**South Lanarkshire**

**Child Protection Committee**

Understanding Child Protection

Self-Learning Pack



**A First Step to Keeping Children & Young People** **Safe in South Lanarkshire (2025)**

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**Introduction**

South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee has updated its self-learning pack to reflect the changes in child protection practice from the refreshed National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (Updated 2023), the guidance can be view [here](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2023/08/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/documents/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/govscot%3Adocument/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023.pdf) . The pack is offered as a learning tool to ensure those involved in the protection of children and young people whether directly or indirectly, including those working in adult services, have as a minimum, a foundation knowledge of child protection.

This popular **Self-Learning Pack – Understanding Child Protection** forms a key part of our training materials and offers essential entry level information on child protection.

The information contained should always be treated as the first step in understanding roles and responsibilities staff have when working with children and young people. It does not replace the need to take further learning steps in keeping children and young people safe from harm, neglect, abuse and exploitation.

Professionals, volunteers and members of local community groups can access our full Public Protection Learning and Development Programme (FREE) and find out how to apply for a place on our wide range of course by visiting website or by emailing us at: publicprotectionoffice@southlanarkshire.gov.uk. All our training is offered using a hybrid model of e-learning, virtual live and face-to-face training. Visit us at [www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk](http://www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk). The Child Protection Awareness course is recommended as the next step after completion of this introductory pack.

The National CPC Scotland (Child Protection Committees Scotland) website created in 2020 is an excellent resource and offers clear information about abuse, harm and neglect [Child Protection Scotland](https://www.childprotection.scot/)

**What’s involved in completing this?**

The materials are designed to enable you to recognise a child protection situation and understand your role in ensuring the continued protection of children and young people in South Lanarkshire.

Throughout the self-learning pack, activities are provided which are intended to offer an opportunity for practitioners/volunteers and their managers/group leaders to reflect on the learning achieved and identify future learning needs. On completion, practitioners will havefoundation knowledge in child protection to get started and will be well placed to derive maximum opportunity from the Public Protection Learning and Development opportunities available.

The South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee would wish to acknowledge the support of other CPCs in the shared development of this pack.

**Aims and Learning Outcomes**

This self-learning pack is suitable as a first step for those working within South Lanarkshire including Social Work Resources, NHS Lanarkshire, Police Scotland, Education Resources, Housing and Technical Resources, Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups, the Scottish Children’s Reporter (SCRA,) Youth Services and other partners with a role in the protection of children and young people in South Lanarkshire. This includes those working in Adult Services.

**It will provide:**

* An introduction to child protection, and
* An opportunity to explore your role in the protection of children and young people.

**On completion you will have:**

* Examined child abuse in the context of your work.
* Increased your knowledge about how to recognise and respond to child protection issues.
* Explored the child protection process in South Lanarkshire.
* An awareness of your own agency child protection procedures.
* A foundation knowledge of child protection and be aware of further training opportunities.
* Have identified your own further learning needs in child protection.
* Have increased confidence and confidence in the protection of children and young people

**On completion of the self-learning pack, you will have located and considered:**

1. The South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee website:

[www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk](http://www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk)

1. South Lanarkshire Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures 2023 available [here](https://www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk/downloads/file/417/multi-agency_child_protection_procedures_2023)
2. The South Lanarkshire Child Protection App…. ADD LINK HERE PLEASE
3. Your own agency child protection procedures and relevant documentation used for recording and referring cases where there is a concern that a child or young person may have been harmed or may be at risk.

As part of your induction your manager must see the self-learning pack once completed.

|  |
| --- |
| **EXERCISE 1****Please take time to complete:****Your Family Support Hub and Social Work Office** Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Police Scotland contact (Public Protection Unit)**Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Line Manager / Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Location of own agency Child Protection Procedures:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Location of South Lanarkshire Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures 2023**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee Website:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Out of Hours contact details are:**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**N.B. Refer to Appendix 2** |

**What is Child Protection**

Child Protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child maybe at risk of harm.

