



Staff Survey 2013



Introduction

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is a strategic partnership involving North Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, the Children's Panel 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 2013 multi agency child protection staff survey.

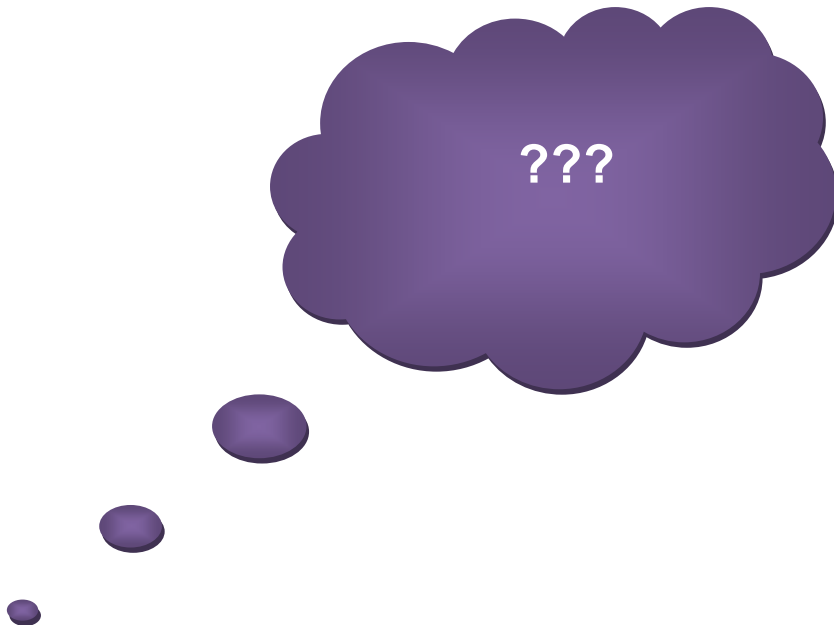


What We Asked

Staff across all key agencies were asked to complete a 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?

Over 400 staff from social services, health, education, housing, police, SCRA and voluntary organisations completed the survey, with a full range of comments made in relation to each of the questions.

The response rate for the 2013 survey was **more than double** that for the 2011 survey, with an **improved proportion** of agencies responding.

There was a slight **increase** in the proportion of respondents who identified themselves as being **frequently involved** in child protection work.

Q1: Please indicate your agency:	2011		2013	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Education	42.7%	88	50.8%	215
Health	13.6%	28	14.7%	62
Housing	31.6%	65	11.1%	47
Police	0.0%	0	5.2%	22
SCRA	0.5%	1	0.5%	2
Social Services	11.2%	23	16.3%	69
Voluntary Organisation	0.5%	1	0.5%	2
Other	0%	0	0%	0
		206		423

Q2: How often are you involved in child protection at work?	2011		2013	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	41.7%	86	46.8%	198
Sometimes	41.3%	85	37.1%	157
Rarely	17.0%	35	16.1%	68
		206		423

What You Told Us

Q3: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:

SERVICES SHARE INFORMATION WELL?

	2011		2013	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	12.1%	25	13.5%	57
Agree	67.5%	139	73.5%	311
Disagree	19.9%	41	12.3%	52
Strongly Disagree	0.5%	1	0.7%	3
How could this be improved?		65 comments		117 comments
		206		423

- ✓ *There has been a 9% increase in respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that services share information well.*

Q4: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:

SERVICES WORK WELL TOGETHER TO ASSESS RISK?

	2011		2013	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	7.3%	15	10.9%	46
Agree	72.3%	149	78.7%	333
Disagree	20.4%	42	9.9%	42
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0	0.5%	2
How could this be improved?		51 comments		59 comments
		206		423

- ✓ *There has been a 12% increase in respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that services work well together to assess risk.*

Q5: 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	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	33.5%	69	36.4%	154
Agree	60.2%	124	60%	254
Disagree	6.3%	13	2.8%	12
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0	0.7%	3
How could this be improved?		26 comments		32 comments
		206		423

- ✓ ***There has been a 3% increase in respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the support and advice available to them in relation to child protection is effective.***

In addition to the specific responses above, hundreds of additional comments were made by those who responded, many of a similar nature. We have summarised these under headings that emerged as common themes and noted some key messages.

Key Themes

1. Working Relationships

⇒ What you told us

You told us how much you valued positive working relationships with professionals from other agencies and how the quality of working relationships directly impacted on how well services shared information and worked well together to improve outcomes for families.

You expressed appreciation for colleagues who used professional judgement to share information in addition to formal information sharing protocols.

Some commented on the need to build better working relationships – suggestions here were about clarity of outcomes to be achieved and how these would be achieved; encouraging all involved with the family to focus on the shared priority of working for the benefit of the child and generally having more frequent contact and communication between all involved with a family.

⇐ What we will do

We will continue to encourage the strengthening of working relationships by:

- Providing opportunities for staff to network outwith case specific situations
- Promoting best practice in positive working relationships at every opportunity
- Encouraging inter professional respect by raising awareness of roles and responsibilities of all services and how these contribute to improving outcomes for children and families

2. Multi Agency Meetings

⇒ What you told us

You told us how much you recognised the value of multi agency meetings to share information, discuss concerns and plan intervention.

Some expressed frustration at lack of attendance at these meetings or about those in attendance who did not share information fully in the presence of parents/carers. You told us you did not find it helpful when other professionals opinions were vague and non committal

However, the majority of respondents who made comments about meetings indicated these meetings were invaluable and directly supported improved information sharing, assessment of risk and, in turn, improved outcomes for children and families. No one asked for fewer meetings.

