

Child Protection Policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of:

Torphins Playgroup
.....

On (date)May 2023.....

SignedKay Sims..... Designation.....Manager.....

1. Statement of Purpose

1.1

Within Torphins Playgroup we are committed to improving the life chances of children in our care. We acknowledge that the child's welfare and wellbeing are paramount and that we have a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding our children.

Every child or young person has the "right to be protected from all forms of harm and abuse". [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.

1.2

The following policy provides guidance for all Torphins Playgroup staff and follows [the National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021](#). For ease of reference, we will use the term 'the guidance' when referring to this document throughout the policy. The sole focus of this policy is the protection, safety, and welfare of children and young people includes unborn babies, and children and young people under the age of 18 years. Throughout this guidance the term 'parents' is used to include all main caregivers and the term 'staff' is used to include all volunteers and students.

1.3

The child's experience, views and needs are central within Child Protection processes. Talking with and listening to children means attention not only to their words, but also to their experience, needs, wishes and feelings.

Children should be involved in decision-making in ways that are attuned to the needs and understanding of each child and with a Trauma Informed approach. They must be helped to understand how Child Protection procedures work, how they can be involved, and how they contribute to decisions about their future. Advocacy services may assist in this process. Some children may have experienced grooming, or coercion including threats, and they may fear reprisal if they disclose.

1.4

Definitions of parents and carers

A parent is defined as someone who is the genetic or adoptive mother or father of a child. This is subject to the [Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008](#) which sets out which persons are able to be treated as parents of a child conceived through assistive reproduction.

A mother automatically has parental rights and responsibilities (PRRs). A father automatically has PRRs if he is or was married to the mother at the time of the child's conception or subsequently. If a father is not married to the mother, he will acquire PRRs if he is registered as the child's father on the child's birth certificate, which requires the mother's agreement as this must have been registered jointly with the child's mother. A father can also acquire PRRs by completing and registering a Parental Responsibilities and Rights agreement with the mother or obtaining a court order.

A carer is someone other than a parent who looks after a child. This includes 'kinship' and 'foster' carers. Throughout this guidance, where a parent is referenced, this applies equally

to carers.

Sections 1.23-1.32 of the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) provides detailed definitions of parents and carers, including same-sex couples.

When working with parents it is essential that a trauma informed approach is taken, where there is an understand of how the impact of trauma may affect how a parent responds to professionals. Being trauma informed means that staff adapt how they work so that no further harm is caused, and the impact of trauma does not create a barrier to positive working relationships with parents.

2. The Context for Child Protection

2.1

[The National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021](#). This non-statutory Guidance describes the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children in Scotland and replaces the 2014 version. It outlines how statutory and non-government agencies should work together with parents, families, and communities to prevent harm and to protect children from abuse and neglect. The Guidance promotes partnership between those who care about and have responsibilities for the child, and entails a collaborative approach between professionals, carers and family members. A key change in the 2021 Guidance is to reflect the greater integration of child protection within the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) continuum and use GIRFEC language and core components to frame identification and proportionate responses to child protection concerns within the National Practice Model. The Guidance outlines the continuum of support for all children, from universal support through to protection from significant harm, underlining that the wellbeing and safety of children are indivisibly connected. There is a clear articulation of the importance of GIRFEC to protecting children, particularly in recognising that all children must receive the right help at the right time. The leadership of Children's Services Planning Partnerships will therefore be instrumental in supporting implementation of this Guidance within the broader context of local GIRFEC practice. It is supported by a suite of other policies and should be seen in the wider context of [GIRFEC](#) the [Early Years Framework \(2009\)](#) and [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#). It is supported by the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#). The Guidance has a strengthened focus on children's rights, engagement and collaboration with children and families, and on building on strengths. It incorporates the experiences and views of children, young people and families and includes a greater emphasis on ensuring that a child's views are considered in all decision-making that affects them. These views have also informed the development of the series of [Practice Insights](#) published alongside the Guidance, ensuring a central focus on the child's voice and perspective.

