



East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

Understanding Child Protection Self-Learning Pack 2017

Promoting Good Practice in Child Protection

“Working together to keep our children and young people safe”

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 3
Aims and Learning Outcomes	Page 4
Exercise 1	Page 5
What is Child Protection?	Page 6
What is Significant Harm in Child Protection?	Page 6
Identifying Child Abuse	Page 6 - 8
Child Abuse; Recognition and Response	Page 8 - 11
Information Sharing and Child Protection	Page 12 - 14
Exercise 2	Page 15
Dealing with a Child Protection concern	Page 16
The Child Protection Process – A Quick Guide	Page 17
The Child Protection Process explained...	Page 18 - 20
Exercise 3 - Exploring Your Role	Page 21
Exercise 4 - Continuing Professional Development	Page 22
Self-learning Certificate	Page 23
Appendix 1 Roles and Responsibilities of Agencies Involved in Child Protection	Page 24 - 28
Appendix 2 Important Contacts and Telephone Numbers	Page 29

Introduction

East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee offers this pack, which has been revised to take into consideration the new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 and the Scottish Government's Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, as a learning and development resource to ensure multi-agency staff / volunteers working with children and young people have as a minimum, a foundation knowledge of child protection. This new **Self-learning Pack – Understanding Child Protection** has now been added to our available materials, and offers essential information on child protection issues for those who may not need to attend a training event, only require foundation level information, or are waiting to start learning with us.

It should always be treated as **FIRST STEP** information for those with an interest in this area and does not replace the need to take further learning steps as required. Professionals, volunteers and members of local community groups can access our full Training Programme and find out how to apply for a place from our wide range of other courses by visiting our website.

<http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/SocialCareAndHealth/Protecting-people/Child-protection/Child-protection-information-for-practitioners.aspx>

Basic Child Protection Awareness is recommended as the next step after completion of this pack.

What's involved in completing this?

The materials are designed to enable staff to recognise important aspects of the child protection process and understand their role in ensuring the continued protection of the children and young people that they work with in East Ayrshire.

Throughout the 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 have sufficient foundation knowledge in child protection to get started, and will be well placed to derive maximum opportunity from CPC learning and development opportunities available.

East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee would wish to acknowledge the support of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee, Fife Child Protection Committee & Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee who are responsible for the content of the original pack.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

This Pack is suitable as a first step for

Staff / volunteers within East Ayrshire including Social Services, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, Educational Services, Housing Services, Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups and all other organisations working with East Ayrshire's Children & Young People.

And 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 East Ayrshire
- 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

On completion of the pack, you will have located and read:

- East Ayrshire Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures and /or
- Your own agency child protection procedures and relevant documentation used for recording and referring cases where there is concern that a child or young person may have been harmed or may be at risk of harm.

EXERCISE 1

Please take time to complete

**Your local Social Services Office /
Children & Families Team**

Telephone No: _____

Police Scotland contact (Public Protection Unit)

Telephone No: _____

**Line Manager/Designated Child
Protection Co-ordinator**

Name: _____

Telephone No: _____

Child Protection Advisor (Health)

Name: _____

Telephone No: _____

Location of own agency Child Protection Procedures:

**Location of East Ayrshire Child Protection Inter-Agency
Procedures:**

East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee web address:

Out of hours contact:

Name: _____

Telephone No: _____

N.B. Refer to Appendix 2

What is Child Protection?

“Child Protection” means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a *likelihood* or *risk* of **significant harm** from abuse or neglect. Equally, in instances where a child may have been abused or neglected but the risk of future abuse has not been identified, the child and their family may require support and recovery services but not a Child Protection Plan. In such cases, an investigation may still be necessary to determine whether a criminal investigation is needed. There are circumstances where, although abuse has taken place, formal child protection procedures are not required. Always discuss your concerns. Key services will make the appropriate decision based on information received.

What is Significant Harm in Child Protection?

Child Protection is closely linked to “significant harm”. It is a complex matter and subject to professional judgement based on multi-agency assessment of the circumstances of the child and their family. Where there are concerns about harm, abuse or neglect, these must be shared with the relevant agencies so that they can decide together whether the harm is, or is likely to be, significant.

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time. 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 a number of things into account when exercising their professional judgment. There are no absolute criteria for judging what constitutes significant harm, talking to other agencies and sharing / gathering information will be a priority.

Identifying Child Abuse

In order 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.

Each of these categories is described in some detail below and you should take time to read these, and to familiarise yourself with signs that may concern you in the following section. Child Protection relates to children who suffer abuse at the hands of their parents / carers or someone living in their family.

