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# **North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee**

## **Communications Strategy**

**2018 - 2019**

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<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Kirsty Calderwood</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>	<b>Public Information and Engagement Subgroup</b>
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## **Chief Officer Preface**

Effective communication lies at the heart of effective child protection practice. It is critical that all those working to protect children and young people in North Ayrshire demonstrate proficient communication skills at all levels. This includes raising awareness of child protection amongst the general public, families and staff as well as sharing and utilising information in ways that promote, support and safeguard the well-being of children and young people.

The North Ayrshire Child and Public Protection Chief Officer Group is pleased to present this Communication Strategy which sets out the actions being driven forward by North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee to achieve effective communication in child protection.

## **Equality and diversity**

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee promotes equal access and opportunities to all individuals. All partners are committed to treating people respectfully, fairly and equally and to tackling discrimination in all of its forms. No one should be discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, gender or age. All partners within the Committee value diversity and actively challenge discrimination and prejudice. Service users should be listened to and respected and should have access to services which are fair, consistent and accessible to everyone, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, disability, gender, age, religious belief or sexual orientation.

## **Vision**

Children and young people living in North Ayrshire deserve the best start in life. Our Children's Services Plan is written for children and young people and aims to join up services to ensure that children and young people are at the centre of everything we do. As a key partner working in support of this vision, North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee provides the strategic lead in relation to local child protection developments. This is firmly embedded in the understanding that every child has the right to be protected from abuse, harm and exploitation.

## **Introduction**

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is made up of representatives from across the main statutory and voluntary organisations throughout North Ayrshire. The purpose of the Child Protection Committee is to ensure that local agencies work together effectively to protect children and young people.

The Committee believes that partnership working can be enhanced by good communication between the member agencies at strategic and policy level, and between professionals working together. It also believes that good communication with children and young people, parents and carers, members of the public, and voluntary and community groups is important too, if child protection measures are to be effective.

The responsibilities of Child Protection Committee's in relation to public information and communication are set out in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2010, as follows:

### **Raising public awareness**

*169. Child Protection Committees will determine the level of public awareness, understanding and knowledge of, and confidence in, child protection systems within their area and address any issues as required within their business and/or improvement plans.*

*170. Child Protection Committees will produce and disseminate public information about protecting children and young people. Child Protection Committees will design, develop, publish, distribute, disseminate, implement, regularly review and evaluate a public information and communications strategy that includes the following elements:*

- raising basic awareness and understanding of child protection issues within communities, including among children and young people;*
- adapting good practice from others and exploring opportunities to fulfil these responsibilities with other Child Protection Committees;*
- promoting the ethos that "child protection is everyone's job" in keeping with the GIRFEC approach; and*
- providing information about how members of the public can report concerns about a child and what could happen.*

### **Involving children and young people and their families**

*171. Child Protection Committees will ensure that the views of children, young people and their families are clearly evidenced in their work, in accordance with GIRFEC principles. It is vital that this area is not addressed in a token manner and that children's views are fed into the planning and implementation of improvements. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 contains provisions that, when implemented, will require the CPC to consult other service providers who contribute to the preparation of the plan.*

*Each Child Protection Committee will:*

- be able to demonstrate that its work is informed by the perspective of children and young people, including the most vulnerable and those with direct experiences of child protection services;*
- review and develop their strategies for doing so; and*

- involve children and young people in the design, development and implementation of Child Protection Committees' public information and communication strategies, to ensure that information is accessible and that children's experiences and perspectives are properly reflected.

**National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, Scottish Government, 2014.**

## **Purpose**

This document sets out the key objectives of our Communications Strategy and how these will be implemented, monitored and evaluated to ensure effective public information and communication across North Ayrshire to ensure the protection of children and young people.

## **Continuous improvement**

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is committed to continuous improvement of child protection services. The Committee regularly measures the performance and impact of services in order to inform improvement plans. This is done against the HMle Quality Improvement Framework, *How Well Do We Protect Children and Meet Their Needs?*

In 2014, the Care Inspectorate published "*How Well Are We Improving The Lives of Children and Young People?*" which is designed for wider children's services. North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee utilises quality indicators from this framework where appropriate.

This Communication Strategy has been developed within this context.

Relevant extracts from the HMle Quality Improvement Framework are outlined below, along with the outcomes which form the basis for evaluation of this Communication Strategy.