The 2021 Guidance builds on the four-part structure of the 2014 Guidance although Part 2B is new. All sections are revised and supplemented. Children's rights and human rights underpin the whole.

2.2

Please note: In addition to any in-house child protection procedures, it is necessary for Torphins Playgroup and Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) to follow local multi-agency child protection procedures, guidelines, and agreements as appropriate. Local authorities

are required by law to produce their own child protection guidance/procedures. As the Playgroup is in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, due regard should be given to these and they should be referred to in policy. Every ELC service should have a child protection co-ordinator taking lead responsibility for child protection, it is the Manager – Kay Sims and in her absence the Lead Practitioner – Laura Crichton. The child protection officer should also engage with appropriate training and development in order to be able to respond effectively to child protection concerns, to support staff and to share learning.

Aberdeenshire Council Guidance

What is Child Protection?

Child Protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. Child Protection procedures are initiated when police, social work or health professionals determine that a child may have been abused or may be at risk of significant harm.

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Approach

Child Protection is part of a continuum of collaborative duties. The GIRFEC approach promotes and supports planning in the way that best safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing of children, and ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest, appropriate time to prevent acute needs arising.

Child Protection processes fall at the urgent end of the continuum of services which include prevention and early intervention. The GIRFEC approach underpins both preventative and child protection processes. This includes an identified point of contact to provide early support, advice and access to services, a shared approach to assessment and consideration of wellbeing, and a shared response to identified needs, included planning for children across services where needed.

Information Sharing

Sharing relevant information is an essential part of protecting children from harm. Where there is a child protection concern, relevant information should be shared with police or social work without delay. Where there may be a child protection concern, information may be lawfully shared without the need for consent to be obtained from the individual(s) to whom the information relates.

In relation to Child Protection procedures and confidentiality, the main points to remember are:

- *In the interests of protecting children, employees have a professional obligation to pass on information to relevant agencies*
- *Employees must not promise to keep secret any allegation or concerns even if a child or third person requests this*

Further information can be found on within the Aberdeenshire [GIRFEC Toolkit](#)

What is harm and significant harm in a child protection context?

Protecting children involves preventing harm and/or the risk of harm from abuse or neglect. A child protection investigation is triggered when the impact of harm is deemed to be significant. 'Harm' in this context refers to the ill treatment or the impairment of the

health or development of the child.

Forming a view on the significance of harm involves information gathering, putting a concern in context, and analysis of the facts and circumstances. For some actions and legal measures, the test is 'significant harm' or risk of 'significant harm'. There is no legal definition of significant harm or the distinction between harm and significant harm. The extent to which harm is significant will relate to the severity or anticipated severity of impact upon a child's health and development.

Further information can be found within the [Scottish Government National Risk Assessment Toolkit](#)

What is the Child Protection Register (CPR)?

In Scotland the Child Protection Register is a confidential list of all children in the local area who have been identified as being at risk of significant harm. It allows authorised individuals to check if a child they are working with is known to be at risk. If a child is added to the CPR they must also have a Child Protection Plan, which sets out what action needs to be taken by whom and when, in order to safeguard the child and promote their welfare.

Aberdeenshire Children's Service's Social Work are responsible for maintaining this register. The decision to place a child's name on the register is taken following multi-agency assessment and a Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM). A child may be placed on the register if there are reasonable grounds to believe or suspect that a child has suffered or will suffer significant harm from abuse or neglect, and that a Child Protection Plan is needed to protect and support the child.

Removing a child from the Child Protection Register

If and when the practitioners who are working with the child and family decide that the risk of significant harm to the child has been sufficiently reduced and the child is no longer in need of a Child Protection Plan, the child's name will be removed from the Child Protection Register. The decision to remove a child's name is made through a review CPPM.