Child Protection is part of a continuum of duties upon agencies working with children, with Child Protection processes falling at the urgent end of a continuum of services which include prevention and early intervention.

The [Getting it Right for Every Child](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/) (GIRFEC) approach promotes and supports planning for such services to be provided in a way that best safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing of children.

**KEY MESSAGE:** If you think a child may be in immediate danger you **must** contact Police on 999 right away. Let them know you are concerned a child is at risk.

**Identifying Child Abuse**

To protect children and young people from abuse, all those working around children and their families should have some understanding of child protection issues and be confident in the recognition of and response to child abuse.

From 2014, children and young people are no longer registered under a specific category of abuse in Scotland, instead the **Risk Indicators** below have been updated and are now separated into two categories as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Impact on/ Abuse of the Child**  | **Vulnerability Factor** |
| Physical abuse | Services finding it hard to engage |
| Emotional abuse | Parent(s)/carer(s) with learning disability |
| Sexual abuse | Child affected by parent/carer mental ill-health |
| Criminal exploitation | Child experiencing mental health problems |
| Child trafficking | Domestic abuse |
| Neglect  | Parental alcohol use |
| Female genital mutilation | Parental drug use |
| Honour-based abuse and/or Forced Marriage | Child displaying harmful sexual behaviour |
| Child sexual exploitation | Online safety |
| Internet-enabled sexual offending,  | Other |
| Underage sex |  |
| Other |  |

The definitions of harm below are as described in the National Guidance and you should take time to read these, and to familiarise yourself with signs that may concern you. It is also important to consider other indicators of concern / risk such as **Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Parental Drug and Alcohol Misuse, Domestic Abuse, Challenging Families, Mental Health Problems, Fabricated or Induced Illness, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child placing themselves at risk,** and any other concerns identified in any assessment.

**Definitions of Harm**

**Physical abuse -** means causing 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. Anyone working in child protection must know that the introduction of the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 means physical abuse is now against the law.

There may be some variation in family, community, or cultural attitudes to parenting, for example, in relation to reasonable discipline. Cultural sensitivity must not deflect practitioners from a focus on a child’s essential needs for care and protection from harm, or a focus on the need of a family for support to reduce stress and associated risk.

**Emotional abuse -** is persistent emotional ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a 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.

It may involve –

* conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person
* exploitation or corruption of a child, or imposition of demands inappropriate for their age or stage of development
* repeated silencing, ridiculing or intimidation • demands that so exceed a child’s capability that they may be harmful
* extreme overprotection, such that a child is harmed by prevention of learning, exploration and social development
* seeing or hearing the abuse of another (in accordance with the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018)

**Child Sexual abuse (CSA) -** is an act that involves a child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening. A child under age 16 cannot consent to sexual activity at all, so it cannot be claimed that the child consented or assented to such activity. Generally, the position for children aged 16/17 will depend on whether there is consent, or a reasonable belief of consent. Some sexual offences, such as sexual abuse of trust section 42 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009) apply up to age 18 irrespective of consent. The offences of taking, or possessing, indecent photographs of children, sections 52 and 52A of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 apply up to age 18, with certain defenses related to those in established relationships where the child is reasonably believed to be 16 or over.

For those who may be victims of sexual offences aged 16-17, child protection procedures will be considered. These procedures must be applied when there is concern about sexual exploitation or trafficking of a child.

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 (CSE) -** 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 sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur using technology to cause harm online.

Children who are trafficked across borders or within the UK may be at particular risk of sexual abuse.

**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. The victim may have been criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual.

Child criminal exploitation may involve physical contact and may also occur through the use of technology. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to move and store drugs and money. Coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons may be involved.

**Child trafficking -** involves 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. Examples of and reasons for trafficking can include sexual, criminal and financial exploitation, forced labour, removal of organs, illegal adoption, and forced or illegal marriage.

**Neglect -** Neglect consists in persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty and is an indicator of both support and protection needs.