### **How Well Do We Protect Children and Meet Their Needs?**

#### **Quality Indicator 4.1 Being aware of protecting children**

Themes:

- Confidence of the public in services to protect children
- Responses to concerns raised by members of the public about a child's safety or welfare

Key features:

This indicator focuses on the extent to which the community understands its responsibility to protect children. It considers the degree of confidence felt by members of the public in services for children in need of protection and deals with the effectiveness of responses to concerns raised by members of the public.

Outcomes:

1. Members of the community have a high level of awareness of local services to protect children.
2. Members of the community know who to contact when they have concerns about a child.
3. Members of the community are confident that appropriate action will be taken as a result of their contact.

#### Quality Indicator 2.2 Children benefit from strategies to minimise harm

Themes:

- Children's awareness of keeping themselves safe

Key features:

This indicator includes a focus on action taken to give children skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe.

Outcomes:

4. Children have a very good awareness of personal safety.
5. Children understand their right to be safe.
6. Children know who to contact if they are worried about themselves or another child.

#### Quality Indicator 6.3 Involving children and families in developing policies and services

Theme:

Seeking the views of children and families and involving them in developing policies and services to protect children

Key features:

This indicator focuses on how services seek children and families views about their needs, and the effectiveness of services. It relates to the involvement of children and families in developing policy and services to protect children.

Outcomes:

7. Children and families have access to systems to express their views about services.
8. The views of children and families are used to evaluate service provision.

### **How Well Are We Improving The Lives of Children and Young People?**

#### Quality Indicator 5.4 Involving individual children, young people and families

Themes:

- Seeking and recording views.
- Participation in key processes
- Addressing dissatisfaction and complaints

Key features:

This indicator is concerned with how well we elicit and represent the views and wishes of children, young people and families. It considers the extent to which children, young people and families are informed, included and enabled to participate meaningfully. It looks at how well we address dissatisfaction and complaints.

Outcomes:

9. Children and young people in the child protection system are supported to participate meaningfully and to have their views and wishes effectively represented.

Outcomes 7 and 8 above are also linked to this quality indicator.

#### Quality Indicator 6.3 Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders

Themes:

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Communication Strategy

- Involvement in policy, planning and service development
- Communication and consultation
- Promoting the rights of children and young people

Key features:

This indicator considers the extent to which children, young people, families and other stakeholders are involved in and their views influence policy, planning and service development. It relates to the effectiveness of integrated approaches to communication and consultation. It focuses on the approaches taken to raising awareness and upholding the rights of children and young people.

Outcomes 7 and 8 relate to this quality indicator.

### **Outcomes Framework**

The table below sets out our outcomes framework within which our Communications Strategy is evaluated.

	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicator/measure</b>
1	Members of the community have a high level of awareness of local services to protect children.	Members of the community demonstrate a high level of knowledge of local child protection services
2	Members of the community know who to contact when they have concerns about a child.	Proportion of members of the community asked who can correctly specify who they would contact if concerned about a child
3	Members of the community are confident that appropriate action will be taken as a result of their contact.	Proportion of expressed confidence in responses to referrals
4	Children have a very good awareness of personal safety.	Percentage of children surveyed who can identify personal safety issues
5	Children understand their right to be safe.	Percentage of children surveyed who understand they have a right to be safe
6	Children know who to contact if they are worried about themselves or another child.	Percentage of children surveyed who know who to contact if worried
7	Children and families have access to opportunities to express their views about services.	Number of views from children and families on the effectiveness of services



8	The views of children and families are used to evaluate service provision.	Number of views from children and families passed to Audit and Evaluation Sub Group
9	Children and young people in the child protection system are supported to participate meaningfully and to have their views and wishes effectively represented.	Proportion of child protection meetings where child/young person's views are effectively represented.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the following strategic objectives have been agreed:

1. **To ensure children and young people know that they have a right to be safe and know how to seek help if they are worried.**
2. **To support all adults to fulfil their responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe.**
3. **To ensure that the work of NACPC and its partners is informed by the perspectives of children, young people and their families.**

**Strategic Objective 1 - To ensure children and young people know that they have a right to be safe and know how to seek help if they are worried.**