3. Responsibility

3.1

It is the duty of everyone involved in early years to safeguard the welfare and interests of the children. Child protection is the responsibility of everyone who works with children and families and having a skilled and competent workforce, along with relevant guidance and procedures, ensures that children can be protected. Everyone working with children and their families, including all professionals, volunteers, and members of the community, need to appreciate the important role that they play in being vigilant and providing robust support for child protection. see [Part 2A Roles and Responsibilities for child protection](#)

PREVENT

Prevent is the Government's strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, in all its forms. This supports and protects vulnerable people who might be susceptible to radicalisation ensuring they are diverted away, before any criminal activity has taken place.

Radicalisation is a form of exploitation and as part of our Child Protection procedures we

must be aware of and protect children who may be vulnerable to this. Where a member of staff has a concern that a child has been radicalised or is at risk of being radicalised, they must share this concern with the Child Protection Officer as per Child Protection procedures.

Further information on PREVENT and Radicalisation can be found within the [Child Protection in Education Spotlight Briefing](#).

Equal Protection

On 7 November 2020, the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 was introduced. The Act provides children with the same rights as adults against assault by a parent or person with charge or care of them.

First and foremost, when dealing with children for Equal Protection incidents or any other matter, it must be remembered that ensuring their safety, care and wellbeing is critical. Instances of equal protection which were previously deemed 'reasonable chastisement' are now classed as an offence of assault and can be reported to Police. Should a member of staff be witness to or be informed of such an assault, then they must share this information with the Child Protection Officer without delay.

The Child Protection Officer will undertake an immediate assessment of the circumstances, and should they conclude that the assault is an isolated Equal Protection incident then they should report this to the **Police via the 101 number**. If the Child Protection Officer is in doubt or would like advice, then they should contact the appropriate Duty Social Work.

Further guidance in relation to Equal Protection can be found on the [GIRFEC website](#)

3.2

We have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child. Staff will be expected to identify and consider the child's needs, share appropriate and relevant information and concerns with other agencies, and work collaboratively with the family and other services to secure safer outcomes for the child. Everyone has a job in making sure children 'are alright' and in particular recognising that all children must receive the right help at the right time. [National Risk Assessment Toolkit](#) is a resource which integrates the GIRFEC National Practice Model in a generic approach to assessment of risk, strength, and resilience in the child's world. Torphins Playgroup will use this guidance to support practitioners in identifying and acting on child protection risks in children and young people.

Torphins Playgroup Manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting children's wellbeing.

3.3

Everyone has a role in protecting children from harm. In order to enable staff to fulfil their obligations, we will provide annual child protection awareness raising and training for all staff regardless of their role within the setting. We will ensure that there is a designated Child Protection Officer (Manager – Kay Sims) with overall responsibility for child protection. This Child Protection Officer must engage with appropriate training and

development in order to be able to respond effectively to child protection concerns, to support staff and to share learning. They will be responsible for ensuring all relevant procedures are followed when a child protection case arises. Confidentiality will be protected, but where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be at risk of harm, relevant information will be shared with key partner agencies. Staff will not investigate any concerns but will gather initial information and establish basic facts such as what happened, when, where and by whom. All concerns should be shared without delay.

Every member of staff working with children has a responsibility to:

- Keep children safe
- Be vigilant for signs that children may need support, are at risk, or are suffering from harm and/or neglect
- Immediately contact the Child Protection Officer when they have concerns or hear allegations
- Contribute to taking action or supporting children and young people following identifications of concerns
- Ensure their work is carried out in ways that prevent harm to children and maintain the safety and wellbeing of all involved

- Undertake Child Protection training,

The Promise encourages a focus on support for those relationships that are key to emotional safety and resilience. “When children talk about wanting to be safe, they talk about having relationships that are real, loving and consistent.” Early years staff will help all children build resilience, and where they are vulnerable, make sense of their situations and recover from trauma.