⇐ What we will do

We will introduce a process whereby all children who are removed from North Ayrshire Child Protection Register are subject to a multi agency meeting three months post deregistration to share information and plan any further intervention.

3. Information sharing

⇒ What you told us

Proactive information sharing was commented upon very positively. While you recognised there were still anxieties at times, in relation to what information could be shared, you felt there were benefits to sharing information about children at a “lower level” to help identify earliest opportunities for intervention.

It situations where information was only shared in response to a particular concern, frustrations about this were expressed by both parties. For those who were making the request for information and then were advised concerns already existed about a child, there was a sense of frustration that these concerns were not shared earlier. For those who received a request for information, there was frustration that this could feel like “fishing” if full information was not provided and they were left unclear as to what information was already known.

For two agencies in particular – police and education – comments emerged about improving internal communication and information relevant to child protection. Community police and teachers across the school community would welcome more information from their managers and those more directly involved in child protection. Both education staff and social services staff felt that information sharing between their two services could be improved. Some staff expressly identified a desire for improved working relationships and information sharing from GP’s and CAMHS.

← **What we will do**

We will make sure information sharing guidance is easily accessible on our website and that the findings of this survey inform our Information Sharing & Confidentiality course.

4. Assessing and managing risk

⇒ **What you told us**

You told us that there can be different views on levels of risk and plans to address risk. You told us of your experience of different perceptions from different agencies of the same information or event and how important it was to have the opportunity to fully explore these differences.

There were some comments specifically in relation to unborn children. These included ensuring all reports are present in mum’s notes and having clear plans in place that encompass all foreseeable eventualities so there is no ambiguity

You were very clear that assessments of risk and need should involve all services involved with a family

You asked for a common assessment framework to aid shared understanding of risk and for more learning and development opportunities in this area

← **What we will do**

We will rollout the new National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People across education, health and social work staff. We will raise awareness of the National Risk Framework and we will ensure user friendly materials from this Framework are easily accessible on our website.

5. IT

⇒ **What you told us**

A number of comments were made about the necessity for a shared electronic information system. Similar comments were made in the 2011 survey. Increased access to CareFirst was noted to have had positive results and some staff were aware of, and optimistic about, the roll out of AYRshare.

← **What we will do**

We will support the rollout of AYRshare across services. The implementation plan is being led by the GIRFEC Manager and we will ensure the findings from this survey inform this plan.

6. Chronologies

⇒ What you told us

There were some comments expressing the need to improve chronology practice across North Ayrshire. This included; improved understanding of what constituted a “significant event”; improved detail of information within the chronology; and improved system for sharing chronologies.

⇐ What we will do

We have revised our Chronologies training and made it more accessible to staff. As part of our rollout of the National Risk Framework, we will introduce quality assurance processes to support staff in improving practice in this area.

7. Learning, Development and Support

⇒ What you told us

Many positive comments were made about the range of learning and development opportunities made available by North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and by individual partners. Suggestions for improvement included: more practical application of theory; presentations from experienced professionals in different jobs; and greater reach of audience to include those in roles where there was contact with children on a different basis such as catering staff or workmen attending houses.

Some of you recognised the need to ensure all those working with families are aware of the indicators of disguised compliance

Staff commented positively on existing support mechanisms such as school child protection coordinators meetings, child protection practitioner forum’s and accessible support from designated staff. There was a comment that a further improvement could be the introduction of some kind form of consultation for very complex cases, particularly those involving sexual abuse.

The value of effective supervision was recognised by respondents, with the suggestion that supervision should always be “diaried in” rather than left to individual staff to seek out.

Some staff would welcome additional opportunities such as shadowing.

⇐ What we will do

Our learning and development programme will take full account of the findings of this staff survey. The Child Protection Learning & Development Coordinator will continue to creatively engage with different staff groups, according to need, to ensure the wider workforce feel confident and competent in responding to concerns about children.

We will continue to support existing support mechanisms and consider how these can be improved.

How You Can Help

Share information early and quickly – don't wait until another service contacts you about a child. If you are then telling that service that you have had some concerns about a child then this is a message that these should have been communicated earlier. If you are asked for information, respond promptly. A request for information should be interpreted as an indication a child may be at risk and you should provide relevant information quickly. You can seek advice about what information can be shared if you wish further support, but it is important to do so quickly and to then contact the caller with the required information rather than them having to phone back again.

Respect other professionals – professionals in different agencies are bound by the same confidentiality guidelines and will respect the information you share if you are clear about the status and boundaries of this information. Agencies work together in partnership with families in order to protect children and improve outcomes. Show your respect to colleagues – this will strengthen the team around the child and help to minimise opportunities for families to pit services against each other.

Prioritise attending meetings about children – the many benefits of multi agency meetings have been commented upon by those responding to this survey. This is reinforced by our local audit and evaluation of child protection services. If you are invited to a meeting about a child you should accord this priority. Your input may be critical in assessing the level of risk or determining a plan of intervention and your absence may not only disadvantage you and your service by being “out of the loop” but may disadvantage a child.

Learn together – working relationships can be strengthened in many ways, including attendance at multi agency training. Currently, the roll out of the National Risk Framework and of AYRshare provide vital opportunities not only to build stronger relationships but to ensure our child protection workforce is fully equipped to meet the demands of this challenging work.

Thanks to all staff who responded to our 2013 Multi Agency Child Protection Staff Survey.