

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

July 2020 – Issue 3



Name: Anne Houston



Job: Former Child Protection Committee (CPC) Independent Chair (Interview recorded in March 2020)

What does the role of Independent Chair involve?

“As the chair, I am responsible for making sure that representatives from all the relevant agencies work together to protect children, and in my experience the best solutions come forward through working together. The other important aspect is how we raise public awareness, specifically how we work with children, young people, their families as well as other members of the public about their roles in keeping all children safe”.

What are the main priorities within your role?

“The single overarching priority is how we best protect children – by supporting staff, giving them time, helping them understand changes in the world and what the new risks are to children eg. online abuse, and we need to help all people understand these new risks. Supporting communities and staff to keep children safe is at the forefront of what we do and this is the absolute priority”.

What is your favourite part of your role?

“I have been really impressed by how much staff care about making a difference to children, this has been a joy. There have been many challenges but as long as we continue to put children and young people at the forefront of what we do and support each other, and be creative, then this will continue long after I leave”.

What is the most challenging part of your role?

“I think we need to encourage the public to help us, as professionals we can’t, and shouldn’t try to do it on our own. It’s about getting ordinary people on side, adults and children, and thinking about the best ways we can support them as well as staff (whom I know are working flat out) to make sure that children are at the centre of everything they do”.

You have been CPC Chair since 2014 and are now retiring, what will you miss most about the role?

“I’ll miss coming together with very different people, good laughs and responding to the challenges. Team work is a nice feeling and I will miss that. I’ll also miss the direct opportunities to make a difference to children and I’ll need to find other ways of doing that - but I will never stop”.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee would like to express thanks to Anne for her hard work and dedication in her time as Independent Chair. She will be sorely missed and we wish her the very best in her retirement.

Covid 19

Like all agencies and services, the Coronavirus Pandemic has had an impact on how the Child Protection Committee operates, and we are now adjusting to the 'new normal'. The CPC continues to be available on the following mailbox at cpc@north-ayrshire.gov.uk. Please email this address if you have queries and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Whilst Covid 19 is a significant area of concern in relation to child protection practice and we are regularly monitoring and reporting on this, we also recognise that previous identified areas of work needs to recommence. Subsequently, the Child Protection Committee is now meeting at increased frequency every 6 weeks and we are starting to re-establish our sub-group activity.

We are regularly uploading information in relation to Covid 19 on our website. Information includes the latest Covid 19 supplementary **Child Protection Guidance, Violence Against Women supplementary guidance** and **protecting people core information**. Please check the following page for more information: <http://childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/professionals/introduction/> and email the CPC mailbox if there is anything you would like to see on this page.

Child Protection Public Information

The Covid 19 pandemic has meant that a lot of children and young people are not in contact with services such as schools. Therefore, there are not the same opportunities for children to reach out to workers when they need help. This is a national issue, and Child Protection Committee Scotland and local committees are ensuring that there are regular communications to increase public awareness of what to do if they are worried about the welfare of a child or young person.

We are on Twitter and are regularly posting videos and Tweets for sharing widely. If you have not already done so, please follow us on Twitter @NA_CPC and also follow @childprotectsco for national updates!



We are also sending child protection leaflets and resources to the community hubs directed for children and young people and communities. If you are working with communities within North Ayrshire and would like child protection information, please contact us via the mailbox cpc@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

Training

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is currently reviewing how training is delivered due to Covid 19. Subsequently, the training schedule for 2020 is on hold for the moment. However, e-learning modules are available online on Child Sexual Exploitation, Keeping Children Safer Online and workers whom are working temporarily with children and families. Please access these modules here: <http://childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/training/>



There are also plans to develop virtual courses which will be accessed via Microsoft Teams. If you would like to be added to our training flyer list for the latest information on practice development opportunities, please email cpc@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

Welcome!

We welcome John Paterson as the new North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Independent Chair. John is already familiar to us as the Chair of North Ayrshire Adult Protection Committee and we look forward to working with him!

"I am delighted to be able to take up the post of Chairperson of North Ayrshire's Child Protection Committee. I have been the Chairperson for the Adult Protection Committee for some years, and I think it is now increasingly the case that partnerships are appointing the same person to chair both of the committees.

The three months since I took up the Child Protection post have certainly been challenging, but I have been immensely impressed by how quickly partners across the many agencies involved in Child Protection have worked together to ensure that children are kept safe from harm in these extraordinary times.

I would like to thank Anne Houston for all her hard work and commitment over the past 6 years. I can only echo what she said in her interview in this newsletter... 'supporting communities and staff to keep children safe is at the forefront of what we do and this is our absolute priority'.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming years".

