



North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

Understanding Child Protection

Self-Learning Pack 2013

Promoting Good Practice in Child Protection



Care Protection Commitment to North Ayrshire's Children
www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info

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Introduction

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee offers this pack, which has been revised to reflect the changes in practice from the NEW National Guidance for Child protection in Scotland 2010, as a learning tool to ensure those involved in the protection of children and young people whether directly or indirectly, including those working in adult services, have as a minimum, a foundation knowledge of child protection. This popular **Self-learning Pack – Understanding Child Protection** forms a key part of our training materials and offers essential information on child protection issues for those who may not need to attend a training event, only require foundation level information, or are waiting to start their training with us. The pack includes the changes brought about in practice by the NEW National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, launched December 2010.

It should always be treated as **FIRST STEP** information for those with an interest in this area and does not replace the need to take the further learning steps you may need. Professionals, volunteers and members of local community groups can access our full Training Programme and find out how to apply for a place from our wide range of other courses by visiting the Training section of our website. **Level 1 – Child Protection Awareness** is recommended as the next step after completion of this pack. Visit us at www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info

What's involved in completing this?

The materials are designed to enable you to recognise a child protection situation and understand your role in ensuring the continued protection of children and young people in North Ayrshire.

Throughout the pack, activities are provided which are intended to offer an opportunity for practitioners / volunteers and their managers / group leaders to reflect on the learning achieved and identify future learning needs. On completion, practitioners will have sufficient foundation knowledge in child protection to get started, and will be well placed to derive maximum opportunity from CPC training and development opportunities available.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee would wish to acknowledge the support of Fife CPC & Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee who are responsible for much of the content of the pack.

Thank you and good luck !

Child Protection Learning & Development Co-ordinator, NACPC - 01294 324977

Aims and Learning Outcomes

This Pack is suitable as a first step for

Those working within North Ayrshire including Social Services, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Strathclyde Police, Educational Services, Housing Services, Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups and all other organisations with a role in the protection of children and young people. This includes those working in Adult Services.

And will provide:

- An introduction to child protection
- An opportunity to explore your role in the protection of children and young people.

On completion you will have:

- Examined child abuse in the context of your work
- Increased your knowledge about how to recognise and respond to child protection issues
- Explored the child protection process in North Ayrshire
- An awareness of your own agency child protection procedures
- A foundation knowledge of child protection and be aware of further training opportunities
- Have identified your own further learning needs in child protection

On completion of the pack, you will have located and read:

- North Ayrshire Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures and Understanding when it is Child Protection Booklet / Information for Service providers Booklet.
- Your own agency child protection procedures and relevant documentation used for recording and referring cases where there is concern that a child or young person may have been harmed or may be at risk of harm.

EXERCISE 1

Please take time to complete

**Your local Social Work Reception Services Office /
Children & Families Team**

Telephone No: _____

**Strathclyde Police contact (Ayrshire Public Protection
Unit)**

Telephone No: _____

**Line Manager/Designated Child
Protection Co-ordinator**

Name: _____

Telephone No: _____

Child Protection Advisor (Health)

Name: _____

Telephone No: _____

Location of own agency Child Protection Procedures:

**Location of North Ayrshire Child Protection Inter-Agency
Procedures:**

**North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee website
address:**

Out of hours contact:

Name: _____

Telephone No: _____

N.B. Refer to Appendix 2

What is Child Protection?

“Child Protection” means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a *likelihood* or *risk* of significant harm from abuse or neglect. Equally, in instances where a child may have been abused or neglected but the risk of future abuse has not been identified, the child and their family may require support and recovery services but not a Child Protection Plan. In such cases, an investigation may still be necessary to determine whether a criminal investigation is needed. There are circumstances where, although abuse has taken place, formal child protection procedures are not required. Always discuss your concerns. Key services will make the appropriate decision based on information received.

Identifying Child Abuse

In order to protect children and young people from abuse, all those working around children and their families should have some understanding of child protection issues and be confident in the recognition of and response to child abuse.