Persistent’ means there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent which has caused or is likely to cause significant harm. However, single instances of neglectful behaviour by a person in a position of responsibility can be significantly harmful. Early signs of neglect indicate the need for support to prevent harm.

GIRFEC sets out the essential wellbeing needs of all children. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); to seek consistent access to appropriate medical care or treatment; to ensure the child receives education; or to respond to a child’s essential emotional needs.

**Faltering growth -** refers to an inability to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones in the absence of medically discernible physical and genetic reasons. This condition requires further assessment and may be associated with chronic neglect.

Malnutrition, lack of nurturing and lack of stimulation can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. For very young children the impact could quickly become life-threatening. Chronic physical and emotional neglect may also have a significant impact on teenagers.

**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. Such procedures are usually conducted on children and are a criminal offence in Scotland. FGM can be fatal and is associated with long-term physical and emotional harm.

**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. Forced marriage may be a risk alongside other forms of so called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA). HBA includes practices used to control behaviour within families, communities, or other social groups, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or ‘honour’.

**Child Abuse: Recognition and Response**

If you have any concern about a child or young person, it is important that you share this information with the relevant people. Appendix 1 provides a useful summary of the roles and responsibilities of each agency in the protection of children and young people.

**Physical Abuse**

Physical abuseoccurs by causing physical harm to a child or young person. As noted above, 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. Additionally,

**Signs that should concern you are**:

* Unexplained Injuries (bruising, bruised eyes, fractured or broken bones, burn or bite marks, finger-tip bruising or grab marks)
* Perplexing illnesses
* Continuous “accidents”
* An unlikely (or no) explanation for an injury
* A continual pattern of accidents or injuries
* A child may be reluctant to change for physical activities at school etc.
* The explanation offered by the child differs from the parent / caregiver.

**Behavioural indicators Include:**

* A child who is very reluctant to return home
* A child who appears withdrawn / in pain or discomfort
* A child who is resistant to going home, or having contact with one family member or an adult knows them
* Self-harm, self-destructiveness and emotional distress.
* Persistent aggression and violent play

**Emotional Abuse**

All children and young people who are abused are affected emotionally because all types of child abuse are harmful. Emotional abuse is a persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development.

* Children may be verbally abused – told they are stupid, useless, ugly or should never have been born
* Subjected to continuous criticism or faced with unrealistically high expectations
* Their interests and achievements may be ridiculed or compared unfavourably
* Affection given by parents is dependent on the child’s behaviour or achievements
* Children may be overprotected to an unrealistic extent
* Communication with the child may be distorted so that the adult uses his/her maturity inappropriately to make the child feel guilty
* Children may have their toys withdrawn, denied or sold by parents/carers as a punishment
* Children may be denied access to an absent parent through parental alienation
* Children may be emotionally damaged by experiences of domestic abuse

**Signs that should concern you about a child or young person**:

* Child is developmentally delayed
* Child indicates using words and/ or body language that they think they are worthless, stupid or unattractive
* Children expect blame and punishment (or blame themselves)
* Children may harm themselves
* Children may find it difficult to make friends and see themselves as not being likeable
* Children may be mistrusting of adults
* Low self-esteem or self-worth
* Lack of confidence in trying anything new
* Sudden speech and language difficulties
* Significant decline in concentration
* Head banging or rocking
* Compulsive stealing (from parents/carers/teachers)
* Extremes of passivity or aggression
* Running away
* Indiscriminate friendliness

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs. Often difficult to assess in practice, some recent child death inquiry reports have highlighted the consequences of neglect on children and this, alongside an apparent increase in neglected children has brought about a renewed focus on neglect.

* Inadequate food – leading to children and young people being malnourished
* Inadequate clothing (for time of year; shoes too tight; ill-fitting clothing; dirty and unwashed clothing)
* Neglect of children’s basic physical needs (dirty, smelly, unkempt)
* Leaving young children unattended.

