

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES		
Date: 17/01/2001	Ref: JMcG/GY/CHILD	

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The council has a corporate responsibility under The Children Scotland Act for the protection and support of children. Its employees therefore have a responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children with whom they come into contact as well as providing the highest possible standard of care for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. In that context the community services department provides a wide range of activities, interest groups and facilities for children.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to ensure that all community services facilities have in place appropriate child protection procedures. These procedures should clearly outline an individual employee's responsibility to respond to any situation where a child (under 16 years of age) may have been abused or neglected including reporting the matter to the appropriate agency.
- 1.3 This report also lays out the recommended procedure and how it should be implemented. The content of this report has been considered by the Department of Social Work and the Council's Departmental Officer Child Protection Group.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 There are four areas to be considered. These are:

2.1.1 Reporting Procedures

The main reporting procedures are divided into two categories.

i) Child Protection Concern Sheet (Appendix A)

This sheet would be used to record minor incidents of concern felt worthy of note, for example a child left unattended at a library or sports centre for a short period of time.

ii) Child Protection Incident Report Form (Appendix B)

This form would be used and completed by a member of staff who had been trained in child protection procedures where a more serious incident or series of minor incidents recorded on the child protection concern sheet had taken place

and would result in referral to the Social Work Department and the Police (if required). This report might also result in a child protection case conference being convened by the social work department.

Where a serious incident has occurred staff would be expected to telephone the duty senior social worker at the local office with the completed referral being faxed to social work on the same day.

A copy of this form (Appendix B) would be retained by the community services personnel section to ensure that the department maintained an overview of incidents taking place in various facilities.

2.1.2 Training/Awareness

It is generally agreed that it would not be possible to train every member of staff in child protection/awareness training. However this would be required for key staff with responsibility for completing the incident report form (Appendix B). Training might also be extended to staff who have substantial access to children. Training notes (Appendix C) would also be provided for these staff.

All other staff including relief casual, temporary and seasonal workers would receive the child protection/awareness procedures handbook (Appendix D) which gives basic information about recognising child abuse as well as information on how to report any given situation.

2.1.3 Departmental Officer Child Protection Group

It is generally agreed that issues involving children are complex and changing and therefore it is recommended that a departmental officer child protection group be established. The group would meet four times a year to discuss and review the methods of child protection and any other issues of legislation involving children. The departmental representative on the council's child protection group would be a key figure in the departmental group.

2.1.4 SCRO Checks (Scottish Criminal Records Office)

Although this is not technically part of the child awareness procedures it is clear that there are inconsistencies within the department in relation to the application of SCI checking which require further consideration.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The proposed procedures have been kept as simple and user friendly as possible to ensure that the process is applied in a consistent and fair manner.
- 3.2 Experience has shown that in the event of a child protection issue occurring distress and discomfort can be caused to all concerned and the department must therefore be aware of its responsibilities to ensure that staff are protected and supported in any action that may require to be taken in invoking the proposed procedures.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Committee is asked to note and approve the implementation of the child protection proposals set out in section 2 of this report.

Paul Jinks

Child Protection Child Incident Report Form

A Details of Facility and Staff:

Facility : _____ Date : _____ Time : _____

Location within Facility _____

Reported By _____ Reporting Manager
(Name) : _____ (Name) : _____

B Concern (Type of Abuse)

Emotional Sexual abuse Physical injury

Physical neglect Other

C For incidents relating to a particular child

Name of child (if known): _____

Description of child (if name not known) _____

Age: _____ Sex: Male / Female (delete as appropriate)

Address (if known): _____

_____ Tel. No. (if known) : _____

D For incidents not relating to a specific child please give description of any persons involved and name if known :

Name : _____

Description : _____

E Nature of the incident / concern _____

Manager's Signature : _____

F Copied to :

Social Work Department – Office Location _____

Strathclyde Police – Office Location _____

Community Services Personnel Section, Steps

Date Received	Ref No

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING PROCEDURES**1. ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to emphasise the responsibility of the department in the matter of child abuse and to describe the procedures for dealing with it.
- 1.2. Child abuse is described under one of five categories on the child protection register. These are:-
- a) Physical injury b) Sexual abuse c) Non organic failure to thrive
d) Emotional abuse e) Physical neglect
- 1.3. While it is the responsibility of the director of social work to enquire into allegations of child abuse, staff within all community services establishments do have a major responsibility to assist the social work department in identifying cases of child abuse, including sexual abuse. The police will be involved where it appears that a crime may have been committed, and staff will be expected to assist the police in making their enquiries. Evidence obtained by social workers or police will be assessed by the reporter to the children's panel with whom staff should co-operate fully. Similarly assistance should be offered to medical authorities as required.
- 1.4. Section managers have a responsibility to ensure that all staff are made aware of these child protection procedures and that staff receive appropriate training, including a copy of the department's child protection procedures. The procedures should of course be made known to newly appointed members of staff as they take up post, including casual/seasonal staff.
- 1.5. Information on forms of child abuse and what to watch for is given in appendix A and B. (A summary of actions required is given in the staff handbook 'Child Protection : Awareness and Procedures').
- 1.6. Suspicions of child abuse by members of staff should be taken through the child protection procedures in the first instance with the normal disciplinary procedures being triggered following the child protection investigation.

