

# Understanding What's Going On

Information for Children, Young People and Families  
involved in the Child Protection Process



## The Child Protection Investigative Process Explained

Everyone has a responsibility to make sure children and young people are safe and that they are being cared for in a way that meets their needs.

If anyone, whether a professional or a member of the public has a concern about a child or young person's well being or their protection, we expect them to report their concerns to:

- Social Work, Police, or
- Any other professional involved with the child or family

A child protection investigation may take place as a result of the concerns being raised.

## Why people are concerned about your child?

Concerns may have been raised about your child for a variety of reasons. It may be believed that your child has experienced or is at risk of:

- Physical injury – hit, kicked, bitten, slapped, punched
- Physical neglect – not being properly fed, living in unacceptable conditions, inappropriately clothed, poor hygiene
- Sexual abuse – inappropriate sexual behaviour by another, or inappropriate sexual language
- Emotional abuse – constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated, exposed to family violence

You can find more information about this form your Social Worker or from the East Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee Website

## **What is likely to happen during the Investigation?**

Social Work and Police have a legal responsibility to investigate any concerns which suggests your child, or any other child, has been abused or is at risk of abuse.

At all times the welfare of your child comes first. Usually police or social work will want to:

- Speak to your child
- Speak to you
- Speak to any other relevant person – other family members, teacher or health visitor etc.
- Make further enquiries if necessary
- Take further action if necessary – arrange medical examination

We know that this can be a stressful time for you and it is important that:

- We explain to you what is happening
- You and your child's views are listened to in a meaningful way
- If necessary, you are given help and advised on the best way your child can be supported during this time.

Usually, depending on age and understanding, social work and police will seek your child's consent prior to any interview or medical examination. We may / may not seek your consent depending on the circumstances of the investigation.

In such situations the reason why your child was interviewed, or any other action taken without your knowledge or consent, will be fully explained at a later stage.

We can take legal action to protect your child if necessary.

Where possible you will be kept fully informed of what is going on, and if you require support or advice this can be arranged.

If you feel you have not been treated fairly you will be advised of your rights and given information on who you should contact for further advice.

## **What will happen after the Investigation?**

After the investigation is completed one or more of the following might happen:

- No need for further action
- Family support offered by one or more agencies
- An Initial Child Protection Case Conference is arranged to decide whether further child protection action is required
- Voluntary arrangements may be made for your child to live with a family member or friend while we fully investigate the concerns
- It may be necessary to take further legal action to protect your child. In a small number of cases this may mean your child cannot legally live with you during the investigative process.
- Referral is made to an appropriate legal system such as the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)

In the majority of cases children are not removed from their homes and will continue to live with their own families in their own communities.

## **Where families can get help**

It is important to remember, children have a right to grow up in households where they feel safe, well cared for and protected. If you are worried that you may not be coping with what is expected of you as a parent and would like further help or advice on caring for your child please speak to someone such as:

- Health Visitor
- Nursery Teacher
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- Family Doctor
- Or any other person who can access help for you

## **During the Investigation**

We know being involved in the child protection investigation can be a stressful time for families. It's important you have an understanding of what is going on and what is happening at every stage and why. You will be allocated a support person, usually

called the Lead Professional who will be your main contact to discuss your concerns.

You should contact:

NAME:

AGENCY DETAILS:

TELEPHONE:

If at any time you feel that you need legal advice on what you or your child's rights are you can contact:

- A solicitor (Legal Aid may be available) [www.slac.org.uk](http://www.slac.org.uk)
- The Scottish Child Law Centre [www.sclc.org.uk](http://www.sclc.org.uk)



All our information for families can be translated by request.

Supported by the West of Scotland Child Protection Consortium

[www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ercpc](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ercpc)