**Signs that should concern you:**

* Child / young person may be too thin / extremely overweight
* Child / young person may be tired and lethargic and uninterested in others
* Child / young person may appear to ask for food, is constantly hungry, eating large amounts when offered or storing / hiding food.
* Child / young person may be regularly dressed inappropriately for the weather
* Clothes may be dirty, smelly, unkempt or soiled
* Parents may not bring the child to school on a regular basis
* Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance at school
* Child / young person may have untreated medical conditions or infections
* Low self-esteem or self-worth Ask: are all the children in the family neglected or is it only one child/ young person?

Chronic neglect is a serious child protection concern and should always be reported.

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual Abuseis an act that involves a child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person. 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.

It can happen at home, at another household know to them or online and include:

* Penetrative or non-penetrative acts
* Non-contact activities, such as watching pornographic material
* Pornographic images
* Grooming either online or in the real world
* Child Sexual Exploitation (see website for specific information and public information on the Professionals page here [South Lanarkshire Child protection | Homepage](https://www.childprotectionsouthlanarkshire.org.uk/)

Those concerned about Sexual Abuse can find comprehensive advice and information for professionals here at [Stop It Now - Preventing Child Sexual Abuse](https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/)

 As with any kind of child abuse, there is no definite list of signs of sexual abuse. The following are not in themselves absolute evidence of sexual abuse. Concerns must be placed within an understanding of the normal range of children’s development:

• Highly sexualised behaviour, rather than affectionate physical contact

• Abused children may express their worries and experiences through play

• Sexually explicit paintings or drawings

• Sexual knowledge or curiosity (unlikely for their age)

• Children can tell you unhappy secrets or games that they are uneasy about

• Regression in development

• Self-harm / low self-esteem

• A child not wishing to go with a certain adult or be looked after by a certain person (i.e. Babysitter) • Running away, going missing

• Money, goods from unknown source

**Physical Signs can include:**

• Pain, itching or redness in intimate areas

• Bruising, bleeding or soreness

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

Protecting children involves preventing harm and / or risk of harm from abuse or neglect. Child Protection investigation is triggered when the impact of harm is deemed to be significant.

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period. It is essential that when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm that the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority.

Key professionals will take several things into account when exercising their professional judgement. There are no absolute criteria for deciding what constitutes significant harm, talking to other agencies and sharing / gathering information will be a priority in making the correct assessment given all the facts. Those working/living in the community are often the first to have a concern. Tell us when you have a concern. As a member of the public, you have a right to remain anonymous. You can request anonymity as a professional in certain circumstances.

**Information Sharing & Child Protection**

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach and child protection practice supports the need for robust sharing of information that includes concerns about a child’s safety or wellbeing. Sharing appropriate information is an essential component of child protection. Where there is a child protection concern, relevant information should be shared with Social Work or Police without delay, **provided it is necessary, proportionate and lawful**, to do so.

In general information will normally be shared with the permission of the child (depending on age and maturity). However, where there are concerns that seeking permission would increase the risk to the child or others, or prejudice or any subsequent investigation information may need to be shared without consent. In child protection situations it is not required. At all times, information should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know. When information is shared, a record should be made of when it was shared, with whom, for what purpose, in what form and whether it was disclosed with or without informed consent. Similarly, any decision not to share information and the rationale should be recorded. You can find out more and Information Sharing and GDPR by visiting [Information Commissioner's Office](https://ico.org.uk/)

**What to say to families when sharing information without consent**

When concerns about children's safety or welfare require a professional or agency to share confidential information without the person's consent, they should tell the person that they intend to do so, unless this may place the child, or others, at greater risk of harm. They should also tell them what information and to whom that information will be disclosed. Each agency should make clear to people using their service that the welfare and protection of children is the most important consideration when deciding whether to share information with others. No agency can guarantee absolute confidentiality as both statute and common law accept that information may be shared in some circumstances.

**EXERCISE 2**

**My agency’s child protection procedures are located:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I have read the child protection procedures in my workplace setting and/or have accessed relevant documents from the South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee Website.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It is important that anyone working with children and young people refers to their own agency child protection procedures (or the information provided on our website) whenever there is a concern that a child or young person has been harmed or may be at risk of being harmed. If I am concerned or worried about a child or young person, I should be aware of whom I need to talk to and how to make a referral.