Where staff in early years have a concern about a child’s wellbeing, they will discuss this with the child’s Named Person in health, usually the health visitor. Where concerns about possible harm or abuse arise, these should always be shared with the appropriate agency (normally social work 01330 700417 – Banchory, out of hours 03456 081206 or police).

Out of Hours Procedures

Concerns about a child should be shared with the Child Protection Officer, however there may be times when these concerns arise out with Playgroup hours and the Child Protection Officer, or the Lead Practitioner is not available.

In these cases where a member of staff feels that the child requires protection without delay and the Child Protection Officer or Lead Practitioner is not available then **do not wait** to speak to the Child Protection Officer, contact Children’s Service’s Social Work out of hours service directly to share this information.

Practice guide to chronologies is available from the Care Inspectorate.

4. Types of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the

online and digital environment.

In a child protection context, there are four different types of abuse that can be identified:

- **Physical abuse** is the causing of physical harm to a child. Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.
- **Emotional abuse** is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. 'Persistent' means there is a continuous or intermittent pattern which has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm. Emotional abuse is present to some extent in all types of ill treatment of a child, but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.
- **Sexual abuse** is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of indecent images, in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Child sexual exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person under 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur through the use of technology.

Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC website](#)

- **Criminal Exploitation** refers to the action of an individual or group using an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator. Violence or the threat of violence may feature. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature.
- **Child trafficking** involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, exchange or transfer of control of a child under the age of 18 years for the purposes of exploitation. Transfer or movement can be within an area and does not have to be across borders.

Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC Website](#)

- **Child neglect** is the 'persistent' (meaning there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent) failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to result in a serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. The GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators set out the essential wellbeing needs. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development.

Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire Neglect Toolkit](#)

- **Female genital mutilation** - This extreme form of physical, sexual and emotional assault upon girls and women involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC Website](#)

- **Forced marriage** - A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional abuse. Forced marriage is both a child protection and adult protection matter. Child protection processes will be considered up to the age of 18.

Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug use. See [guidance](#) "Protecting rights, protecting children: signposts to Convention Articles" Pages 224/225 Appendix E: United Nations Convention On the Rights Of The Child

Further information on types of abuse and neglect can be found in the [Guidance page 12 – 14](#) and Appendix 1 of this policy. Other indicators of risk that may affect some children include Domestic Abuse, Problem Alcohol Use and Parental Substance Misuse. For further information on these and other indicators of risk see the [Guidance Pages 33 - 36](#).

5. Procedures

All staff have a role in relation to child protection. It is imperative that the appropriate procedures are followed in relation to Reporting, Recording and External Agency Recording. Staff need to understand their own role and the roles of other services when responding to concerns about a child.

The [GIRFEC National Practice Model](#) provides shared practice concepts within assessment and planning. Practitioners should be familiar with the core elements such as the 'SHANARRI' wellbeing indicators, the My World Triangle, and the resilience matrix. Together they support holistic analysis of safety and wellbeing, dimensions of need, and the interaction of strengths and concerns.

All of the agencies involved in protecting children must gather the information they have on individual children at risk into a chronology of key events and contacts, review it regularly and make sure that it is passed on to the professional with the lead role in protecting the child. The professional with the lead role must co-ordinate this into a multi-agency chronology on a regular basis. The Manager is responsible for ensuring regular audit and ongoing discussion of Child Protection concerns must take place.

6. Reporting

6.1 Staff must report any concerns they have about a child to the designated Child Protection officer within the setting, the Manager – Kay Sims or in her absence, the Lead Practitioner – Laura Crichton. Concerns about a risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation may arise in a number of ways including:

- When a child indicates or discloses harm, because of what the child has said.
- When a third party, family or anonymous source discloses the possibility of harm.
- When you are concerned that a child is or may be being harmed. In response to a particular incident.
- When you have witnessed because of direct observation or heard something that causes you concern about a child's safety.

