



Child Protection

Corporate Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy and procedure applies to **all** Aberdeen City Council staff and elected members, regardless of their role or level of responsibility.

1.2 Aberdeen City Council has a responsibility to ensure that all its services,
“... recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, **irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement**. They are expected to identify and consider the child's needs, share information and concerns with other agencies.”

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, pg36, 2014)

1.3 Aberdeen City Council is responsible for ensuring that its services, individually and collectively, work to protect children and young people as effectively as possible and this requires them to:

“... disseminate a clear vision, shared values and aims that promote the protection of all children and young people.”

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, pg37, 2014)

1.4 Aberdeen City Council works with Community Planning Partners across the City to develop and maintain effective inter-agency child protection procedures and working arrangements. The Child Protection Committee for Aberdeen City oversees the strategic and operational oversight of child protection practices across the City.

1.5 For the purposes of this policy a child or young person is defined as a person up to the age of 18 years of age.

2. Child Protection Policy

Every child and young person in Aberdeen has the right to be kept safe and protected from harm. Children need to be kept safe from harm in order to thrive and reach important developmental milestones, and to ultimately become responsible and contributing citizens. Keeping children safe means more than ensuring their physical safety; looking after their emotional and mental well-being is equally important.

3. Child Protection Procedure

See the Signs



Record it



2

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Report it



What happens next

3.1

See the Signs - What staff need to know about child protection.

3.1.1

Staff/elected members working in customer facing services has a responsibility to be able to recognise a situation that presents a risk to children and young people and to feel confident to respond in a way that will help protect the child. Staff are required to look out for signs which might suggest that a child is

- Being physically, sexually or emotionally harmed, or put at risk of harm, abuse or exploitation;
- Having their basic needs neglected or being cared for in ways that are not appropriate to their age and stage of development;
- Being denied the sustained support and care necessary for them to thrive and develop normally;
- Being denied access to appropriate medical care and treatment; and
- Being exposed to demands and expectations which are inappropriate to their age and stage of development;

3.1.2

There will seldom be one single reason why staff/elected members may have concerns. More often it will be several things which on their own seem to be relatively unimportant but when looked at alongside other circumstances in the child's life they cause concern. For example, a child or young person may require our intervention if they:

- have unexplained bruising or injuries, or bruising in an unusual place;
- appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn or scared to go home;
- appearing hungry, tired, unkempt or have poor hygiene;
- are left unattended or unsupervised or are out too late;
- seem to have too much responsibility for their age;
- are speaking or acting in a sexually inappropriate way;
- are misusing drugs or alcohol.

3.1.3

In addition, staff/elected members are required to raise concerns about a child or young person because of the behaviour of an adult who has responsibility to care for the child or young person, or is involved in their life. The adult may:

- act in a violent way to other adults, within or outwith the household;
- act violently or sexually towards the child or young person, or appear to be grooming them for sex;
- misuse drugs or alcohol chaotically;
- be physically or verbally abusive towards the child or young person;
- appear to be neglecting the child's basic needs or not taking them for medical treatment;

- be exposing the child to inappropriate images, particularly on-line;
- struggle to manage mental health problems.

3.1.4 Staff working in non-customer facing services also has a responsibility to be familiar with how Child Protection might impact on their role. Some examples of where child protection might arise include:

- Recruitment – ensuring safe recruitment practice;
- Procurement – ensuring organisations from whom services are procured have clear child protection procedures and safe recruitment practices;
- ICT – ensuring appropriate controls are in place for ICT equipment to prevent access to inappropriate websites; where child pornography is detected on Council IT equipment.

3.2 **Record it - What staff must do if they have a child protection concern.**

3.2.1 Where staff/elected members have concerns about a child they should:

- Act promptly;
- Make a note of their concerns. Staff/elected members are required to record
 - What they have seen
 - What the child has disclosed (in the child's words if possible)
 - What concerns this has raised
- Provide as much information about their concerns as possible.
- Ensure the concerns are retained confidentially and securely.