Physical Abuse

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

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age - or developmentally - inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, 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 or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is an often hidden form of children sexual abuse, with distinctive elements of exploitation and exchange. In practice, the sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 might involve young people being coerced, manipulated, forced or deceived into performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities in exchange for receiving some form of material goods or other entity (for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gifts, affection). Sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology and without the child's immediate recognition.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from "non-organic failure to thrive" where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life threatening within a relatively short period of time

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 Abuse is the actual or likely physical injury to a child / young person. Physical abuse may occur from an actual attack to a child or an adult's deliberate failure to protect them from injury or suffering. Accompanied by neglect, physical abuse is the most common form of maltreatment of children and is the most common cause of child death from abuse.

- A child may be hit, punched, kicked or bitten;
- Shaking a child is extremely dangerous and potentially fatal, babies are particularly at risk;
- A child may be burned or deliberately scalded;
- A child may be squeezed with violence or attempted suffocation;
- Deliberate poisoning (household substances, alcohol, drugs or medicines);
- Shut in cupboards / Confined in small places;
- Tied or strapped down

Signs that should concern you:

- Unexplained Injuries (bruising, bruised eyes, fractured or broken bones, burn or bite 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.

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 with one family member
- Self harm
- Persistent aggression and violent play

Emotional Abuse

All children and young people who are abused are affected emotionally and all types of child abuse are harmful. Emotional abuse is a persistent pattern of deliberate uncaring or emotionally cruel treatment of a child.

- 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 emotionally damaged by experiences of domestic abuse

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

- Child is developmentally delayed

- Child indicates through the use of words and 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
- 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
- Child / young person may be tired and lethargic
- Child / young person may arrive at your workplace desperate for food/constantly hungry, eating large amounts
- Child / young person may be regularly dressed inappropriately for the weather
- Clothes may be dirty, smelly or soiled
- Parents may not bring the child 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

- Ask: are all the children in the family neglected or is it only one child/ young person?

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse (including Child Sexual Exploitation) is defined as the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent who is dependent or developmentally immature. Sexual Abuse leads to the sexual gratification of adults and includes:

- Full sexual intercourse
- Sexual Fondling
- Masturbation
- Oral and Anal Sex
- Sexual Exhibitionism
- Pornographic Images
- Grooming (including grooming via the internet)

Signs that should concern you:

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 from young children, rather than affectionate physical contact
- Abused children may express their worries and experiences through play (with dolls or small figures)
- Sexually explicit paintings or drawings
- Children masturbating regularly
- 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
- A child not wishing to go with a certain adult or be looked after by a certain person (i.e. Babysitter)

Physical Signs:

- Pain, itching or redness in the genital or anal area
- Bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal area

A note about Child Sex Offenders

- Abusers may be extremely frightening and threaten to hurt the child or someone they care about
- Abusers may claim that nobody will believe the child if they tell (and may threaten the child with this)
- Some abusers will attempt to bribe children with presents, treats or money
- Some abusers work to convince children that what they are doing is a normal and acceptable activity within the family or between friends
- Abusers come from all classes, professions, racial and religious backgrounds and can be anyone – family members, neighbours, friends, doctors, community group helpers, even professional colleagues
- Most known abusers are men, but some women sexually abuse their own or other children
- Young people also abuse children. About one third of reported cases involve young people

Information-sharing for child protection: general principles

The wellbeing of a child is of central importance when making decisions to lawfully share information with or about them. Children have a right to express their views and have them taken into account when decisions are made about what should happen to them. The reasons why information needs to be shared and particular actions taken should be communicated openly and honestly with children and, where appropriate, their families.

In general, information will normally only be shared with the consent of the child (depending on age and maturity). However where there is a risk to a child's wellbeing, consent should not be sought and relevant information should be shared with other individuals or agencies as appropriate.

At all times, information shared should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know. When gathering information about possible risks to a child, information should be sought from all relevant sources, including services that may be involved with other family members. Relevant historical information should also be taken into account.

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 also be recorded.

Agencies should provide clear guidance for their practitioners on sharing information for example, the GMC guidance on *Protecting Children and Young People*. This should include advice on sharing information about adults who may pose a risk to children, dealing with disputes over information-sharing and clear policies on whistle-blowing.

It is not necessary to seek consent when there is legislative requirement to share information; for example when making a referral to the Children's Reporter, or the prevention and detection of crime.