Practitioners with child protection concerns may share relevant information in order to:

- clarify if there is a risk of harm to a child
- clarify the level of risk of harm to a child
- safeguard a child at risk of harm
- clarify if a child is being harmed
- clarify the level of harm a child is experiencing
- safeguard a child who is being harmed

All staff working in Torphins Playgroup have a key role in the support and protection of children and young people. All staff must be aware of, and must follow, child protection procedures in place, the Manager must ensure staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and to respond appropriately.

6.2

You will not be asked to investigate any concerns of potential harm whether they are reported to you by another person or are identified and raised by you personally. If a staff member has child protection concerns about a child these should be discussed with the CPO. All relevant information must be reported without delay and the Child Protection Officer will decide subsequent action. The concern must be placed in the context of available observed and recorded information about the child, their needs, and circumstances.

It is the role of designated police, social work, and health staff to consider whether there may be a risk of significant harm, and if so, to progress necessary action through child protection procedures. This will include careful consideration and a plan for how to

communicate with the child and family, including where there is no further action required

6.3

Initial information should be gathered, and basic facts established, that relate to the concern, namely what, where, when and by whom. This will include suspicions or indicators of significant harm (Appendix 1) and/or direct information of concern for a child. All information must be recorded on the Chronology Form (Appendix 2). The Child Safety and Wellbeing Concern Sheet (Appendix 3) may be completed depending on the circumstances. This may be held in-house, or sent to external agencies, as deemed appropriate.

Concerns about possible harm to a child from abuse, neglect or exploitation should always be shared with police or social work, without delay. [Appendix H](#) within the guidance, is a checklist to support efficient communication of essential information

As the setting is in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, it is necessary for the setting to follow local authority guidelines and procedures in relation to child protection procedures. Found here; <https://asn-aberdeenshire.org/aberdeenshire-child-protection-in-education-guidance/>.

7. Recording

It is important to record all information about children and their families within the Child Chronology (see Appendix 2). This will ensure a record of all facts and procedures that have been followed, as well as agencies that have been spoken to or consulted, with as appropriate. When completing the Child Safety and Wellbeing Concern Sheet form (see Appendix 3) only facts will be recorded, including what has actually been said by a child or another person. The actual words used must be recorded, as well as details of the time, place and any other relevant information.

8. External Agency Reporting

The Child Protection Officer will make the decision when to report to external agencies with regards to concerns relating to the safety of a child and child protection. Staff may be required to cooperate and work with multi-agency colleagues in responding to and supporting children and families, who may be subject to ongoing child protection procedures and responses. The process of responding to child protection concerns in diagrammatic form can be found on p130 of the guidance.

Notification of Concern: Where concerns about possible harm to a child arise, these should always be shared with the appropriate agency (normally police or social work) so that staff responsible for investigating the circumstances can determine whether that harm is significant. Where a practitioner has a concern about a child's wellbeing, this can be shared with a named person (or equivalent) where this has been discussed with the family

Sharing relevant information is an essential part of protecting children from harm. Practitioners and managers in statutory services and the voluntary sector should all understand when and how they may share information. Further information on Information

Sharing: Inter-Agency Principles can be found on p27 of the [Guidance](#)

Also see guidance page 155 section 4.147 Reporting concerns.

Anyone who sees a person physically punishing/assaulting their child can:

- call the police on 101
 - contact local authority social work
 - call [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111 (anonymously) who will report to police
 - as has always been the case, call 999 if a child or young person is in immediate danger
- Prompts in [Appendix H](#) may be useful for persons calling social work or police

Identifying and Responding to Concerns about Children

All staff members have the responsibility to be vigilant for signs that a child may need support, are at risk, or are suffering from harm and/or neglect, including where they may be at risk of radicalisation. Any concerns they have must be shared with the Child Protection Officer without delay. Please see the Child Protection Flowchart for full details of all steps.

Step 1:

These concerns must be shared with the Child Protection Officer by completing Part 1 of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Concern Sheet (Appendix 3).

