

Practitioner Guidance

When parents or carers of children involved in child protection processes are arrested.



Care
Protection
Commitment
to North Ayrshire's Children



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Purpose

The guidance has been produced by North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee to assist professionals working across agencies when the parents/carers of children for whom there are child protection concerns have been arrested.

The guidance is to ensure that the needs and protection of children are of paramount consideration at all times.



When Parents are arrested – Children subject to child protection procedures.

When children are subject to child protection procedures and this results in their parent/carers being arrested on suspicion that they might be responsible for the abuse, agencies must take steps to ensure that children are safeguarded and protected in their ongoing care situation.

The agencies with statutory responsibility for the child protection investigation and the care of the children will be police and social work.

In the event that parents/carers are arrested as a result of the child protection investigation, immediate consideration must be given to the ongoing care of the children, until it is considered appropriate for the children to return to the care of their parents/carers.



Immediate Considerations and Actions.

When considering the care needs of a child in this situation, social work will have lead responsibility for considering the alternatives of care for the children.

If family members, friends or neighbours present themselves for consideration as the child's carer, factors relevant to this assessment include:

- The child's views on whether they want to stay with the individual.
- Information held by relevant agencies with regard to the individual.
- The needs of the child, both immediate and longer term.
- The ability of the individual to meet these needs.
- The views of the child's parents/carers.

When considering information held by agencies on the individual, checks must include:

- police records including intelligence information,
- social work records and CareFirst, including checks to linked persons,
- any information which may be held with regard to the individual's own children particularly with regard to care and protection issues.

There are mechanisms for checks within police and social work to take place outwith working hours e.g. the West of Scotland Out of Hours Social Work Stand-by Service.

The extent of the checks will be dependent on the availability of the information which can be accessed. Staff involved should record what checks have been undertaken and the outcome.

If all relevant checks were not undertaken at the time the child was placed with the individual then more extensive checks should be undertaken on the first working day following the child being placed. The workers involved should again record details of the checks.



Registered Carers

When a child is placed with registered foster carers all necessary checks will have been undertaken.

Consideration of Necessary Emergency Action

On the basis of the information available at the time the child is being placed in an alternative care situation, the workers involved must give consideration as to whether an emergency order is necessary to secure the child's care within the placement.

Factors which need to be considered include whether the individual who is caring for the child is able to withstand any pressure from

- the child's parent/carer should that person be released from police custody or
- extended family who may wish the child to be placed elsewhere.

Consideration also needs to be given to an emergency order being taken in the absence of parental agreement to the child being placed in alternative care.

Information Given to the Alternative Carer

Relevant information should be given to the alternative carer in order that they can best care for the child.. This does not have to include detailed information about the abuse but should be sufficient to allow the carer to note any significant comment or behaviour in respect of the child.

Emergency contact numbers should be provided to the carer in the event that they need advice, e.g. West of Scotland Out of Hours Social Work Stand-by Service.

The alternative carer needs clear guidance on the legal position of the child in their care and what action they should take in the event of anyone attempting to remove the child or in the event of the child running away.

A detailed alert should be forwarded to West of Scotland Out of Hours Social Work Stand-by Service in order that they can provide the most effective support to the alternative carer should this be required.

Follow-up to the Initial Placement of the Child

On the first working day following the placement, a more detailed assessment, including that of the alternative carer's circumstances will have to be made and a decision taken as to whether it is in the child's best interests to remain in that care situation.





Care Protection Commitment

to North Ayrshire's Children





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