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**SCOTTISH BORDERS**

**Multi-agency Child Protection Procedures**

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Scottish Borders Child Protection Procedures

The multi-agency Scottish Borders Child Protection Procedures describe a staged response to concerns that a child has experienced, or is likely to experience, significant harm. They outline the actions that should be taken, and the processes involved in assessment, analysis and planning so that the risk of harm can be reduced. All partners represented in the Public Protection Committee have agreed to these procedures, and all agencies, services and organisations in the Scottish Borders should comply with them. Any additional procedures and protocols specific to the roles and remit of an agency, service or organisation should align to these procedures.

The Scottish Borders Child Protection Procedures reflect [the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023](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). (“National Guidance”) They do not replace the National Guidance, but describe specifically how we apply it in our local context. Any divergence from the National Guidance is clearly identified as such. Links to relevant portions of the National Guidance are included throughout, and practitioners should refer to these.

For role specific guidance please refer to the [National Guidance](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#page=51), and any single agency procedures and protocols available on your organisation’s intranet or staff resource site. If you require further clarification, please consult your Line Manager, or contact the Public Protection Unit for advice.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SCOTTISH BORDERS CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES CURRENTLY APPLY TO CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 16 YEARS. PROVISION FOR THE PROTECTION OF 16- and 17-YEAR OLDS IS THROUGH OUR ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES OR VULNERABLE YOUNG PERSONS’ PROTOCOL.**

The Scottish Borders Child Protection Procedures are divided into three sections:

[**Section 1**](#_Section_1:_Underlying) outlines the general principles that underly our Child Protection Procedures, and information that practitioners should apply whenever working with children at risk of significant harm.

[**Section 2**](#_Section_2:_The) has detailed information about the different stages of the Child Protection process for all practitioners who may have a role to play. For ease of reference, a table with all timescales for meetings, provision and sharing of reports etc is at Section 2.1.

[**Section 3**](#_Section_3:_Further) contains additional multi-agency protocols that may be relevant to the specific circumstances of a child or family, and shared forms and templates.

**Throughout these Child Protection Procedures, the term “practitioner” should be understood as referring to anyone working with children and families, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity.**

***To view a Contents list and move between sections in this Word document, click the View tab and check the Navigation pane box.***

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# Section 1: Underlying principles and practice

This section outlines the general principles that underly our Child Protection Procedures, and information that practitioners should apply whenever working with children at risk of significant harm.

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##### 1.1: Definition of a child and parent

**Throughout these procedures the word “child” refers to unborn babies and all children and young people under the age of 16 years.**

In Scotland, the legal boundaries of childhood and adulthood are defined in various ways, with overlaps for those aged 16 and 17 years. The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023 aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in defining a child as anyone up to the age of 18. Routinely including 16- and 17-year-olds in Child Protection Procedures has wider implications for service delivery, therefore, until further notice

**THE SCOTTISH BORDERS CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES APPLY TO CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 16 YEARS. PROVISION FOR THE PROTECTION OF 16- and 17-YEAR OLDS IS TYPICALLY THROUGH ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES, OR VULNERABLE YOUNG PERSONS’ PROTOCOL.**

**Throughout these procedures the term “parent” refers to the adults who have parental rights and responsibilities for a child and/or have primary responsibility for the day to day care of the child.**

A “parent” is the genetic or adoptive mother or father of a child. A carer is someone other than a parent who is looking after a child on a day-to-day basis, and includes Kinship Carers, Foster Carers, married or un-married partners of a parent, or other close relatives.

Parents and children should be involved in the Child Protection process as much as possible, so long as this does not increase the risk of harm to the child. This involvement can include:

* Being given information, and helped to understand why practitioners are concerned about the child and what the Child Protection process involves.
* Participating in meetings.
* Sharing their views about what the child is experiencing.
* Helping to put together a plan of what needs to happen to make the child safer, and carrying out any actions identified for them in the plan.
* Completing feedback surveys to help practitioners to understand what has gone well, and what has not gone so well through the Child Protection process.

Further information regarding the definition of a “child”, “parent” and “carer”, including an overview of the legal context, can be found in the [National Guidance page 8](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#page=21)

##### 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities

Child Protection is everyone’s business. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that children are safe and cared for. All staff, carers, and volunteers in all agencies, whether their primary focus is working with children or with adults, have a responsibility to be alert to the possibility of children being abused or neglected, to report their concerns through the appropriate routes and to provide relevant information.

The Core Agencies with responsibility for Child Protection Procedures are Social Work, Health, and Police. Depending on the child’s age, Early Years, Education, Youth Work, or adult services may have a critical role to play in the Child Protection process, whilst a range of other agencies are partners in the wider context of keeping children safe and well.

All services, agencies or organisations working directly with children or adults should have their own processes for identifying, sharing and acting upon concerns about risk of harm to a child which must comply with these procedures.