In November 2002 the Scottish Executive published *It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I'm Alright*, the report of a national audit and review of child protection practice in Scotland. In common with other reviews of public services to support child welfare and protection, the report concluded that some children experience very serious levels of hurt and harm and live in conditions and under threats that are not tolerable in a civilised society.

The report highlighted problems for agencies and professionals in getting the right information at the right time to enable them to support and protect children effectively. In particular, insufficient use was made of inter-agency information, especially information from health and education services. The report recommended that professionals be aware of their responsibilities towards the care and protection of children and that where children are at risk of abuse and neglect, information must be shared promptly with other relevant agencies.

Decisions about when to involve other agencies, when to break confidentiality, and when to refer to the Children's Reporter, are difficult and complex. Various factors will come into play, such as the age of the child(ren), the degree of risk the child faces and support available to the family.

The Legal Position

Privacy and confidentiality is governed by legal provisions that aim to safeguard personal information, particularly:

- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989);
- the Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA); and
- Professional codes of conduct.

All professionals and agencies are required to keep confidential information given to them during the course of their work. Information given to professionals by their patient, client or service user should not be shared with

others without the person's permission, unless the safety of the person or other vulnerable people may otherwise be put at risk.

Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) guarantees respect for a person's private and family life, his/her home and his/her correspondence. Disclosure of information would breach that right unless it is in accordance with the law, or necessary for the protection of an individual, or is in the public interest.

Personal data covers both facts and opinions about a living individual, which might identify that person. The fore going legal provisions prevent unauthorised disclosure of a wide range of information.

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 or not 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.

Specific reference to the Data Protection Act and to national and/or local guidance supporting it should be made in any case where practitioners are unsure about their ability to share information.

EXERCISE 2

My Agency child protection procedures are located:

I have read the child protection procedures in my workplace setting and / or have accessed relevant documents from the East Ayrshire 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 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, time 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

Dealing with a Child Protection Concern

It is important that staff / volunteers 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

Stay Calm
Listen to the Child
Keep questions to a minimum
Reassure Child
Record what the child has said in their own words

DON'T

Ask too many questions
Make false promises
Express shock or anger
Delay in passing on your concerns

NEVER

Carry out an investigation into an allegation this is **NOT** your role.

Making a Referral

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

You will require to pass on the following information:

- Child's name, address and date of birth
- Parent's address and current whereabouts
- Where the child is and their views where known
- Your details
- Your involvement with the child
- What are your concerns
- Details of alleged abuse
- Whether there are any other children in the household
- Whether the parents / carers are aware of your concerns

REMEMBER - YOU SHOULD ALWAYS REFER TO YOUR CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES!

**The Child Protection Process
- A Quick Guide -
CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL**

No further action / Joint Police & Social Work Investigation



INITIAL CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE

When there are significant concerns that a child may be / or is at risk of abuse



DECISION ON REGISTRATION

The CP conference decides whether child (ren) should be placed on the child protection register and whether a referral to the Scottish Children's Reporter's Authority is required.



CHILD PROTECTION PLAN



MULTI-AGENCY CORE GROUP

Multi-agency intervention/support/protection plan



REGULAR CORE GROUPS

A Review of the child protection plan to consider progress being made in protecting the child / young person



REVIEW CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

A meeting to consider whether continued Registration is required



DE-REGISTRATION

Ongoing support & services considered

N.B. Following a referral and an initial assessment, there will be a decision made about whether the Child Protection Process will proceed or not.

The Child Protection Process explained...

Child Protection Conference

Child protection Case Conferences (CPCC) are a core feature of inter-agency co-operation to protect children and young people. Their primary purpose is to consider whether the child – including an unborn child – is at risk of significant harm and if so, to review an existing Child's Plan and/or consider a multi-agency action plan to reduce the risk of significant harm. CPCCs are formal multi-agency meetings that enable services and agencies to share information, assessments and chronologies in circumstances where there are suspicions or reports of child abuse and neglect. The need for a conference should be discussed with other services and agencies at an early stage in investigations. Any agency can request a CPCC. One will be arranged, where it appears there may be risks to child(ren) within a household and there is a need to share and assess information and if it is felt that a child or young person would benefit from an inter-agency **Child Protection Plan** that addresses the risk of significant harm. The initial CPCC should be held as soon as possible and **no later than 21 calendar days** from the notification of the concern being received.

Child Protection Plan

When the conference 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. This multi-agency plan is referred to as the Child Protection Plan and should set out in detail: the perceived risks and needs; what is required to reduce these risks and meet those needs; and who is expected to take any tasks forward including parents/carers and the child themselves.

