



West Dunbartonshire
**Child Protection
Committee**

West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee

Multi Agency Dissent

And

Escalation Guidance

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Documents Management Details

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Title	Multi Agency Dissent and Escalation Guidance
Writer	Natasha Macpherson, Child Protection Lead Officer
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Rational for introduction / drive for change	To include non-child protection escalation or dissent circumstances.
Summary of substantive Changes (if applicable)	The previous escalation and dissent guidance has been updated to include non-child protection circumstances. This document also includes necessary paperwork to be completed when wishing to escalate or dissent a decision.
Lead Officer	Natasha Macpherson, Child Protection Lead Officer
Consultation and approval process	<p>Representatives from across all Partners were provided an opportunity to contribute to this document to ensure it meets the needs of their service.</p> <p>The document was presented to the June 2024 Child Protection Committee for approval.</p>

1. Introduction

This guidance has been developed by West Dunbartonshire's Child Protection Committee on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee and the Nurture DIG. The Chair of the Child Protection Committee in West Dunbartonshire and Chair of the Nurture DIG acknowledge the shared responsibility that agencies and services have to ensure that Getting It Right For Every Child and child protection processes improve outcomes for children in acceptable timeframes.

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. It's important that staff feel supported in and around the complexity of protecting vulnerable children.

There may be occasions where there are differences of opinion about the best course of action and these differences can encourage further exploration and discussion in relation to what is best for each child and can therefore contribute to better outcomes for children. It is important that all those working with children and families feel able to share their views and constructively challenge the decisions and actions, or lack of actions of others.

During any disagreement, staff must always be focused on the child. The safety of individual children remains the paramount consideration and decisions should always be made in the child's best interests.

The following are core aspects of a safe multi agency GIRFEC and child protection service:

- Transparency, openness, and a willingness to understand and respect individual agency views.
- A culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue within and across agencies.
- All communication is as accurate and detailed as possible. Without accuracy, effective decisions cannot be made, and equally inaccurate accounts can lead to children remaining unsafe.
- Supervision can support staff to reflect critically on the impact of their decisions on the child and their family.
- All agencies share a commitment to addressing disagreements at an early stage.

2. Guidance Statement

Learning from Learning Reviews and findings from Joint Inspections of services for children, recommend that professional partnership working is essential so that children and their families get consistent support and the right help at the right time. Children must not be left in situations where their needs are not being met in a consistent manner or in an unsafe environment. If your assessment of a child's circumstances suggests progress is not being

made to reduce risk or improve children's outcomes, or you perceive that a child is at additional risk, there are several steps you must take to fulfil your responsibility.

This guidance aims to ensure that all multi agency staff have clear steps to follow to promote a consistent approach to escalating concerns. This may be in situations whereby there are welfare or child protection concerns or whereby there is Social Work allocation or not.

3. Scope

This guidance provides additional information which should be adhered to if there are concerns that single or multi-agency children's plans are not keeping children and young people safe or promoting change that can evidence their wellbeing needs are being met in a safe and consistent manner.

It aims to ensure that staff know where to seek support in exploring any identified concerns and the steps to be taken to escalate these concerns appropriately to ensure the wellbeing or safety of the child.

Escalation should be used on the rare occasions where staff have not reached a consensus and one professional/agency thinks that progress is not being made to improve outcomes for children or perceives that a child is at additional risk.

It may apply in the following situations:

- Referrals (to Social Work, Reporter, other services). This can be request for assistance and Child protection referrals.
- Inter-agency Referral Discussions.
- Child protection planning meetings or core group meetings.
- Care and risk management meetings.
- Team around the child meetings.
- Looked after reviews.
- Children's Hearing System.
- Case transfers between Local Authorities.

4. Guidance for practice

Through reflection and gathering of evidence, identify exactly what it is that makes you think progress is not being made with single or multi-agency child's plans, or what is putting this child at additional risk of harm.