3.2.2 Staff/elected members must not :

- carry out any sort of investigation into the allegations
- make promises to the child or young person about what may or may not happen

3.3 **Report it**

3.3.1 **Child Protection is everyone's responsibility.** Any member of staff/elected member who has concerns that a child or young person is at risk of being harmed is required to tell someone who can help to reduce those risks. It cannot be assumed that someone else has already reported it or the child being harmed or neglected is able to report it themselves.

Where suspected child protection concerns are identified employees are required to contact:

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their child protection co-ordinator or line manager • the child's Named Person (Headteacher or Health Visitor) |
|---|

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Child Protection Team (JCPT) • Emergency Out Of Hours Social Work Service • Police Scotland | <p>01224 306877
01224 693936
101</p> |
|---|--|

If there are significant and immediate concerns about the safety of a child, employees should phone 999

3.3.2 The protection of children takes priority over any data protection or confidentiality legislative requirements that cover the sharing of information.

“If a child’s wellbeing is considered to be at risk, relevant information must always be shared”

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 para 99).

3.3.3 Employees/elected members are required to make every effort to ensure that information is shared only with those who need to know and can do something to help reduce the risks to the child.

3.4 **What happens Next?**

3.4.1 All investigations will be progressed in accordance with National Guidance for Child Protection 2014.

3.4.2 Responsibility for investigating child protection concerns lies with Police Scotland and the Local Authority. Staff in Children’s Social Work are trained and skilled to undertake this function on behalf of the Local Authority.

3.4.3 Investigations are undertaken on a multi-agency basis involving Police, Health and Children’s Social Work. The investigation will also liaise with the Named Person for the child. (For preschool children their Named Person is their Health Visitor; for school aged children it is their Head Teacher.)

3.4.4 Where necessary children are jointly interviewed by police and social work. The rules around these interviews are exacting due to the need for them to be compliant with Court expectations.

4. **Policy Implementation and Compliance with Procedure**

4.1 All staff/elected members are required to be aware of and compliant with this policy and procedure.

4.2 All Managers must, as a minimum, ensure that they:

- Raise awareness amongst staff of this policy and procedure.

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- Ensure staff are aware of how they are expected to safeguard and promote the protection of children during the course of their work;
 - Provide access to training, professional development and support for staff to promote the protection of children. This requires to be appropriate for the roles and responsibilities of individual posts
 - Ensure staff are aware that failure to comply with this policy and procedure is a breach of their employment responsibilities and may result in the instigation of disciplinary or performance processes.
 - Have policies and procedures that are compliant with the corporate responsibility to safeguard and promote the protection of children in Aberdeen City.
- 4.3 Training on child protection is a mandatory section of induction to all new staff/elected members, irrespective of their role, through the E-induction course. Training will be done through the Online Interactive Learning (OIL). It is the responsibility all managers to determine if particular roles with in their area of service require more in-depth training.
- 4.4 Child protection is a complex and emotive area of work and Aberdeen City Council recognise that staff may at times need additional support when they identify circumstances which indicate a child may have been abused. This support will be offered in a sensitive and impartial manner, by colleagues, line management supervision and through the Council's counselling service 'time for talking'.

Appendix 1

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Managing Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Employee Code of Conduct
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Information Security
- Data Protection Policy
- Customer Service Standards and Charter
- Sector specific policy and procedures.

References and Useful Resources

Legislation:

- [Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#)
- [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [Children & Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

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- [Children's Hearings \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#)
- [Adoption and Children \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)

National Guidance:

- [Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter](#)
- [Early Years Framework](#)
- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014](#)
- [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

Local Guidance:

- Aberdeen City Child Protection information
- [Aberdeen Getting It Right website](#)
- [Child Protection Partnership website](#)
- Aberdeen City Council, Data Protection
- Protecting Children in Aberdeen online interactive learning (OIL) module
- Aberdeen City Children's Services Plan
- Local Outcome Improvement Plan