



## EAST AYRSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

### PRACTITIONER BRIEFING NOTE

#### NO 29

**TOPIC: GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON MINORS RETURNING FROM SYRIA**

**BRIEFING:** In recent years a number of British children either travelled or were taken to Syria by their parents to join terrorist organisations. Also, British women travelled to Syria and may have had children during their time there. As the situation in Syria evolves, we may see some of these children return to the UK. These children have lived in a warzone for a number of years and may have witnessed incidents such as violence, rape, murder and death, including beheadings. These horrors will almost certainly have had an impact on their mental and emotional development.

The safeguarding of any British minors returning from the conflict in Syria and Iraq is, however, likely to be require additional specialist expertise. The Scottish Government has refined UK Government advice to assist local authorities and partners to better understand the experiences of children returning from Syria, and the support available to safeguard them.

As set out in the advice (see link below), a new national programme will provide local authorities with expert support on the mental and emotional needs of returning British children. Representatives from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (0208 938 2226 / <mailto:ReturningFamilies@tavi-port.nhs.uk>) will be able to attend safeguarding meetings to offer advice and share their experiences from safeguarding returning children in other local authority areas, on top of offering appropriate interventions as agreed.

A linked programme to provide key worker support to help safeguard returning children and provide stability to their family has also been established. This service will be provided by Catch 22 (0207 336 4853 / [Returning.Families@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:Returning.Families@catch-22.org.uk)).

Local authorities can obtain more information by contacting the Safeguarding and Vulnerability Team in the Scottish Government

(Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ, 0131 244 0876 or 0131 244 7835) or Police Scotland Prevent Delivery Units.

Link: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/C/Guidance-on-Minors-returning-from-Syria-Advice-to-Local-Authorities-June-2018.pdf>

**FURTHER**

**INFORMATION:** For Further information please contact:

Dougie Robertson, East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Lead  
Officer, Tel. No 01563 576935, Email  
[Dougie.Robertson@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:Dougie.Robertson@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)