Sharing your concern with the relevant involved colleague is essential and should provide agreement to proceed in the best interest of the child. This is the preferred way to resolve the concern (Step 1).

If escalation is required, further options should be taken (outlined in Steps 2 to 4).

Step 1

- You should contact the relevant colleague involved to raise the identified concern with them and share your assessment based on the GIRFEC national practice model.
- You should consider requesting a team around the child meeting, looked after review, care and risk management review, professionals only meeting.
- If unresolved, you should take step 2.

Step 2

- You should discuss your assessment with your line manager. Health professionals will also seek discussion with a public protection nurse advisor at the public protection service.
- If the child is allocated or awaiting allocation, contact the allocated social worker and/ or their team manager.
- You should consider requesting a team around the child meeting, looked after review, care and risk management review, professionals only meeting.
- If concerns persist, the line manager should have a discussion with the other equivalent line manager.
- If the child is an open case to the Reporter or subject to a legal order from a Children's Hearing, consider a discussion with the Reporter.
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan, consider a discussion with the Chair of the child protection planning meeting and likewise if the child is looked after or is subject to care and risk management meetings.
- If an inter-agency referral discussion has not yet been progressed and there is a risk of significant harm, consider initiating or requesting an inter-agency referral discussion.
- If unresolved, you should take step 3.

Step 3

- If the child is subject to a child protection plan, you should consider requesting a review child protection planning meeting. In that way a Social Work Team Leader is responsible for convening a multi agency meeting in a timely manner to protect children.
- If unresolved, you should take step 4.

Step 4

- You should escalate to multi agency senior line managers who will discuss and agree what action is required and feedback to staff and managers.

All relevant discussion must be recorded in each agencies information systems detailing actions taken at all stages of the above framework.

5. Senior Manager Contact Details

Social Work

Sharon Laing, Senior Social Work Manager
sharon.laing@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Mark Mulvenna, Interim Senior Social Work Manager
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Education

Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer
claire.cusick@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Police

DI Kevin Mulvenna
0141 532 3354
kevin.mulvenna@scotland.police.uk

Health

Louise Langfield, Public Protection Lead Nurse
01414516605
Louise.Langfield@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Elaine Smith, Children and Families Senior Nurse
Elaine.Smith@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Reporter

Douglas Hill, Locality Reporter Manager
douglas.hill@scra.gov.uk

6. Useful websites

- Getting it Right for Every Child (2022) - [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-it-right-for-every-child/pages/introduction/pages/introduction.aspx)
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021 Updated 2023) – see link below: [Supporting documents - National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-for-child-protection-in-scotland/pages/introduction/pages/introduction.aspx)
- The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) website provides information that includes The Role of the Reporter, How to Refer and Information for Professionals – see link below: www.scra.gov.uk

7. Escalation Form (Next Page)

CONFIDENTIAL

Escalation/Request for Child Protection Planning Meeting or other multi-agency meeting

Used as written confirmation of telephone call and email made to escalate concern

Member of staff escalating concern	
Name	
Designation	
Base	
Tel. No and email	

For the attention of	
Name of Chair/Senior Manager	
Address	

<i>Child/Family details</i>		
<i>Parents/Carers</i>		
Mother		
Father		
Other significant adult(s) in household		
Address		
Tel. No.		
Children	<u>Name</u>	<u>CHI/P Number</u>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Reason for request

- Current single/multi/child protection plan not improving the outcomes for the child in acceptable timeframe
- Change in circumstances that impacts on current risk and assessments
- Poor/non engagement/resistance by family with description of impact on child
- Increased risk to child identified and described
- Other

REQUEST FOR:

Team Around the Child Meeting
(TAC)

☐ (Please tick as appropriate)

Child Protection Planning Meeting

☐

Professional only meeting

☐

Looked After Review

☐

Care and Risk Management Review

☐

Is the family aware of this request?

YES

NO

Signature

Date:

(Print)

Designation:

Copy to Professional record