From 2011, children will no longer be registered under a specific category of abuse in Scotland, instead the definitions below will form part of a whole host of Indicators of concern and will assist us identify when child abuse has / or is likely to occur.

- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Neglect**

The above definitions are described in some detail below and you should take time to read these, and to familiarise yourself with signs that may concern you. It is also important to consider other indicators of risk such as Parental Drug & Alcohol Misuse, Domestic Abuse, Disability, Challenging Families, Mental Health Problems, Fabricated or Induced Illness, and any other concerns, in any assessment.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has **severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development**. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some levels of emotional abuse are present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed the child consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware what is happening. The activities may include physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from "non-organic failure to thrive" where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life threatening within a relatively short period of time.

Child Abuse: Recognition and Response

If you have any concern about a child or young person, it is important that you share this information with the relevant people. **Appendix 1** provides a useful summary of the roles and responsibilities of each agency in the protection of children and young people.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may occur from an actual attack to a child or an adult's deliberate failure to protect them from injury or suffering. Accompanied by neglect, physical abuse is the most common form of maltreatment of children and is the most common cause of child death from abuse.

- A child may be hit, punched, kicked or bitten
- Shaking a child is extremely dangerous and potentially fatal, babies are particularly at risk
- A child may be burned or deliberately scalded
- A child may be squeezed with violence or attempted suffocation
- Deliberate poisoning (household substances, alcohol, drugs or medicines)
- Shut in cupboards / Confined in small places
- Tied or strapped down

Signs that should concern you:

- Unexplained Injuries (bruising, bruised eyes, fractured or broken bones, burn or bite marks)
- Perplexing illnesses
- Continuous "accidents"
- An unlikely (or no) explanation for an injury
- A continual pattern of accidents or injuries
- A child may be reluctant to change for physical activities at school etc.

Behavioural indicators Include:

- A child who is very reluctant to return home
- A child who appears withdrawn / in pain or discomfort
- A child who is resistant to going home with one family member
- Self harm, self destructiveness
- Persistent aggression and violent play

Emotional Abuse

All children and young people who are abused are affected emotionally and all types of child abuse are harmful. Emotional abuse is a persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

- Children may be verbally abused – told they are stupid, useless, ugly or should never have been born
- Subjected to continuous criticism or faced with unrealistically high expectations
- Their interests and achievements may be ridiculed or compared unfavourably
- Affection given by parents is dependant on the child's behaviour or achievements
- Children may be overprotected to an unrealistic extent
- Communication with the child may be distorted so that the adult uses his/her maturity inappropriately to make the child feel guilty

- Children may have their toys withdrawn, denied or sold by parents/carers as a punishment
- Children may be emotionally damaged by experiences of domestic abuse

Signs that should concern you about a child or young person:

- Child is developmentally delayed
- Child indicates through the use of words and body language that they think they are worthless, stupid or unattractive
- Children expect blame and punishment (or blame themselves)
- Children may harm themselves
- Children may find it difficult to make friends and see themselves as not being likeable
- Children may be mistrusting of adults
- Low self esteem
- Sudden speech and language difficulties
- Significant decline in concentration
- Head banging or rocking
- Compulsive stealing (from parents/carers/teachers)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Running away
- Indiscriminate friendliness

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. Often difficult to assess in practice, some recent child death inquiry reports have highlighted the consequences of neglect on children and this, alongside an apparent increase in neglected children has brought about a renewed focus on neglect.

- Inadequate food – leading to children and young people being malnourished
- Inadequate clothing (for time of year; shoes too tight; ill fitting clothing; dirty and unwashed clothing)
- Neglect of children's basic physical needs (dirty, smelly, unkempt)
- Leaving young children unattended.

Signs that should concern you:

- Child / young person may be too thin
- Child / young person may be tired and lethargic
- Child / young person may arrive at your workplace desperate for food/constantly hungry, eating large amounts
- Child / young person may be regularly dressed inappropriately for the weather
- Clothes may be dirty, smelly or soiled
- Parents may not bring the child on a regular basis
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance at school
- Child / young person may have untreated medical conditions or infections
- Low self esteem
- Ask: are all the children in the family neglected or is it only one child/ young person?