Step 2:

The Child Protection Officer on receiving information of these concerns must consider these 3 questions to assess if the child needs protection without delay:

- Is this child at immediate risk?
- What is placing this child at immediate risk?
- What needs to happen to remove this risk now?

Step 3:

Using this information and any further information known to them, the Child Protection Officer must use their professional judgement to assess if the child is in need of protection without delay. In circumstances where they are unsure, they should contact the appropriate Social Work Team for advice.

(Where the Child Protection Officer has a concern about **Radicalisation** they must contact the Aberdeenshire PREVENT Lead via prevent@aberdeenshire.gov.uk to share this information. Information and any necessary actions will be given from the PREVENT Team from this point forward.)

Step 4:

Where the Child Protection Officer assesses that the child is in need of protection without delay, they must contact the relevant Duty Social Worker via telephone, without delay and share the information.

The "Child Safety and Wellbeing Concern Sheet" must also be forwarded to the Duty Social Worker following this telephone conversation.

Step 5:

Duty Social Worker makes decision (with further discussion with other services where necessary) on the next steps to be taken. This decision will either be to initiate Child Protection procedures or there will be an agreement that this is not required at this time.

Step 6:

Child Protection Officer updates Chronology (Appendix 2) detailing only that a Child Protection Concern has been raised and next step agreed.

Step 7:

Child Protection Officer completes Part 2 of the “Child Safety and Wellbeing Concern Sheet”, with details of the decision and saves this within the Child Protection folder.

Step 8:

Child Protection Officer debriefs relevant Playgroup staff, including staff member who raised initial concern, where appropriate.

Supporting the Child and informing Parents

The most important aspect of Child Protection procedures is keeping the child safe from harm and providing support during what can be a very difficult time for them. Social Work and/or Police will provide advice on what can and should be shared with the child at this time.

If/when, how and by whom parents are informed, should always be discussed with Social Work and/or Police as part of the referral process. The Child Protection Officer **should not inform parents** prior to this discussion and agreement.

When there is a decision not to initiate Child Protection Procedures at this time

The 5 GIRFEC Questions should be considered along with the possible need for a Single Agency Assessment.

5 GIRFEC Questions

- What is getting in the way of this child's or young person's well-being?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child and young person?
- What can I do now to help this child and young person?
- What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

See the Child Protection Flowchart for full details on steps to be followed in these circumstances.

Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRD)

Where there is information received that a child may have been abused or neglected and/or is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, an IRD must be convened.

An IRD is the start of the formal process of information sharing, assessment, analysis and decision-making. They ensure a co-ordinated inter-agency child protection process up until the point a Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) is held, or a decision is made that a CPPM is not required. All aspects of an IRD are recorded.

Practitioners in Police, Social Work and Health must participate in an IRD. Education may have an essential contribution also and there is an expectation to attend the IRD wherever possible. Education representation at an IRD is likely to be the Playgroup's Child Protection Officer. There is a central rota for Quality Improvement Officers and Senior Officers to represent Education in IRDs during school holiday periods.

For further information on IRDs, please see Aberdeenshire's Briefing 2 – Interagency Referral Discussions, Scottish Child Interview Model and Child Protection Registration

Joint Investigative Interviews (JII)

A JII may be required to:

- learn the child's account of the circumstances that prompted the enquiry
- gather information to permit decision-making on whether the child in question, or any other child, is in need of protection
- gather sufficient evidence to suggest whether a crime may have been committed against the child or anyone else
- secure best evidence as may be needed for court proceedings, such as a criminal trial; or for a children's hearing proof

A JII is planned in detail and is undertaken by a specially trained police officer and social worker. The Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) is in place and further information can be found within Aberdeenshire's Briefing 2 – Interagency Referral Discussions, Scottish Child Interview Model and Child Protection Registration

Health Assessments and Medical Examination - full details of Health Assessments and Examinations can be found within **sections 3.68 – 3.91** of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

Emergency Legal Measures – urgent action may be required before or after a Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) to protect a child from actual or likely significant harm, or until compulsory measures of supervision can be put in place by the Children's Hearing System.

Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM)

A CPPM is a formal multi-disciplinary meeting which must include representation from Social Work, Police and Health as well as any other agency currently working with the child and their family, including Education. The child and relevant family members should be invited and supported to participate as appropriate. Where they are unable to participate their views must be sought and represented at the meeting.

The purpose of a CPPM is to ensure relevant information is shared to enable a collective assessment of risk to be carried out and to agree a plan to minimise the risk of harm to the child. The CPPM must decide whether the child is at risk of significant harm and requires a coordinated, multi-disciplinary Child Protection Plan.

When a Child Protection Plan is required, the child's name must be added to the Child Protection Register. Consideration is also taken about whether a referral to the Principal Reporter is/is not required if this has not already been done.

Review Child Protection Planning Meetings must take place within six months of the

CPPM.

Child Protection Plan (CPP)

The Child Protection Plan must:

- be developed in collaboration and consultation with the child and their family
- link actions to intended reduction or elimination of risk
- be current and consider the child's short-, medium- and long-term outcomes
- clearly state who is responsible for each action
- include a named lead professional
- include named key contributors (Core Group)
- include detailed contingencies
- consider the sensitive direct involvement of children and/or their views

The **Core Group** are those who have direct and on-going involvement with the child and/or family. They are responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Child Protection Plan, in partnership with children and parents.

Further information on Child Protection Planning Meetings and Child Protection Plans can be found on the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC website](#)

Monitoring of this Policy

It will be the responsibility of Kay Sims to ensure that all staff, including new or temporary staff, are familiar with this policy and to monitor that it is being implemented. This will be achieved through both formal and informal observation of staff practice, regular review of the setting's child protection practices, procedures and paperwork and annual child protection training for all staff as a team.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and in response to accident, incident or change in national or local policy or guidance.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Indicators of Abuse

Appendix 2 – Child Protection Chronology

Appendix 3 – Child Safety and Wellbeing Concern Sheet

Links to national policy

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

[Child Protection Guidance 2021 \(theapsgroup.scot\)](http://theapsgroup.scot)

[National guidance for child protection committees undertaking learning reviews](#)

[Home - The Promise](#)

Health and Social Care Standards My Support, my life (Scottish Government 2017)
www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00520693.pdf

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 3: Best Interests of the Child)
www.unicef.org.uk

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on 16 March 2021.

Once commenced, the Bill will incorporate the UNCRC. The Bill will support the delivery of a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland and a fundamental shift in the way children's rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled in Scotland.

Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter (Scottish Executive 2004)

<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20150219072535/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/04/19082/34410>

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and other relevant legislation

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/contents

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright

Getting Our Priorities Right (Scottish Government)

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/04/2305

The Common Core of Skills

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/5565

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/contents

Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019

www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/16/enacted

Child Protection Improvement Programme (CPIP) Scottish Government 2016
<https://beta.gov.scot/policies/child-protection/child-protection-improvement-programme/>

Links to Aberdeenshire Policy

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, “Getting It right for Every Child – Aberdeenshire”:
<https://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/>

Getting it Right for Children, Young People & Families in Aberdeenshire Multi-Agency Operational Guidance: <https://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/GIRFEC-Guidance-V2-15-Feb-2021.pdf>

Aberdeenshire Council, 2023, “Child Protection in Education Guidance” : [Additional Support Needs \(ASN\) Aberdeenshire, Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing \(asn-aberdeenshire.org\)](https://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Additional-Support-Needs-ASN-Aberdeenshire-Inclusion-Equity-and-Wellbeing-ASN-aberdeenshire.org)

Aberdeenshire Council, 2023, “Multi-Agency Child Protection Guidance” : [Child Protection \(girfec-aberdeenshire.org\)](https://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Child-Protection-Guidance-2023.pdf)