Child Protection Register

All local authorities are responsible for maintaining a central register of all children – including unborn children – who are the subject of an inter-agency Child Protection Plan. This is called the Child Protection Register. The register has no legal status but provides an administrative system for alerting practitioners that there is sufficient professional concern about a child to warrant an inter-agency Child Protection Plan. Local authority social work services are responsible for maintaining a register of all children in their area who are subject to a Child Protection Plan, though the decision to put a child on the register will be based on a multi-agency assessment. The Child Protection Register provides a central resource for practitioners concerned about a child's safety or care. If legal safeguards are required to protect the

child or ensure compliance then a referral must be made to the Children's Reporter to allow consideration as to whether Compulsory Measures of Supervision are required.

The decision to place a child's name on the register should be taken following a Child Protection Case Conference where 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.

When placing a child on the register, it is no longer necessary to identify a category of registration relating to the primary type of abuse and neglect. Instead, the local authority should ensure the child's name and details are entered on the register, as well as record the areas of concern identified. The local authority should inform the child's parents or carers and, where the child has sufficient age and understanding, the child, orally and in writing, about the information held on the register and who has access to it.

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 or young person is no longer in need of a Child Protection Plan", the local authority should remove the child from the Child Protection Register. The decision to remove a child's name will be made by a review CPCC at which all the relevant agencies are represented, as well as the child and their family. When a child's name is removed from the register, the child and their family must be informed.

Removal of a child's name from the register should not necessarily lead to a reduction or withdrawal of services or support to the child and family by any or all of the agencies.

Core Group

A core group is a group of identified individuals, including the Lead Professional, the child and their parents/carers, who have a crucial role to play in implementing and reviewing the Child Protection Plan. The core group is responsible for ensuring that the plan remains focused on achieving better outcomes for the child by reducing the known risks. The initial core group meeting should be held **within 15 calendar days** of the initial CPCC.

The functions of a core group include:

- ensuring ongoing assessment of the needs of, and risks to, a child or young person who has a Child Protection Plan;

- implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Child Protection Plan so that the focus remains on improving outcomes for the child. This will include

evaluating the impact of work done and/or changes within the family in order to decide whether risks have increased or decreased;

-maintaining effective communication between all services and agencies involved with the child and parents/carers;

-activating contingency plans promptly when progress is not made or circumstances deteriorate;

-reporting to review CPCCs on progress; and

-referring any significant changes in the Child Protection Plan, including non-engagement of the family, to the CPCC chair.

EXERCISE 3

Exploring your role

In relation to what you might be expected to do after making a child protection referral, 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 any training now?

4. What future learning needs may you have?

N.B. A printable copy of the current multi-agency Children's Services Learning and Development Calendar is available from the Training Page of our website;

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/C/Childrens-Services-L-D-Calendar.pdf>

Exercise 4

Continuing 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!



Self – Learning Certificate 'Understanding Child Protection'

This is to certify that (name)

has visited East Ayrshire Child Committee's Website and completed the above named self –learning pack as a first step to learning about Child Protection in East Ayrshire.

Signed by (group leader / line manager)

Date _____

Thank you for completing this pack

*Dougie Robertson
East Ayrshire Child Protection Lead Officer*

NOTE TO THOSE READING CERTIFICATE:

East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee offers this new **Self-learning Pack – Understanding Child Protection** to assist people learn 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 their training with us.

Appendix I

Roles and Responsibilities of Agencies involved in Child Protection

All agencies working with children and young people have a shared responsibility for protecting children and young people and safeguarding their welfare. Local authorities have a specific legal duty in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in need in their area. This welfare responsibility is carried out by the local authority department with responsibility for social services. Those bodies responsible for education, health, the police and other agencies with a role in providing children's services also have significant responsibilities for the protection of children and young people. *Protecting Children - A Shared Responsibility* provides guidance on how agencies and professionals should work together to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect, and to safeguard and promote their welfare. The duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in need falls upon the local authority as a whole and embraces social work services, education, housing and any other relevant services required to safeguard and promote the welfare of such children and young people.

The roles and responsibilities of agencies working with parents and children to promote children's welfare and protection are set out in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014); The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and on implementation of The Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014 Act. Agencies working with vulnerable families should also be familiar with local guidance and procedural documents.

It is everyone's job to play their part in gathering and sharing of information and to take responsibility for the welfare and safety of vulnerable children. However, the danger of it being everyone's responsibility is that it may in practice become no-one's. It is therefore important to identify roles and responsibilities of agencies and individuals that are implicit and explicit in these protocols.

