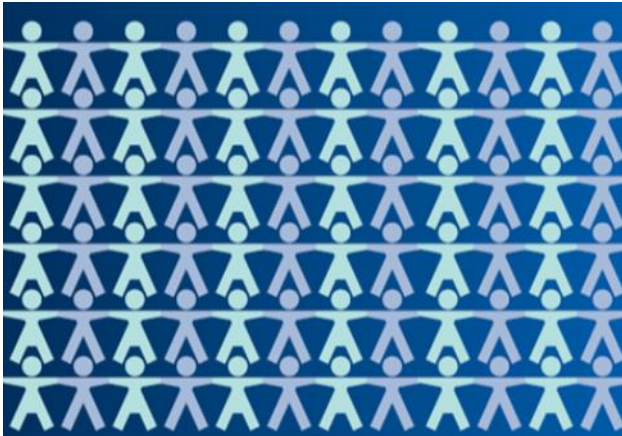


Information for people worried about child abuse or neglect



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 is for anyone concerned that a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

It is everyone's responsibility to protect children.

All children have a right to grow up in a caring and safe environment. All adults have a responsibility to protect children, including:

- Parents
- Family Members
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Members of the Public
- Professionals

What is child abuse?

There are different types of abuse:

- 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 might make you concerned?

Children rarely tell if they are being abused, however, there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of a child being abuse or neglected.

The child may:

- Have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Appear afraid to go home
- Appear hungry, tired or unkempt
- Be left unattended or unsupervised
- Have too much responsibility for their age
- Be acting out in a sexually inappropriate way
- Be misusing drugs or alcohol

The adult may be:

- Acting in a violent or sexual manner towards a child



- Misusing drink or drugs while caring for a child
- Verbally abusive towards a child

If you notice any of these signs and/or are worried, please take action to protect the child.

What do I do if I am concerned?

If you are concerned about a child speak to someone. This might be a health visitor, nursery staff teacher, family doctor, social worker, police officer or children's reporter.

Make sure you:

- Act promptly
- Note your concerns
- Give as much information as you know about the child and family

If the child is at risk of abuse this information will need to be shared with other agencies.

Will I need to give my name?

No. However, remaining anonymous may cause difficulties in establishing whether or not a child is at risk of abuse.



All information received will be treated, confidentially and with discretion. Any details received, including your name, will not be revealed unless the child's safety requires it.

What happens next?

All information received is treated seriously and will be acted upon, This might include:

- Checking agency records and gathering information
- Speaking to the child and family and assessing the situation
- Making sure the child is safe

What will happen to the child and family?

Once enquiries have been completed one or more of the following might happen:

- No further action
- Support or advice offered to family
- Referral to another agency for a service
- Referral to appropriate legal system



Where Child Protection concerns are identified:

An inter agency meeting will be held to decide the best way to protect the child, this will include people who have a knowledge of the child and family e.g. health visitor, police, teacher, social worker and parents/carers.

In a small number of cases, immediate emergency action may be necessary to protect the child



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.