Task	Person(s) responsible	Timescale	Resource implication	Impact	Outcome Reference	
a	Review, monitor and address any identified gaps in available child protection information for children and young people, in consultation with children and young people.	Public Information and Engagement sub group.	Ongoing from now until review March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time.</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of children's right to be safe and of means of help.</li> </ul>	4,5,6
b	Promote our children's website and involve young people in updating our young person's website.	Public Information and Engagement sub group	Ongoing from now until review March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of websites by children and young people.</li> </ul>	4,5,6
c	Utilise our range of local awareness raising resources for children and young people in order to promote children's right to be safe and who to contact if worried.	Public Information and Engagement sub group.	Ongoing from now until review March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of local resources</li> <li>• Increased awareness of children's right to be safe and of</li> </ul>	4,5,6

					means of help.	
d	Engage with public events and utilise bespoke Child Protection resources to raise awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Information and Engagement Sub Group</li> </ul>	Ongoing from now until March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time</li> <li>Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of children's right to be safe and of means of help</li> </ul>	4,5,6

## Strategic Objective 2 – To support all adults to fulfil their responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe

Task	Person(s) responsible	Timescale	Resource implication	Impact	Outcome Reference
a	Continue to disseminate, and monitor the impact of, child protection information for the local community which includes information on local services.	Ongoing from now until review March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time.</li> <li>Budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased public awareness of child protection and local services.</li> <li>Increased public confidence in child protection services</li> </ul>	1,2,3,
b	Utilise a range of opportunities to continuously promote the message "Child Protection is Everyone's Job". Including, but not limited to: posters, leaflets, information stalls, wage slips, electronic signage, Council vehicles, radio advertising and newspaper articles.	Ongoing from now until review in March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time.</li> <li>Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness and ownership of child protection.</li> </ul>	1,2
c	Explore how best to utilise social media to raise public awareness of child protection, including use of online resources	Review March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased public awareness of child protection responsibilities</li> </ul>	1,2,3
e	Develop, publish and disseminate a range of guidance and learning opportunities for staff to support their	Ongoing from now until review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confident and competent staff</li> </ul>	1,2

child protection practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>group</li> <li>Kirsty Calderwood</li> <li>Child Protection L&amp;D Coordinator</li> </ul>	March 2019			
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**Strategic Objective 3 – To ensure that the work of NACPC and its partners is informed by the perspectives of children, young people and their families.**

Task	Person(s) responsible	Timescale	Resource implication	Impact	Outcome Reference	
a	Identify methods for gathering perspectives of children, young people and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Information and Engagement</li> <li>Kirsty Calderwood</li> </ul>	Consider on quarterly basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of perspective of children in the child protection system</li> </ul>	7,8,9
b	Utilise feedback from children and families in the child protection system in order to improve services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kirsty Calderwood</li> </ul>	Consider on quarterly basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time.</li> </ul>	Increased awareness of views of those directly involved with services	7,8
c	Engage with schools to gather perspectives of schools and pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Information and Engagement</li> <li>Kirsty Calderwood</li> </ul>	Consider on quarterly basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of the views of children and young people in relation to safety</li> </ul>	4,5,6,7

d	Monitor and evaluate whether children and young people's views are effectively represented at meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kirsty Calderwood</li> <li>• Practice and Performance Team</li> </ul>	Consider on a quarterly basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased representation of children and young people's perspective at meetings</li> <li>• taken account of in decision making</li> </ul>	9
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## **North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee - Media Protocol**

The purpose of this Media Protocol is to clarify the process to be undertaken in the event of engagement between North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (NACPC) and the media.

The protocol defines the responsibilities of individual member organisations and the timescales to be adopted in media matters, particularly in relation to reactive media inquiries.

NACPC will not engage with the media on matters relating to an individual case except where a Significant Case Review has been undertaken by NACPC, in which case the Chief Officers' of NACPC will be involved in discussions on how approaches to and from the media will be handled (see Significant Case Review section below)

### **Proactive approach to the media**

The following process should be followed where NACPC or one of its sub groups wishes to seek media coverage of activities or issues related to Child Protection:

- 1 A decision to seek media coverage for an activity or issue is taken by Chief Officers' Group, NACPC or one of the sub groups in line with the principles included in the Communications Strategy.
- 2 A lead contact is nominated by those wishing media coverage. This person will liaise with the Child Protection Lead Officer and North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team.
- 3 The contact will ensure that all parties have a clear idea of the purpose of the media engagement and the information to be provided.
- 4 The contact, along with the Child Protection Lead Officer and North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team will then discuss and agree a media plan.
- 5 The media plan will then be distributed to the Chairperson of NACPC for approval, then to members of the Information Sub Group and NACPC for information, ideally at least two working days prior to implementation.
- 6 The media plan will be implemented.
- 7 Media coverage will be monitored and evaluated by the Information Sub Group and feedback will be provided to NACPC within the routine sub group reports.