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed the child consented or assented. It can include:

- Penetrative or non-penetrative acts
- Sexual fondling
- Masturbation
- Sexual Exhibitionism
- Non contact activities, such as watching pornographic material
- Pornographic Images
- Grooming (including grooming via the internet)

Signs that should concern you:

As with any kind of child abuse, there is no definite list of signs of sexual abuse. The following are not in themselves absolute evidence of sexual abuse. Concerns must be placed within an understanding of the normal range of children's development:

- Highly sexualised behaviour, rather than affectionate physical contact
- Abused children may express their worries and experiences through play
- Sexually explicit paintings or drawings
- Sexual knowledge or curiosity (unlikely for their age)
- Children can tell you unhappy secrets or games that they are uneasy about
- Regression in development
- Self harm
- A child not wishing to go with a certain adult or be looked after by a certain person (i.e. Babysitter)

Physical Signs:

- Pain, itching or redness in the genital or anal area
- Bruising, bleeding or soreness in any orifice

A note about Child Sex Offenders

- Abusers may be extremely frightening and threaten to hurt the child or someone they care about
- Abusers may claim that nobody will believe the child if they tell (and may threaten the child with this)
- Some abusers will attempt to bribe children with presents, treats or money
- Some abusers work to convince children that what they are doing is a normal and acceptable activity within the family or between friends
- Abusers come from all classes, professions, racial and religious backgrounds and can be anyone – family members, neighbours, friends, doctors, community group helpers, even professional colleagues
- Most known abusers are men, but some women sexually abuse their own or other children
- Young people also abuse children. About one third of reported cases involve young people

What is Significant Harm in Child Protection?

Child Protection is closely linked to “significant harm”. It is a complex matter and subject to professional judgement based on multi-agency assessment of the circumstances of the child and their family. Where there are concerns about harm, abuse or neglect, these must be shared with the relevant agencies so that they can decide together whether the harm is, or is likely to be, significant.

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time. It is essential that when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm that the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority. Key professionals will take a number of things into account when exercising their professional judgement. There are no absolute criteria for judging what constitutes significant harm, talking to other agencies and sharing / gathering information will be a priority.

Information Sharing & Child Protection

Sharing appropriate information is an essential component of child protection. To secure the best outcomes for children, practitioners need to understand when it is appropriate to seek or share information. These general principles should apply:

- The safety, welfare and well-being of a child are of central importance when making decisions to lawfully share information with or about them.
- Children have a right to express their views and have them taken into account when decisions are made about what should happen to them.
- The reasons why information needs to be shared and particular actions taken should be communicated openly and honestly with children and, where appropriate, their families.
- In general, information will normally only be shared with the consent of the child (depending on age and maturity). However, where there are concerns that seeking consent would increase the risk to the child or others, or prejudice any subsequent investigation information may need to be shared **without consent**.
- At all times, information should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know.
- When information is shared, a record should be made of when it was shared, with whom, for what purpose, in what form and whether it was disclosed with or without informed consent.

The Legal Position

Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) guarantees respect for a person's private and family life, his home and his correspondence. Disclosure of information would breach that right unless it is in accordance with the law, or necessary for the protection of an individual, or is in the public interest.

Disclosure of personal information is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Personal data covers both facts and opinions about a living individual, which might identify that person. Purpose. This prevents unauthorised disclosure of a wide range of information.

What to say to families when sharing information without consent

When concerns about children's safety or welfare require a professional or agency to share confidential information without the person's consent, they should tell the person that they intend to do so, unless this may place the child, or others, at greater risk of harm. They should also tell them what information and to whom that information will be disclosed. Each agency should make clear to people using their service that the welfare and protection of children is the most important consideration when deciding whether or not to share information with others. No agency can guarantee absolute confidentiality as both statute and common law accept that information may be shared in some circumstances.