Some organisations or services may identify a “designated” or “responsible” person for Child Protection, who is able to provide advice and guidance to other practitioners. They may also receive and coordinate reports of concerns about individual children from practitioners in that organisation or service in order to avoid duplicative Child Protection Referrals being made about the same concern.

If asked, **all** agencies must provide relevant information to assist any child protection assessment and planning.

If invited, **all** agencies must provide a report for a Child Protection Planning Meeting and a representative must attend.

Detailed information on collective and single agency responsibilities can be found in [National Guidance Part 2a](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#page=51)

**Responsibility of individual practitioners**

All practitioners are accountable for their own practice and must adhere to their own professional guidelines, standards and codes of conduct. All practitioners should undertake training, learning and development appropriate to their role and level of responsibility in child protection, and should ensure that they are familiar with any single agency processes, protocols or guidance relevant to their role.

For role specific guidance please refer to the [National Guidance](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#page=51) Part 2a and single agency procedures and protocols available on your organisation’s intranet or staff resource site. If you require further clarification, please consult your Line Manager or contact the Public Protection Unit for advice.

##### 1.3: Involving parents and children

The protection and welfare of children must be at the heart of all considerations and decisions. Children and their main care givers should be involved and included at every stage of the child protection process, unless there is a clear and demonstrable reason why this would increase the risk to a child. Working in partnership with family members is key to the long-term beneficial outcomes for the child, and practitioners must take account of a family’s strengths as well as the areas of concern.

Practitioners must seek to achieve a shared understanding with parents.

* The views of parents and carers should always be listened to and considered, and accurately represented in Reports and at meetings.
* They should be given as much information as possible about what is happening and be involved in decision making, unless this increases the risk to the child.
* They should be supported to understand: what the concerns are; their role in any meetings, or why the decision has been made not to invite them to a meeting; their role in the Child Protection Plan.
* They should be supported to understand their rights, and any relevant complaints procedures.

Children must:

* Be helped to understand the concerns about them, what the child protection process is, who and what is involved and how they can contribute to decisions.
* Have their views sought, listened to, considered and accurately represented at every stage of assessment, planning and intervention.
* Be supported to contribute to and understand their Child Protection Plan and receive an accessible copy appropriate to their age, stage and understanding. Where professionals disagree with the child’s view of what action should or should not be taken, this must be explained to the child.

Supporting participation of parents and children may require the use of interpreters or specialist support for the use of augmentative and alternative communication.

Parents and children have the right to decline to share their views.

Further information to support involving children and families can be found in:

[National Guidance page 113-115](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#page=126)

[National Guidance page 3-5](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#page=16)

[National Guidance: Practice Insight 18](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-practice-insights/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023-practice-insights/govscot%3Adocument/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023-practice-insights.pdf#page=92)

Advice and guidance when services find it hard to engage parents can be found in the [National Guidance page 138](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#page=151)

##### 1.3b: Parent and child participation in meetings

Where possible, parents should be encouraged to attend all meetings. They may wish to bring a support person with them to attend a Child Protection Planning Meeting to help them to express their views and understand the discussion. The parent should be made aware that the support person has no other role in the meeting, and that they will hear potentially sensitive information discussed within the meeting. Practitioners should be aware of the current and previous experience of parents and support them with the potential impact of any trauma on their participation in meetings.

Careful consideration should be given to each child’s individual circumstances, when deciding whether they should attend Child Protection Planning Meetings and/or Core Group Meetings. The child’s age and understanding, any additional support needs, communication barriers and trauma experienced should be considered alongside the nature of the concerns about them. This decision should be made in conjunction with the child, parents and the practitioners who know the child best. Where a child attends a meeting, the Chair and all attending practitioners should ensure that it is conducted in the best interests of the child. Where a child is known to have a significant relationship with a trusted adult (eg a practitioner or extended family member) consideration should be given to them attending the meeting as the child’s advocate, with no decision making role.

**Exclusion from meetings**

In exceptional circumstances, the Chair may determine that a parent should not be invited to, or should be excluded from attending, all or part of a Child Protection Planning Meeting or Core Group. These could include:

* Where bail conditions preclude contact with the child or parent;
* Where there is concern that they present a significant risk of harm to others attending;
* Where domestic abuse is a consideration;
* Where the Child Protection Planning Meeting will consider a sibling group including half- or step-siblings, parents should be invited only to the parts of the meeting that consider the child(ren) for whom they have parental rights and responsibilities.

The reasons for a decision to exclude a parent need to be clearly documented. Their views should still be obtained and shared at the meeting and the Chair should identify who will notify them of the outcome and the timescale for carrying this out. This should be noted in the record of the meeting.

