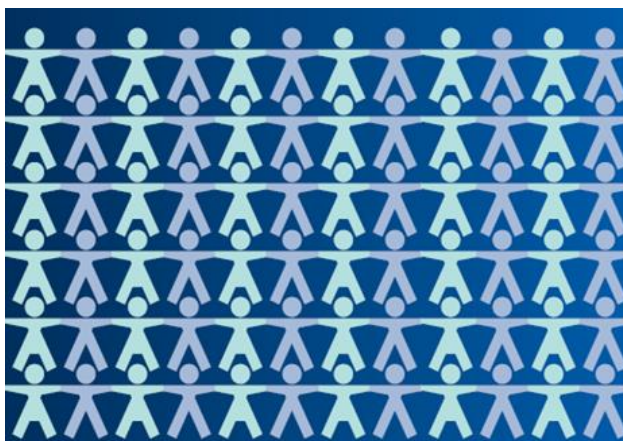


Child Protection Investigation Information for Parents



This leaflet has been prepared by West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee. This Child Protection Committee is made up of representatives from across the main statutory and voluntary organisations in your area. The Child Protection Committee meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of local and national interest concerning the protection of children. The Child Protection Committee also promote interagency working and training in the field of child protection and ensure local procedures are in place for responding to child protection concerns.



Child Protection Investigation

If you and your child have recently been involved in a child protection investigation you may be feeling worried or confused.

This booklet is designed to help you understand what might happen next. You might also find it useful to speak to someone, such as a social worker, teacher or health visitor, and if there is anything in the leaflet that you do not understand or have any questions about please ask them to explain.

What happens next

If your child is safe there might be no need for any further action. However, where there are concerns that your child might have been abused or maybe risk of abuse then an initial Child Protection Case Conference may be held.

Initial Child Protection Case Conference

An initial Child Protection Case Conference is a meeting to which a range of people will be invited. A Senior Social Work Manager will chair the Child Protection Case Conference. All those attending this meeting will have knowledge of your child and



family.

This may include:

- Nursery Staff
- Teacher
- Health Visitor
- Social Worker
- General Practitioner
- Police
- Housing
- Youth Worker
- Worker from voluntary organisations

You (and in some circumstances your child), will be invited to attend.

You can bring someone to support you at this meeting, such as a family member, friend of legal representative.

Those invited to attend usually provide a written report of their knowledge and involvement with you and your family.

Your contribution is very important to this meeting and your views will be listened to. Your views can also be written down and presented to the meeting. If you need help to prepare this report please speak



to someone such as a social worker, family member, friend or your legal representative.

At the meeting there will also be a full discussion about why there was a need for a child protection investigation. Everyone will have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion and to ask any questions.

- A solicitor (Legal Aid may be available)
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration
- Scottish Child Law Centre

All agencies working with families recognise that bringing up children can be demanding and stressful. If you would like further help or advice then please speak to someone such as:

- Health Visitor
- Nursery Head of Centre
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- GP
- Family member or friend, or any other person who can access help for you



If a child Protection Order has been granted, you have the right to apply to the Sheriff for the Order to be recalled or varied.

This can be done prior to the Initial Children's Hearing on the 2nd day.

The Reporter to the Children's Hearing can also recall this Order during this time, if it is believed the Order is no longer required.

If no application for recall is made, the Order will proceed to a full Children's Hearing on the 8th day, at which point, if necessary, the Children's Panel can make any necessary arrangements to protect your child through other legal measures.

If a Child Protection Order is sought for your child you should seek legal advice at the start of this process. Legal Aid may be available.

Unborn Children

Where there are serious professional concerns about the likelihood of harm through abuse or neglect of an unborn child, then a pre-birth Child Protection Case Conference will be held prior to the baby being born.

This meeting will consider the following:





- Whether there is a need to apply for a Child Protection Order at birth
- Whether the child's name should be placed on the Child Protection Register
- Whether there is a need for an inter-agency Child's Plan

Additional Information

It is acknowledged that being involved in the child protection system can be stressful time for families.

It is important that:

- Everything that is happening is explained to you
- You and your child's views are listened to
- You are advised on the best way you can support your child during this time (e.g. reassuring your child)
- If at any time you are unsure of what is happening, or need support or advice,
- speak to any social worker, teacher or health visitor or any other professional involved.

Wherever possible you will be kept fully informed of what is going on and where necessary helped to support your child.

West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee



If you feel you or your child have not been treated fairly during this time, you have the right to make a complaint. The social worker or another professional can advise you on whom to contact for further advice.

If at any time you feel that you need legal advice on what you or your child's rights are you can contact:

When everyone has had the opportunity to speak, decisions will be made about what should happen next. Your child's welfare will always be at the centre of any decisions made.

The main priority is to make sure your child is safe and will be properly cared for. It is also important that if you need help to do this, then appropriate support is made available.

At the initial Child Protection Case Conference, a decision will also be made whether or not your child's name should be placed on the Child Protection Register.

Please note you have the right to disagree or appeal against any decision made at the initial Child Protection Conference regarding your child.