The full document *Information Sharing about Children at Risk – A Guide to Good Practice* (2003) is available in PDF format from the Scottish Government website: www.scotland.gov.uk



EXERCISE 2

My Agency child protection procedures are located:

I have read the child protection procedures in my workplace setting and / or have accessed relevant documents from the North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Website.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

It is important that anyone working with children and young people refers to their own agency child protection procedures (*or the information provided on our website*) whenever there is a concern that a child or young person has been harmed or may be at risk of being harmed.

If I am concerned or worried about a child or young person, I should be aware of whom I need to talk to and how to make a referral

The designated child protection person in my organisation is:

Their contact details are:

I should also remember to:

- Record the actions you have taken as soon as practicable, signed and dated preferably within 24 hours.
- Follow a verbal referral with a written referral within 24 hours, to the relevant Social Services Team.
- Discuss with my line manager / designated child protection person

Dealing with a Child Protection Concern

It is important that practitioners recognise that children and young people are harmed or are at risk of harm from those people who are supposed to care for them. If you are concerned about a child but unsure whether they are being abused, simply discuss your concerns with the identified child protection person in your organisation.

If a child / young person tells you someone may have abused them;

DO

Stay Calm
Listen to the Child
Keep questions to a minimum
Reassure Child
Record what the child has said in their own words

DON'T

Ask too many questions
Make false promises
Express shock or anger
Delay in passing on your concerns

NEVER

Carry out an investigation into an allegation this is **NOT** your role.

Making a Referral

Once you have discussed your concerns with the designated child protection person in your organisation may decide to pass on your concerns to Social Services or the Police.

You will require share the following information:

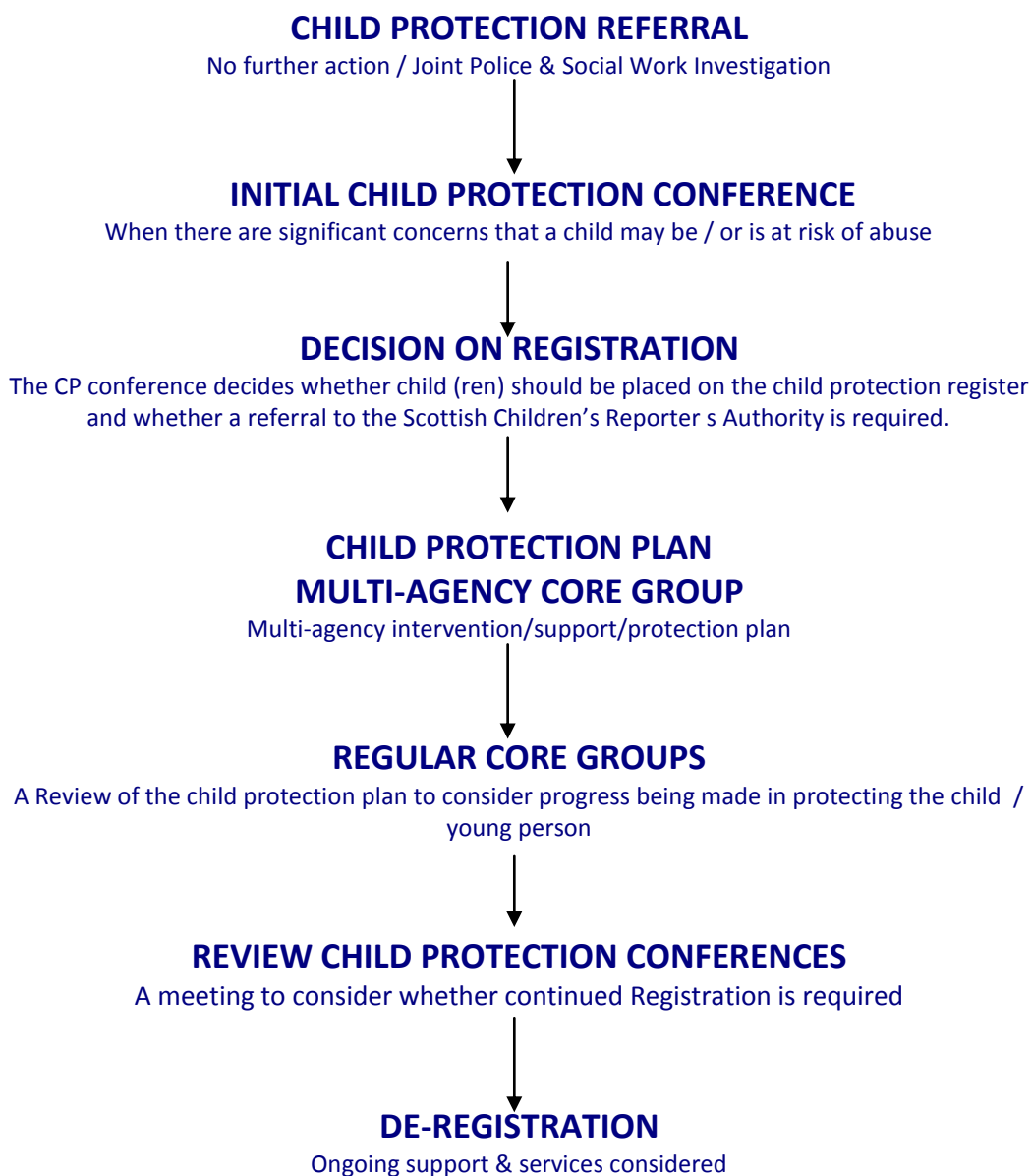
- Child's name, address and date of birth
- Parent's address and current whereabouts
- Where the child is and their views where known
- Your details
- Your involvement with the child
- What are your concerns
- Details of alleged abuse
- Whether there are any other children in the household
- Whether the parents / carers are aware of your concerns
-