Find out more

Children 1st – Scotland's National Children's Charity
www.children1st.org.uk/help-advice/

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
www.cypcs.org.uk/about

NSPCC Learning - All the tools, training and resources you need to keep children safe
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/?_ga=2.207962065.2134587175.1536322681-1325448261.1536322681

Publication - Factsheet
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (The Scottish Government, 2018)
<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences/>

[National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People](#) This document is a national risk assessment 'toolkit' for child protection to support practitioners in identifying and acting on child protection risks in children and young people

Child Protection Policy – Appendix 1

Indicators of Abuse

This list of indicators is not exhaustive, nor is it mutually exclusive.

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inappropriate/inadequate clothing
- Unkempt and general waif-like look
- Untreated illnesses
- Exposure to danger; lack of supervision
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns - particularly if recurrent
- Inconsistent and/or improbable excuses given to explain injuries or untreated injuries
- Reports of punishment which seem excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact; over reaction to sudden movement of adults
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Site of bruise not normally associated with play
- Failure to thrive
- Untreated injuries

Sexual abuse

- Itching in the genital area
- Soreness in the genital area
- Unexplained rashes or marks in the genital area
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Stained or bloody underclothes
- Recurrent tummy pains or headaches
- Bruises on inner thigh or buttocks
- Frequent masturbation (many young children masturbate occasionally for comfort/experimentation)
- Inappropriate language for a pre-school child

- Inappropriate sexual knowledge for a pre-school child
- Making sexual advances to adults or other children
- Wariness of being approached by anyone, possibly combined with a dazed look
- Regression to younger behaviour
- Distrust of a familiar adult; anxiety about being left with adults
- Sexually explicit play with toys and other children

Emotional abuse

Emotional neglect is often difficult to detect and can occur by itself, or in conjunction with physical abuse. It may also occur when a child is physically well cared for.

- Overly withdrawn child
- Overly aggressive child
- Constant wetting or soiling
- Frequent vomiting
- Persistent rocking movement
- Very poor language development
- Inability to relate to peers or adults
- Fear of new situations
- Parental attitude to child

Other possible signs are:

- Significant lack of growth
- Weight loss
- Hair loss
- Poor skin and muscle tone
- Circulatory disorders
- Lethargy

It is important to recognise that some of the signs and symptoms could arise from other causes. Ask for explanations of any injury. Consider the explanation in conjunction with the developmental age of the child. In addition to recording information about a child's actions, it is also useful to take notes of anything a child says which is indicative of neglect or harm.

All agencies that deliver child services and work with children and families have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child. They are expected to identify and consider the child's needs, share information and concerns with other agencies to improve outcomes for the child. [the National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021](#).

Child Protection Policy – Appendix 2

Chronology

Child's Name:

D.O.B.:

Carer's Name:

Date Chronology Started:

Child's Key Person:

Signature/Date	Observations and Discussions	Agreed actions/persons spoken to

Child Protection Policy – Appendix 3

Child Safety and Wellbeing Concern Sheet



For completion by staff when they have a concern for a child's safety and wellbeing, in accordance with government, Aberdeenshire and Playgroup child protection policy and procedures.

The designated Child Protection Officer will consider concerns shared, responding and monitoring as appropriate.

Part 1

Name of Pupil:		Date of birth:	
School:		Year / Class:	
Name of Person Making this Record:		Role of person Making this Record:	
Date of Concern:		Time of Concern:	
Nature of concern, attach additional sheets if necessary			
Concern reported to (name and designation):			

Part 2:

CPO to complete - Nature of concern made:	Child Protection		Wellbeing	
CPO to complete - have previous records been made for this pupil? Please check back records.	Yes/No			
State which Playgroup staff (designation) and / or agency (s) info is shared with				
Time & date information shared				
Response Received From agency (s):	State which agency (s):			
Time & date response received:				
Action Taken				Confirmed

