effectively.

Implementation of AYRshare began following the last multi-agency child protection staff survey in 2013. The volume of comments about AYRshare is encouraging in terms of awareness and this highlights the need to continue to implement and further develop this shared information system.

Other comments in relation to information sharing included:

- Experience of delays in information sharing – a wide range of examples were provided and these included delays experienced from all key services: police, health, education and social services.
- Balance between confidentiality and sharing information – continuing experiences of some staff of differing views of what information can be shared and in what circumstances.
- Poor general communication – including not being notified of meeting cancellations and not receiving feedback following sharing concerns with others.

## ...about assessing risk

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:						
SERVICES WORK WELL TOGETHER TO ASSESS RISK?						
	2011		2013		2015	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	7.3%	15	10.9%	46	9.8%	34
Agree	72.3%	149	78.7%	333	75.5%	262
Disagree	20.4%	42	9.9%	42	13.5%	47
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0	0.5%	2	1.2%	4
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- **85% of staff agree or strongly agree that services work well together to assess risk – this compares to 79% in 2011 and 90% in 2013**

There is a strong correlation between staff's views on assessing risk and staff's views on information sharing as the practice link between the two is keenly recognised. Staff are absolutely clear that effective information sharing is critical to effective assessment of risk.

In terms of reflecting on how to improve the assessment of risk, the comments made about improved communication and information sharing were echoed.

In addition, four broad themes emerged from the other comments in relation to assessing risk:

- **Drift/delay in assessing risk** – a sense of frustration at times in terms of lack of action or decision-making
- **A desire to convene face to face meetings to assess risk as opposed to undertaking this remotely** – staff value the range of expertise when multi-agency meetings are convened and feel these settings facilitate better assessment and analysis
- **Not feeling a true part of multi-agency assessment** – some services feel risk assessment is predominantly owned by police and social services rather than being fully multi-agency
- **Differences in thresholds** – continuing experiences of different thresholds for risk in terms of response takes

## ...about support and advice

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:

**THE SUPPORT AND ADVICE AVAILABLE TO ME IN RELATION TO CHILD PROTECTION IS EFFECTIVE?**

	2011		2013		2015	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	33.5%	69	36.4%	154	26.8%	93
Agree	60.2%	124	60%	254	69.7%	242
Disagree	6.3%	13	2.8%	12	2.6%	9
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0	0.7%	3	0.9%	3
		206		423		

- **96% of staff agree or strongly agree that the support and advice available to them in relation to child protection is effective. This compares to 93% in 2011 and 96% in 2013**

Most of the comments made in this part of the survey were very positive, staff generally knew where and how to seek guidance and access training and were satisfied with what was available.

One message we did receive from these comments was a request to bring back Child Protection Practitioner Forums which highlighted learning from Significant Case Reviews.

## What Else You Told Us...

In addition to the many comments made in relation to **inter-agency** working in terms of information-sharing and assessing risk to protect children and young people, many staff made comments in respect of their own agency's role in these areas.

These comments will be shared with the relevant senior managers for each agency in order for appropriate **single agency** consideration to be given to these comments.

## Key Messages

We have looked at all comments and summarised these in key messages:

1. Effective working relationships continue to be highly valued and facilitate improved information sharing and assessment of risk.
2. Staff should continue to invest in these working relationships, but regardless, must maintain high levels of professional conduct in relation to working together to protect children and young people.
3. Where possible, colleagues across different services should meet face to face to discuss children with whom they are working.
4. Efforts must continue to be made to fully involve all services in assessing, planning and reviewing children for whom concerns exist.
5. All staff should make more effort to avoid drift and delay in responding to contact from other professionals.
6. All staff must continue to access available training, within their own agency, and via multi-agency partnerships such as North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee, North Ayrshire GIRFEC, and North Ayrshire Adult Protection Committee.
7. Staff must utilise available guidance, systems and tools to support information sharing and assessment. This particularly includes AYRshare and the National Risk Framework.
8. Don't underestimate the importance of communication basics – using plain and simple language, communicating changes quickly and using the most direct form of communication available.
9. Share responsibility for maintaining an ongoing level of communication across the “team around the child”.
10. Keep the focus on the child at all times.

## What We Will Do...

- We will bring back Child Protection Practitioner Forums.
- We will continue to support the implementation of AYRshare and the National Risk Framework.
- We will continue to support services in working together to protect children and young people.
- We will share your comments with Senior Managers across relevant services in order that any single agency action can be taken.

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*Thanks to all staff who responded to our 2015 Multi Agency Child Protection Staff Survey.*