Child Protection Register

Where there are concerns of possible future harm to your child, your child's name may be placed on the Child Protection Register.

The Child Protection Register is held by Social Work and is part of the Social Work computerised system. The Child Protection Register has no legal status, and is simply a way of identifying children for whom there are serious concerns.

Access to the Child Protection Register is strictly controlled. However, information will be shared with other agencies involved with you and your child, such as health and education. Information shared is strictly on a need to know basis.

If your child's placed on the Child Protection Register then a Child Protection Plan will be agreed.

The Child Protection Plan sets out what needs to be done to reduce the risk of future harm and offers support to you and your child. A copy of the plan will be given to you. If your child's name is not placed on the Child Protection Register, but you need help or support with the care of your child, this



can be arranged.

Core Group

If your child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register, a Child Protection Plan is agreed and a Core Group will be identified.

The Core Group is made up of a small group of people, including you (and where appropriate your child) who will meet within 15 days of the initial Child Protection Case Conference. A Senior Social Worker directly involved with you or your child usually chairs the Core Group. The purpose of the Core Group meeting is to look at the Child Protection Plan and consider the progress being made. Any difficulties in progressing this plan will be identified and where necessary changes made to address this. Your contribution is important to ensure the successful progress of the plan.

The progress of the Child Protection Plan will be reported to the Review Child Protection Case Conference. If you have any concerns about the progress of this plan these should be raised with the Chair of the Core Group meeting, or the Chair of the Review Child Protection Case Conference.



The Review Child Protection Case Conference

If your child's name was placed on the Child Protection Register a Review Child Protection Case Conference will be held no later than 3 months following the initial Child Protection Case Conference.

At the Review Child Protection Case Conference the people who attended the Initial Child Protection Case Conference in that everyone will have the opportunity to express their view. The meeting will be chaired by a senior social work manager.

The purpose of this meeting is to review the progress of the Child Protection Plan and to decide if your child's name should remain on or be removed from the Child Protection Register.

A report on the progress of the Child Protection Plan will be provided along with any other up to date reports from other agencies.

It is important that you and your child's views are listened to and the Review Case Conference hears whether or not supports offered have been helpful.





Once again, your views (and where appropriate those of your child) can also be written down and presented to this meeting. If you need help to prepare this please speak to someone such as a social worker, family member, friend or your legal representative.

Once a full and frank discussion has taken place about the progress of the Child Protection Plan, then decisions will be taken about what should happen next.

If there are still concerns about your child, or little progress has been made, then your child's name will remain on the Child Protection Register for a further period of time and, where necessary, adjustments made to the Child Protection Plan.

Where progress has been made and the risks to your child have been reduced, consideration will be given to removing your child's name from the Child Protection Register. Support to you and your child will still continue if required.

Everyone who attends these meetings will be provided with a minute, which is a record of the discussion and the decisions taken. All meetings concerning your child are confidential and



information shared between agencies will be restricted to those who need to know to secure the protection welfare of your child.

Please note you have the right to disagree or appeal against any decision made at the Review Child Protection Case Conference regarding your child.

Appeals

If you or your child do not agree with the decision to:

- Register your child's name on the Child Protection Register
- Keep your child's name on the Child Protection Register
- Not to register their name at all

You (and your child) have a right to appeal against this to the Social Work Area Manager for Children and Families. The appeal should be made, in writing, within 5 working days of the decision, where necessary, your social worker or legal representative can advise and support you with this.

The Social Work Area Manager for Children and



Families should respond fully, in writing to the person making the appeal within 28 days.

Disagree with any other decision

If you (or your child) disagree with any other decision made at either the Initial Child Protection Case Conference or the Review Child Protection Case Conference, you can state this and your disagreement will be recorded within the minute of the meeting.

Complaints

If you (or your child) have a complaint about the service offered to you during this time, please bring this to the notice of any of the agencies involved. You will be advised of your rights and given information on the Complaints procedure of the appropriate agency.

Child Protection Order

If it is believed that your child may be in immediate danger then an application may be made for a Child Protection Order.



Under S57 (1) Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the local authority can apply for a Child Protection Order if they have reason to suspect a child to be at risk.

A social worker usually applies for the Child Protection Order on behalf of the local authority. Application is made to the Sheriff.

If an application is successful, the Sheriff can order that your child be removed from their home to a safe place, or prevent the removal of your child, for example from a hospital or from the grandparent's home etc. The Sheriff can attach conditions to the Order to ensure the protection of your child for example a condition that they must have no contact with a particular named person or that your child must have a medical examination etc.



List of useful local contact numbers

Health and Social Care Partnership (Children's Services)

Clydebank 0141 562 8800

Dumbarton/Alexandria 0141 562 8888

Out of Hours 0300 343 1505

Glasgow and Partners Social Work Emergency Service

Police Scotland Public Protection Unit 0141 532 3300

Scottish Children's Reporters Administration 0300 200 2223

Childline 0800 11 11

Parentline 0808 800 2222

National Child Protection Line 0800 022 3222

Your local Health Visitor who can be found through your local surgery or health centre.

West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee



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