The designated child protection person in my organisation is:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Their contact details are:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I should also remember to:

• Record the actions you have taken as soon as practicable, signed and dated preferably within 24 hours.

• Follow a verbal referral with a written referral within 24 hours, to the relevant Social Services Team.

• Discuss with my line manager / designated child protection person

**GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD (GIRFEC)**

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is Scotland’s commitment to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time. Through GIRFEC, everyone in Scotland can work together to build the scaffold of support children and young people need to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential. We want all children and young people to live in an equal society which enables them to flourish, to be treated with kindness, dignity and respect, and to have their rights upheld at all times.

We all carry out basic assessments related to Well-Being every day. If you have a concern, why not ask yourself. Am I satisfied the child or young person you know is having their needs met? Put this together with the information provided in this pack and from our website and it should give you the answer you need. **REMEMBER** to always discuss with your child protection officer.



You can find out more here: [Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/)

**Responding to a Child Protection Concern**

It is important that practitioners / staff recognise that children and young people are harmed or are at risk of harm from those people who are supposed to care for them. If you are concerned about a child but unsure whether they are being abused, simply discuss your concerns with the identified child protection person in your organisation.

If a child / young person tells you someone may have abused them;

**DO DON’T**

Stay calm Ask to many questions

Listen to the child / young person Make false promises

Keep questions to a minimum Express shock or anger

Reassure child / young person Delay in passing on your concerns

Record what the child has said in

their own words

**NEVER -** Carry out an investigation into an allegation, this is **NOT** your role.

**Notification of Concern / Making a Referral**

Once you have discussed your concerns with the designated child protection person in your organisation, you may decide to share your concerns with Social Services or the Police.

You will require to share as much of the following information as you have:

* Child’s name, address and date of birth
* Parent’s address and current whereabouts
* Cultural / language / understanding: any considerations in communication
* Where the child is and their views
* What is the nature of your child protection concern
* How is the child (physically / emotionally)
* Whether there are any other children in the household
* Whether the parents / carers are aware of your concerns
* Have you discussed these concerns / referrals with the child / parents
* Your details
* Your involvement with the child

**REMEMBER YOU SHOULD ALWAYS REFER TO YOUR CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

**The Child Protection Process**

**A Quick Guide**

**NOTIFICATION OF CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN**

Where there are concerns regarding abuse and / or neglect, an agency makes a Notification of Child Protection Concern to Social Work or Police

**INITIAL REFERRAL DISCUSSION (IRD)**

Multi-agency (Police, Social Work, Health & Education) discussion convened on receipt of Notification of CP Concern. As part of the IRD information will be shared and decisions will be made on how to progress the referral – No further Action / Joint Police Social Work investigation

**CHILD PROTECTION PLANNING MEETING (CPPM)**

When a child protection investigation has been undertaken and indicates that a child may be / or is at risk of abuse, a multi professional Child Protection Planning meeting is convened. The CPPM must decide whether the child is at risk of significant harm and a decision is made on whether to place the child on the Child Protection Register and whether a referral to the Scottish Children’s Reporters Authority is required

**CHILD PROTECTION CORE GROUP**

The child will be subject to a Child Protection plan, the multi-agency team around the child will be known as the Core Group with Social Work acting as Lead Professional. The core group meets regularly within 15 days of the CPPM thereafter four weekly

**REVIEW CHILD PROTECTION PLANNING MEETING**

A Child Protection Planning meeting is held within 6 months of the previous CPPM. However this does not preclude an earlier review where changes to the child’s circumstances are enough to remove or significantly reduce risks. A decision is made on whether to continue with Child Protection Registration or not

**POST REGISTRATION MEETING**

 A Team around the Child meeting should be held within 8 weeks after a child’s name has been removed from the child protection register. This will involve the family and core group members and will review risks and progress from de-registration.