REMEMBER

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS REFER TO YOUR CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES!

The Child Protection Process

- A Quick Guide -



N.B. Following a referral and an initial assessment, there will be a decision made about whether the Child Protection Process will proceed or not.

The Child Protection Process explained...

Child Protection Conference

A Child Protection Conference is a multi-agency meeting where information relevant to concerns about abuse, or risk of abuse, is shared and considered, and decisions are made regarding the future protection of children. The roles and tasks of key agency personnel are clarified at a Child Protection Case Conference. A Child Protection Case Conference will be arranged, where it appears there may be risks to child(ren) within a household and there is a need to share and assess information and if it is felt that a child or young person would benefit from an inter-agency **Child Protection Plan** that addresses the risk of significant harm.

Child Protection Plan

When the conference decides to place a child's name on the **Child Protection Register**, a plan must be agreed by the conference to reduce risk to the child and provide support to the family. This multi-agency plan is referred to as the Child Protection Plan.

Child Protection Register

The Child Protection Register is the system in place for alerting professionals that there is sufficient concern about a child or young person to warrant an inter-agency **Child Protection Plan**. The local authority Social Work Service are responsible for maintaining a Register of all children who are the subject of an inter-agency Child Protection Plan, which provides a point of enquiry for professionals who are concerned about a child's well-being or safety. The multi-agency **Child Protection Conference** takes the decision of whether or not to place a child's name on the Child Protection Register.

A child's name will remain on the Child Protection Register until such times as the risk to the child or young person is significantly reduced. After the initial Child Protection Conference regular reviews will take place as required until such times as the child is removed from the Register.

Core Group

Core Groups provide an important mechanism to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection of a child. A Core Group is set up in all cases where a decision has been reached to place a child on the Child Protection Register. The primary purpose of the group is the implementation of the **Child Protection Plan**.

The purpose of the Core Group is to ensure that an identified multi-agency group of professionals working alongside the family, finely tune the Child Protection Plan, ensuring that the agreed tasks are being carried out, and to continuously review the risk to the child or young person.

Exercise 4

Continued Professional Development

You should now have read and completed the exercises within this pack.

Along with your line manager or person with responsibility for child protection within your organisation, please complete the following.

I have had the opportunity to read this pack and its appendices.

Signed

Date

I have had the opportunity to discuss the implications of this with my line manager or person with child protection responsibility.

