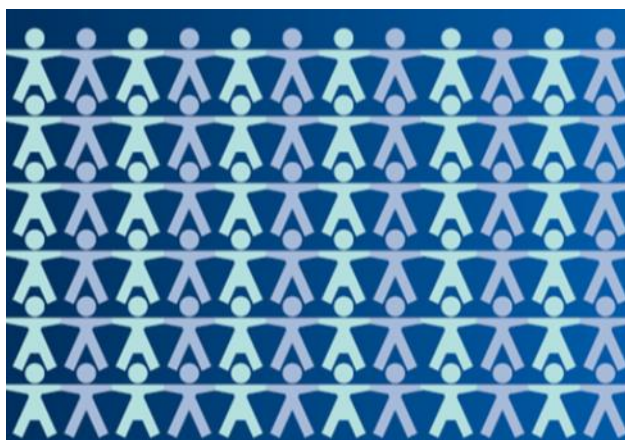


Information for families involved in the Child Protection Process



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 concern



Introduction

This leaflet will help families who become involved in Child Protection Investigation to understand:

- Why people are concerned
- What is likely to happen during the investigation
- What will happen after the investigation
- Where families can get help

Responsibilities of agencies and others

Everyone has a responsibility to make sure children are safe and well cared for. Any concerns about a child's welfare or protection should be reported to:

- Social Services
- Police
- Any other professional involved with the child or family

Why people are concerned about your child

Concerns may be raised about your child for a variety of reasons. It may be believed that your child has experienced or is at risk of:

- Physical injury (hit, kicked, punched)
- Physical neglect (not being properly fed or clothed, poor hygiene)





- Sexual abuse (inappropriate sexual behaviour or language, indecent assault, sexual intercourse)
- Emotional abuse (constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated exposed to family violence)

What is likely to happen during the initial stages?

Social workers and police have a legal responsibility to investigate any concerns which suggest your child (or any other child) has been abused or is at risk of abuse.

At all times the welfare of your child comes first. Usually police or Social Wok will want to:

- Speak to your child
- Speak to you
- Speak to any other relevant person (other family members, teacher of health visitor etc)
- Make further enquiries if necessary
- Take further action if necessary (arrange a medical examination)



It is acknowledged that this can be a stressful time for you and it's important that:

- You get a clear explanation about what is happening
- You and your child's views are listened to
- If necessary, you are given help and advice on the best way your child can be supported during this time.

Usually social workers and police will seek your child's consent before any interview or medical examination dependant on age and understanding.

In most cases your consent is also sought. However on rare occasions this might not be possible. In such situations the reason why your child was interviewed, or any other action taken without your knowledge or consent, will be fully explained at a later stage.

Where consent is refused by the parent or carer other emergency legal measures may be considered to ensure the child's welfare.

Where possible you will be kept fully informed of what is going on, and if you require support or advice this can be arranged. You will be advised of your rights and given information on who you



should contact for further advice if you feel you have not been treated fairly.

What will happen after the investigation?

After the investigation is completed one or more of the following might happen:

- No need for further action
- Family support offered
- A meeting (called a Child Protection Case Conference) is arrange to decide whether further child protection action is required
- Voluntary arrangements may be made for your child to live with a family member or friend
- It may be necessary to take further legal action to protect your child
- Referral is made to the appropriate legal system

Where families can get help

If you feel you need legal advice on what you and your child's rights are in relation to this investigation you can contact:

- A solicitor (legal aid may be available)
- Child Law Society





Agencies working with families recognise that sometimes bringing up children can be demanding and stressful.

However, children have a right to grow up in households where they feel safe, well cared for and protected. If you would like further help or support on caring for your child, please speak to someone such as a:

- Health Visitor
- Nursery staff
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- GP
- Any other person who can access help for you

Concern for an unborn child

In cases where there are concerns about the safety of an unborn child, there may be a need for a Child Protection Case Conference to be held. The Child Protection Case Conference will consider whether it is safe for the child to go home after birth.



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.