N.B. Following a notification of child protection concern and an initial assessment, there will be a decision made about whether the Child Protection Process will proceed or not. You do not have to make decision about whether something is child protection or not, it is important that you share your concern.

**The Child Protection Process Explained**

**Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM)**

When a child protection investigation has been undertaken and indicates that a child is potentially at risk of significant harm, a multi professional Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) should be convened. The CPPM is multi-disciplinary and includes representatives from the core agencies of Social Work, Police, Health, Education and any other agency currently working with the child and their family. The purpose of the CPPM is to ensure information is proportionately shared in order that a collective multi professional assessment of risk can be undertaken and a plan agreed to minimise the risk of harm to the child.

Social Work Resources will convene and chair the Child Protection Planning meeting.

**Child Protection Plan**

Where the CPPM decides to place a child’s name on the child protection register, a plan must be agreed by the conference to reduce risk to the child and provide support to the family. The multi-agency plan based on the wellbeing indicators (sometimes referred to as the SHANARRI Indicators) is referred to as the Child Protection Plan. It is developed in collaboration and consultation with the child and their family and actions within the plan are intended to support a reduction or elimination of risk.

**Child Protection Register**

The Child Protection Register is the system in place for alerting professionals that there is sufficient concern about a child or young person to warrant a multi-agency Child Protection Plan. The local authority Social Work Service is responsible for maintaining a Register of all children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan, which provides a point of enquiry for professionals who are concerned about a child’s well-being or safety. The Child Protection Planning Meeting takes the decision of whether to place a child’s name on the Child Protection Register. A child’s name will remain on the Child Protection Register until such times as the risk to the child or young person is significantly reduced. After the Child Protection Planning Meeting, regular Core Group Meetings will take place as required until such times as the child is removed from the Register.

**Core Group**

The Core Group are those who have direct and on-going involvement with the child and/or family. They are responsible for co-producing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Child Protection Plan, in partnership with children and parents. When a child is subject to a child protection registration and a child protection plan, a qualified social worker must be appointed as the lead professional, who will take responsibility for coordinating the child protection plan. The first core group should be arranged within 15 days of the CPPM, thereafter core groups should be every 4 weeks. Social Work resources are responsible for convening and chairing the core group with all agencies involved expected to prioritise attendance.

**EXERCISE 3**

**Exploring your role**

In relation to what you might be expected to do after making a notification of child protection concern, take the opportunity to discuss the implications for you in relation to these tasks with your line manager or the person in your organisation responsible for child protection.

**Please complete:**

**1. What will your role be in the child protection process?**

**2. What support might you need?**

**3. Do you need training now?**

**4. What future learning needs may you have?**

A printable copy of the current South Lanarkshire Public Learning and Development Programme is available on the Professionals Page of our website. Courses are FREE – Book Child Protection Awareness TODAY!

**Exercise 4**

**Continued Professional Development**

You should now have read and completed the exercises within this pack. Along with your line manager or person with responsibility for child protection within your organisation, please complete the following:

**I have had the opportunity to read this pack and its appendices.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**I have had the opportunity to discuss the implications of this with my line manager or person with child protection responsibility.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**We have agreed what my future learning needs in child protection are and these will be met by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Congratulations – Please now print your certificate!**

**Understanding Child Protection**

**Certificate of Completion**



**This is to certify that (name)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Has read / visited and viewed several associated information links and the South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee Website and has completed the above-named self-learning pack with their line manager as a first step to learning about Child Protection and Keeping Child Safe in South Lanarkshire.