## Response to 'routine' media inquiry

The media may approach NACPC - or any individual member organisation - for information or comment for the following reasons

- To seek a local angle on a national issue
- To follow up on a local contentious issue

These may be issues NACPC is already aware of – for example, a national funding announcement, some problem arising from local services, or criticism of aspects of the strategic approach or Action Plan.

In such cases discussion may already have taken place on how these should be handled in line with the above protocol and 'press lines' may have been agreed.

If no prior discussion has taken place within NACPC, the Communications/Press Officer of the organisation approached by the media should follow the procedure below:

1. Contact the Chair of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee, Child Protection Lead Officer and/or North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team immediately to discuss if the media request would be best managed by that agency or by the Child Protection Committee
2. If the decision is taken that the organisation approached will respond directly, a copy of the response will be sent to the Child Protection Lead Officer for media monitoring purposes and the Child Protection Lead Officer will then circulate that response to each member organisation for information
3. If the decision is taken that a NACPC response is more appropriate, the Child Protection Lead Officer and/or North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team will collate the necessary information, seeking information from partners if required, and prepare a draft response.
4. The draft response will then be discussed with the Chairperson of NACPC and amended as required until it is approved by the Chairperson of NACPC.
5. The response will then be issued to the media by North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team on behalf of NACPC and circulated by the Child Protection Lead Officer to all member organisations for information.

## Response to 'exceptional' media inquiry -

If any unexpected or 'exceptional' media requests are received the following procedure should be followed:

1. If a media enquiry regarding a child protection issue related to North Ayrshire is made to a member organisation, the organisation should contact the Chair of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee, the Child Protection Lead Officer and/or North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team immediately to discuss if the media request would be best managed by that organisation or by NACPC itself.
2. If the decision is taken that it is more appropriate for the member organisation to respond directly, a copy of the draft response will be sent to the Child Protection Lead Officer for media monitoring purposes and the Child Protection Lead Officer will then circulate that response to each member organisation for information or input if required.
3. Where it is considered that an NACPC response is more appropriate, the Child Protection Lead Officer and/or North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team will establish the nature of the enquiry and the information sought and will collate the necessary information, seeking information from partners if required, and prepare a draft response.
4. The draft response will then be discussed with the Chairperson of NACPC and amended as required until it is approved by the Chairperson of NACPC.
5. The response will then be issued to the media by North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team on behalf of NACPC and circulated to all member organisations for information.
6. Where a response is requested directly from NACPC, the Chair of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee, the Child Protection Lead Officer and North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team will discuss the request and determine if it is appropriate for NACPC to respond or if the enquiry should be directed elsewhere.
7. If it is agreed that NACPC should respond directly, the procedures from 3 to 6 above will be followed
8. If it is agreed to direct the inquiry to an individual member organisation, the Child Protection Lead Officer and/or North Ayrshire Council's Communications Team will contact the appropriate NACPC member for that organisation – or a senior manager from that organisation - and pass on the details of the enquiry.
9. The member organisation will then prepare a draft response and (as at 2. Above) will send a copy of the draft response to the Child Protection Lead Officer for media monitoring purposes. The Child Protection Lead Officer will then circulate that response to each member organisation for information or input if required.

## Significant Case Reviews

When reporting on the findings of a Significant Case Review, the NACPC Chief Officers' Group will be responsible for any decision on whether or not to involve the media.

If the decision is taken to involve the media, the Chief Officers' Group will be involved in discussions to develop a media plan as part of their wider responsibilities and the Chairperson of the Chief Officer' Group will be required to approve the final media plan including any press release.

The media plan should include a press release and, where appropriate, suggested interview and/or photo opportunities.

Representatives on the Chief Officers' Group have responsibility for ensuring that any press release is brought to the attention of their own Communications Teams and that any concerns are fed back to the Child Protection Lead Officer.

If the Chairperson of NACPC is not available, the Vice Chairperson will take on these responsibilities. If neither is available within the required timescale and the Lead Officer and North Ayrshire Council Communications Manager believe it is important that a response is made they will discuss this with at least one member of NACPC who has knowledge of the issue and seek their approval.

When the media enquiry relates to sensitive information - for example, information about an individual case or a member of staff - the Chairperson of NACPC will attempt to discuss the response with the Chairperson of the Chief Officers' Group.

In such cases the Chairperson of the Chief Officers' Group will be expected to approve the final statement. If the Chairperson of the Chief Officers' Group is not available within the required timescale and the Chairperson of NACPC believes it is important to make a response they will approve the response following consultation with other members of the Chief Officers' Group.