Professionals should always consider these key points:

- Children and young people's welfare and safety must be the paramount consideration when decisions are made about them
- Children and young people have the right to safety, stability and security of care
- Children and young people have a right to express their views and for their views to be taken into account when decisions are made about them

- Children and young people have a right to express concerns in confidence in so far as their safety and that of others is not compromised
- Sexual exploitation of children through prostitution is abuse.
- Children and young people cannot consent to their own abuse and exploitation
- Children and young people have the right to be protected from abuse and exploitation.
- Agencies should work in partnership with children and young people
- Agencies should work in partnership with parents/carers
- Agencies should work in collaboration to protect and support children and young people

It is important to recognise the responsibilities of those with parental duties for children and young people including local authorities where they are acting *in loco parentis*

Social Services

Social Services are committed to the principle of promoting a child's right to be brought up in a safe and loving environment by their family. The welfare and safety of the child, however, is the paramount consideration. Social Services will always take seriously any information received regarding the welfare of a child. Action taken will be informed and sympathetic, and in the best interests of the child. In all aspects of child protection the Social Work Service is committed to working closely with other agencies.

Police

The Ayrshire Public Protection Unit within police Scotland has a role to work jointly with key agencies to ensure that all investigations are carried out in a sensitive, sympathetic and child centred manner. A co-ordinated response will be based on consultation and information sharing, and, where necessary, will involve joint interviews by a Police Officer and a Social Worker as part of a multi-agency assessment.

In the majority of cases of child abuse, a criminal offence may have been committed. The Police have a statutory duty to investigate the circumstances and, where evidence of a crime exists, to report the facts to the Procurator Fiscal. Police involvement does not automatically result in an alleged offender being prosecuted. The Police have a duty to pass on information to the Children's Reporter (SCRA) regarding children and young people who are found to be vulnerable, whether or not there are grounds for criminal prosecution.

Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) is the Act which now governs the Children's Hearings System. The Act entered into force on 24 June 2013. The 2011 Act revisits the whole Hearings System. In essence, the 2011 Act replaces Part II, Chapters 2 and 3, and Schedule 4 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (the 1995 Act).

The 2011 Act seeks to:

- strengthen the place of children
- deliver better support for children
- deliver better support for panel members
- ensure national consistency
- modernise processes

In child abuse cases, most referrals are received from Social Services or the Police, but may originate from other sources, e.g. Schools, Health staff and members of the public. On receipt of a referral, the Children's Reporter will investigate the facts to establish whether these are sufficient to frame grounds of referral for consideration by a Children's Hearing. This involves requesting reports on incidents and/or taking statements from witnesses in order to gather evidence on the abuse, whether physical (involving an injury or neglect), sexual or emotional. Witnesses, including for example, doctors and health visitors, may be required to give evidence relating to the child abuse.

Where there is sufficient evidence, the Children's Reporter will decide whether compulsory measures of supervision are required and a Hearing is necessary, or whether voluntary supervision, a warning or advice is required.

Education

Educational Services has 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 with the Social Work Service or Police.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Staff within NHS Ayrshire & Arran are committed to promoting and protecting the health and welfare of all children and young people in East Ayrshire. Where a specific child protection concern is noted staff will, using their own agency's child protection procedures, contact the designated Child Protection Advisor and will then take the appropriate action, e.g. contact with the Social Services or Police.

Housing

East Ayrshire Council's Housing Services 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.

Community Groups

All Community groups, staff and volunteers working in a child care position provide a wide range of services and therefore have regular direct contact with children and young people of all ages up to 18 years. Staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting the interests and well being of children and young people with whom they work. Staff will take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm and abuse, and will respect their rights at all times.

All community groups have a responsibility to protect children from harm or abuse and will refer to their own procedures when dealing with concerns.

Voluntary Organisations

The voluntary sector in East Ayrshire plays an important role in supporting children and 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.

Local Communities

The community as a whole has responsibility for the well being 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 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.

Contact numbers for those with a concern are listed in **Appendix 2**

Appendix 2

Important Contacts and Telephone Numbers

Social Services – Reception Services	Cumnock 01290 427720 Kilmarnock 01563 554200
Police Scotland – Ayrshire Public Protection Unit	101 or 999 in an emergency
Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration	0300 200 1860
Child Protection Advisor (Health)	01290 421194
ChildLine	0800 1111
ParentLine	0808 800 2222
Child Protection Helpline	0800 022 3222
East Ayrshire Women's Aid	01563 536001
Out of Hours Social Work Stand-by Service	0800 328 7758
East Ayrshire Child Protection Lead Officer	01563 576935