Signed by (group leader/line manager) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Child Protection Learning and Development Officer*

*South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee*

**NOTE TO THOSE READING CERTIFICATE**

South Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee offers this certificate as a part of a **Self-Learning Pack – Understanding Child Protection** that assists people learning about child protection issues. It is designed for those who may not need to attend a training session, or only require foundation level information, or are waiting to start training with us. It should always be treated as FIRST STEP information for those with an interest in this area.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Roles and Responsibilities of Agencies involved in Child Protection**

*“All agencies have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement* *Effective partnerships between organisations, professional bodies and the public are more likely if key roles and responsibilities are well defined and understood”.*

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)

**Social Work Resources**

Local authorities have a duty to promote, support and safeguard the wellbeing of all children in need in their area. Social Work Children and Families Services have a key role in the investigation of child protection concerns and managing the child protection process. This includes referring concerns about children to the Children’s Reporter where there is reason to believe that the child is in need of compulsory measures of supervision. Social work practitioners should actively seek to involve parents, carers and where appropriate, the child in discussions and decisions which may affect their lives, and to consult with other professional agencies that know the family or have knowledge that would inform decision making and the child protection plan.

**Education Resources**

Staff working in education establishments including early years and childcare, childminders, private and third sector providers have a key role in the support and protection of children. They are well placed to observe physical and psychological changes in a child which may indicate abuse. Education and early years staff can have the greatest level of day-to-day contact with children, and they are able to contribute a great deal to the assessment of children in need of protection.

Educational staff have a role within child protection to identify children and young people who may be victims of abuse. In this role school staff need to be aware of signs and symptoms of abuse. They should observe carefully the behaviour and demeanour of children and young people and, when approached, take time to listen. Any concern or suspicions the teacher might have, no matter how trivial they may seem at the time, should be recorded on their child protection referral form, in consultation with the identified Child Protection Co-ordinator for the school. Where a specific concern is noted as a child protection issue, the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator, using their own agencies child protection procedures, will take the appropriate action, e.g. contact Social Work Service or Police. Where the concerns do not meet the child protection threshold, but a child needs extra help and support that cannot be provided by their family and universal services, the Named Person will be responsible for accessing support as required and will have a key role in developing a Child’s Plan.

**NHS Lanarkshire**

NHS Lanarkshire are committed to promoting and protecting the health and welfare of all children and young people in South Lanarkshire. Where a specific child protection concern is noted staff will, using their own agencies’ child protection procedures, contact the designated Child Protection Advisor and will then take the appropriate action, e.g. contact the Social Services or Police.

**Housing**

South Lanarkshire Council Housing and Technical Resources have a responsibility to house children and young people. Housing applicants with children and young people may be given priority because of their potential vulnerability and will be given priority when fleeing domestic violence. Other priorities include young people over the age of 16 for whom the Council has a duty of care and who may need accommodation and support to maintain their tenancy. Housing staff therefore have a clear responsibility in relation to child protection and should be familiar both with these guidelines and their own child protection procedures for reporting concerns when these arise.

**Voluntary Organisations**

The voluntary sector in South Lanarkshire plays an important role in supporting children, young people and families. In the interests of protecting children and young people, each voluntary organisation will have a clear Child Protection Policy detailing its procedures. If an organisation has a concern in relation to the safety or well-being of a child they will always contact social services to share their concern. Further information on Voluntary and Community Groups roles and responsibility can be found in ***“SLCPC Protecting Children and Young People Guidance for Voluntary and Independent Sector 2019”*** on the Voluntary/Community Page of the website.

**Local Communities**

The local community has a responsibility for the wellbeing of children and young people. Members of the public should remain alert to circumstances in which children and young people may be harmed. Individuals can assist the statutory agencies by bringing cases to their attention. Relatives, friends and neighbours of children and young people are particularly well placed to do so, but they must know what to do if they are concerned. Because of the difficult and sensitive nature of the situation, people must be confident that any information they provide will be treated in a sensitive way and used only to protect the interest of the child. They should know that early action on their part is often the best way of helping a family stay together as well as protecting the child.

**APPENDIX 2**

**Important Contacts and Telephone Numbers**

**Social Work Resources** 0303 123 1008

**Emergency Social Work Service** 0303 123 1008

**(Out of Hours)**

**Police Scotland** 101 and ask for Public Protection Unit

**Scottish Children’s Reporter’s Administration** 0131 244 8701

**(SCRA)**

**Child Protection Advisor (Health)** 01698 753742

**Childline** 0800 1111

**ParentLine** 0808 800 2222