2. THE RESPONSE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF

- 2.1. As mentioned in paragraph 1.3, the responsibility of enquiring into allegations of child abuse rests with the director of social work. Community services department staff should not conduct such enquiries but must report suspicions immediately using the child protection concerns sheet (see appendix A) or child protection incident report form (appendix B), depending on the nature of the incident.
- 2.2. Wherever there is evidence that a child has been abused or there is suspicion of abuse, this must be reported to the line manager immediately. The relevant line manager will

be named in the individual's child protection booklet. The line manager, after judging that there may be grounds for suspicion, should then take the following action:

- i) Complete the **child protection incident report form** (appendix B) and forward to the local social work department office and any other appropriate departments. The departmental personnel section will hold a central register of all child protection reports.
- ii) If an emergency exists where urgent circumstances require immediate action and it is believed a crime has been committed a call to the police should be made. Urgent circumstances could include, for example, the immediate avoidance of further abuse, the immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser, the avoidance of the destruction of evidence, or the need for an immediate place of safety for a child.

3. THE RESPONSE OF SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT STAFF

- 3.1 To fulfil the statutory duty of the social work department, the senior social worker at the local social work department area office, on being advised by the department of a case or suspected case of child abuse, will take responsibility, in conjunction with the police, if appropriate, for co-ordinating the enquiry, including interviewing the child and parents and if necessary assisting in arranging the medical examination.

4. CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCE

- 4.1 The local area service manager of the social work department may convene a case conference as a result of a report being made. Staff should note that they may be asked to attend any such conference.

5. HELP FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF

- 5.1 Although staff have professional, ethical and legal duties to report their concerns or suspicions related to child abuse it is recognised that there can sometimes be stressful consequences for staff involved in dealing with such cases. It should be remembered that staff are not being asked to make allegations or carry out investigations, but are being asked to react to their suspicions or concerns for the wellbeing of children in good faith and in terms of this document. In these circumstances staff will be fully supported by this department.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Child Protection : Awareness and Procedures
(Booklet)

Introduction

The department has responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse and discrimination, and to ensure that they are treated equally regardless of age, gender, race, culture, religion, language or ability.

This document tries to ensure that all staff in the department are aware of child protection issues, the forms it can take, its recognition and the steps to take in its prevention.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is the term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults, and often by people they know and trust. However, children can abuse other children and staff should look out for and stop incidents of bullying, name calling etc.

There are five forms of abuse but four main types that staff are likely to encounter.

1. Physical Injury

This involves physical injury to the child and can include bruises, burns, fractures, beating poisoning (including substances such as alcohol, tobacco, medicines, narcotics, glue etc.), drowning or suffocation. Frequently it is short term and violent although it can involve systematic and repetitive injury over a long period of time. The following are uncommon areas for accidental bruising; back, back of legs, buttocks, neck, mouth, cheeks, behind the ear, stomach, chest, underarms, genital and rectal area.

2. Sexual Abuse

This term describes the use of children for the sexual gratification of adults or adolescents in different ways. They may be exposed to indecent acts or used for pornographic photography and video. It should be noted if adults request permission to photograph or video children within any departmental facility. Many of the signs of emotional abuse may also manifest themselves in children who are being sexually abused. Physical signs are more difficult to observe, although there may be minor bruises, scratches or bite marks around the thighs, genitals or abdomen.

3. Emotional Abuse

This involves habitual verbal harassment of the child by criticism, threat, ridicule, taunting or disparaging comments. These can lead to loss of confidence and self esteem.

4. Neglect

Neglect occurs whenever an adult fails to meet the basic needs of a child with regard to food, warmth, hygiene, clothing or medical care. Also involved in this category would be failure to ensure proper

supervision and to provide adequate care and attention to the child (eg children being left at a departmental facility unattended for long periods of time on a regular basis resulting in a risk of harm).

Responding to Abuse

Being a victim of child abuse can be devastating and the sooner action is taken to prevent further abuse, the better. If you recognise any of the above signs of abuse occurring within your working environment there are two methods of reporting this:

i) **The Child Protection Report Sheet**

This is used in minor incidents, such as when children are left at a facility or an adult is acting in a suspicious manner. The purpose of this sheet is to monitor if there is a recurrent problem that needs to be actioned.

ii) **The Child Protection Incident Report Form**

This is used where a serious incident has occurred or there is an accumulation of minor incidents (as noted on the child protection concerns sheet).

Your local contact to report any such incidents is _____

The local area manager of the social work department may convene a case conference as a result of a report being made. Staff should note that they may be asked to attend any such conference and/or assist the police, reporter to the children's panel or medical authority in their enquiries.

It is important to remember that the protection of children in our community is the responsibility of everyone.