Signed

Date

We have agreed what my future learning needs in child protection are and these will be met by:

Congratulations - Please now print your certificate!

Self – Learning Certificate

Understanding Child Protection

This is to certify that _____ (name)

has visited North Ayrshire Child Committee Website and completed the above named self –learning pack as a first step to learning about Child Protection in North Ayrshire.

Signed by _____ (group leader / line manager)

Date _____

*Caren McLean, B.A. DipSW, CCPS, PT
Child Protection Learning & Development Co-ordinator
North Ayrshire Child Protection Development Team*

NOTE TO THOSE READING CERTIFICATE:

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee offers this certificate as part of a **Self-learning Pack – Understanding Child Protection that** assists people learn about child protection issues. It is designed for those who may not need to attend a training session, or only require foundation level information, or are waiting to start their training with us.

It should always be treated as **FIRST STEP** information for those with an interest in this area.

www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info

Appendix I

Roles and Responsibilities of Agencies involved in Child Protection

All agencies working with children and young people have a shared responsibility for protecting children and young people and safeguarding their welfare. Local authorities have a specific legal duty in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in need in their area. This welfare responsibility is carried out by the local authority department with responsibility for social services. Those bodies responsible for education, health, the police and other agencies with a role in providing children's services also have significant responsibilities for the protection of children and young people. *The NEW National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010* provides guidance on how agencies and professionals should work together to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect, and to safeguard and promote their welfare. The duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in need falls upon the local authority as a whole and embraces social work services, education, housing and any other relevant services required to safeguard and promote the welfare of such children and young people.

The roles and responsibilities of agencies in touch with parents and children to promote children's welfare and protection are set out in national guidance on inter-agency co-operation in child protection, and on implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Agencies working with vulnerable families either directly or indirectly including Adult Services, should be familiar with this guidance.

It's everyone's job to play their part in gathering and sharing of information and to take responsibility for the welfare and safety of vulnerable children. However, the danger of it being everyone's responsibility is that it may in practice become no one's. It is therefore important to identify roles and responsibilities of agencies and individuals that are implicit and explicit in these protocols.

Professionals must always consider these key points

- Children and young people's welfare and safety must be the paramount consideration when decisions are made about them
- Children and young people have the right to safety, stability and security of care
- Children and young people have a right to express their views and for their views to be taken into account when decisions are made about them
- Children and young people have a right to express concerns in confidence in so far as their safety and that of others is not compromised
- Sexual exploitation of children through prostitution is abuse.
- Children and young people cannot consent to their own abuse and exploitation
- Children and young people have the right to be protected from abuse and exploitation.
- Agencies should work in partnership with children and young people

- Agencies should work in partnership with parents/carers
- Agencies should work in collaboration to protect and support children and young people

It is important to recognise the responsibilities of those with parental duties for children and young people including local authorities where they are acting in *loco parentis*

Social Services

Social Services are committed to the principle of promoting a child's right to be brought up in a safe and loving environment by their family. The welfare and safety of the child, however, is the paramount consideration. Social Services will always take seriously any information received regarding the welfare of a child. Action taken will be informed and sympathetic, and in the best interests of the child. In all aspects of child protection the Social Work Service is committed to working closely with other agencies.

Police

The Ayrshire Public Protection Unit within Strathclyde Police 'U' Division has a role to work jointly with key agencies to ensure that all investigations are carried out in a sensitive, sympathetic and child centred manner. A co-ordinated response will be based on consultation and information sharing, and, where necessary, will involve joint interviews by a Police Officer and a Social Worker as part of a multi-agency assessment.

In the majority of cases of child abuse, a criminal offence may have been committed. The Police have a statutory duty to investigate the circumstances and, where evidence of a crime exists, to report the facts to the Procurator Fiscal. Police involvement does not automatically result in an alleged offender being prosecuted. The Police have a duty to pass on information to the Children's Reporter (SCRA) regarding children and young people who are found to be vulnerable, whether or not there are grounds for criminal prosecution.

Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)

Under Section 56 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Children's Reporter is required to investigate referrals received. In child abuse cases, most referrals are received from the Social Services or the Police, but may originate from other sources, e.g. Schools, Health staff and members of the public. On receipt of a referral, the Children's Reporter will investigate the facts to establish whether these are sufficient to frame grounds of referral for consideration by a Children's Hearing. This involves requesting reports on incidents and/or taking statements from witnesses in order to gather evidence on the abuse, whether physical (involving an injury or neglect), sexual or emotional. Witnesses, including for example, doctors and health visitors, may be required to give evidence relating to the child abuse.

Where there is sufficient evidence, the Children's Reporter will decide whether compulsory measures of supervision are required and a Hearing is necessary, or whether voluntary supervision, a warning or advice is required.

Education

Educational Services has a role within child protection to identify children and young people who may be victims of abuse. In this role school staff need to be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse. They should observe carefully the behaviour and demeanour of children and young people and, when approached, take time to listen. Any concern or suspicions the teacher might have, no matter how trivial they may seem at the time, should be recorded on their child protection referral form, in consultation with the identified Child Protection Co-ordinator for the school. Where a specific concern is noted as a child protection issue the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator, using their own agencies child protection procedures, will take the appropriate action, e.g. contact with the Social Work Service or Police.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran

NHS Ayrshire & Arran are committed to promoting and protecting the health and welfare of all children and young people in North Ayrshire. Where a specific child protection concern is noted staff will, using their own agencies child protection procedures, contact the designated Child Protection Advisor and will then take the appropriate action, e.g. contact with the Social Services or Police.

Housing

North Ayrshire Council's Housing Services have a responsibility to house children and young people. Housing applicants with children and young people may be given priority because of their potential vulnerability, and will be given priority when fleeing domestic violence. Other priorities include young people over the age of 16 for whom the Council has a duty of care and who may need accommodation and support to maintain their tenancy.

Housing staff therefore have a clear responsibility in relation to child protection and should be familiar both with these guidelines and their own child protection procedures for reporting concerns when these arise.

Community Groups

All Community groups staff and volunteers who are employed in a child care position provide a wide range of services and therefore have regular direct contact with children and young people of all ages up to 18 years. Staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting the interests and well being of children and young people with whom they work. Staff will take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm and abuse, and will respect their rights at all times.

All community groups have a responsibility to protect children from harm or abuse and will refer to their own procedures when dealing with concern or may refer to the document "***Protecting Children in Community Groups*** " available from the North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee website.

Voluntary Organisations

The voluntary sector in North Ayrshire plays an important role in supporting children and young people and families.

In the interests of protecting children and young people, each voluntary organisation will have a clear Child Protection Policy detailing its procedures. If an organisation

has a concern in relation to the safety or well-being of a child they will always contact social services to share their concern.

Local Communities

The community as a whole has responsibility for the well being of children and young. Members of the public should remain alert to circumstances in which children and young people may be harmed. Individuals can assist the statutory agencies by bringing cases to their attention. Relatives, friends and neighbours of children and young are particularly well placed to do so, but they must know what to do if they are concerned.

Because of the difficult and sensitive nature of the situation, people must be confident that any information they provide will be treated in a sensitive way and used only to protect the interest of the child. They should know that early action on their part is often the best way of helping a family stay together as well as protecting the child.

Contact numbers for those with a concern are listed in **Appendix 2**

Appendix 2

Important Contacts and Telephone Numbers

Social Services – Reception Services	Kilbirnie	01505 684551
	Irvine	01294 324800
	Saltcoats	01294 605261
	Arran	01770 600742
Strathclyde Police – Ayrshire Public Protection Unit		01563 505092
Scottish Children’s Reporter’s Administration		01294 278151
Child Protection Advisor (Health)		01294 322028
ChildLine		0800 1111
ParentLine		0808 800 2222
Child Protection Helpline		0800 022 3222
North Ayrshire Women’s Aid		01294 602424
Out of Hours Social Work		0800 328 7758
North Ayrshire Child Protection Development Team	For website and CP training information only	01294 324738



www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info