##### 1.4: How Concerns May Arise

All practitioners should undertake learning and development activity relevant to their role, to ensure that they are aware of the types of harm a child may experience, and potential indicators of concern.

Concerns may arise because of a one-off serious incident, or an accumulation of concerns over time, whether or not the child already has a Child Plan or is known to Social Work. Practitioners may become aware of a potential child protection concern in several ways, including:

* Their observations of the child’s presentation or behaviour.
* Their observations of the presentation and behaviour of the parents, or other adults in the child’s life.
* Something a child says.
* Reports from family members, a third party, colleagues, or an anonymous source.
* Notification that a child may become a member of the same household as a child in respect of whom any of the offences mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 has been committed, or a person who has committed any of the offences mentioned in Schedule 1.
* [Contextual safeguarding](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-practice-insights/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023-practice-insights/govscot%3Adocument/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023-practice-insights.pdf#page=26) information that gives rise to wider concerns such as exploitation, peer-on-peer, or online abuse.

When a child shares a concern:

* They must be taken seriously and supported.
* Information must be recorded in the child’s own words.
* Open-ended questions should be used (for example “what happened next?”).
* Closed or leading questions must be avoided (for example “Did dad hit you?”).
* “Why” questions must be avoided. These may make the child feel responsible for what has happened.
* Explain to the child that the information must be shared. Do not promise to keep anything secret.

Detailed information regarding recognising and responding to specific types of abuse and neglect can be found in [National Guidance Part 4.](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#page=149)

[Bullying pg 200](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" \l "page=213)

[Child Sexual Abuse pg 162](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#page=175)

[Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) pg 168](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" \l "page=181)

[Domestic abuse pg 150](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#page=164) (

[Emotional abuse pg 147](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#page=160)

[Fabricated or induced illness pg 211](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" \l "page=224)

[Female genital mutilation pg 207](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#page=220)

[Harmful Sexual behaviour by children pg 173](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" \l "page=186)

[Hate crime pg 201](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" \l "page=214)

[Historical (non-recent) abuse pg 220](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" \l "page=233)

[Honour-based abuse and forced marriage pg 209](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#page=222)

[Indecent images and internet-enabled sexual offending by adults pg 172](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" \l "page=185)

[Missing children pg 188](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" \l "page=201)

[Neglect pg 147](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#page=160)

[Online abuse pg 177](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" \l "page=190)

[Physical abuse, equal protection and restraint pg 158](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#page=171)

[Suicide and self-harm pg 146](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" \l "page=159)

[Trafficking and child criminal exploitation pg 197](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" \l "page=208)

##### 1.5: Concerns about staff, service providers and people in positions of trust

Where the concern relates to a practitioner’s behaviour in their paid or unpaid work with children, the paramount consideration is the welfare of any child concerned.

Any practitioner who has information that indicates the behaviour of a colleague from their own or another agency, service or organisation may present a risk of harm to a child or children must [record](#_1.6:_Recording_concerns) and [report](#_2.2:_Reporting_Concerns) their concerns in line with these procedures.

Practitioners should also consider utilising their organisation’s Whistleblowing protocols, where appropriate.

Child Protection Procedures should take precedence over any disciplinary process or complaints procedures.

If the threshold of significant harm is not met, it may still be necessary to notify the employer or relevant organisation of the person’s behaviour, for them to undertake appropriate investigation or action.

Where a concern about a person who works with children or adults arises in their private life, the Interagency Referral Discussion should consider when to inform their employer/organisation.

Further information on concerns relating to a person in a position of trust can be found in [National Guidance page 93](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#page=106)

Scottish Borders Protocol for responding to allegations against foster carers can be found in [Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further).

##### 1.6: Specific circumstances of the child or family

For some children, there may be circumstances in their lives which create an increased risk of potential significant harm or impact on their parents’ ability to provide care and protection. These may include:

* Characteristics of the child, such as developmental stage, disability, or mental health.
* Characteristics of the parents, such as mental health, learning disability or alcohol or drug use.
* Specifics of the indicators of concern, such as the presence of bruising in non-mobile infants and children.

These characteristics may require particular attention, or a specific approach to supporting the child and family.

**Local protocols for specific circumstances can be found in** [**Section 3**](#_Section_3:_Further) **of these Procedures.**

Information and guidance regarding specific circumstances can be found in [National Guidance Part 4.](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#page=149)

[Children at risk of being drawn into terrorism pg205](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" \l "page=218)

[Children experiencing mental health problems pg 145](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" \l "page=158)

[Complex investigations pg 205](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" \l "page=218)

[Cultural and faith communities pg 216](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" \l "page=229)

[Defence community pg 218](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" \l "page=231)

[Disabled children pg 140](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" \l "page=153)

[Disasters and emergencies pg 219](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" \l "page=232)

[Harmful Sexual behaviour by children pg 173](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" \l "page=186)

[Missing children pg 188](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" \l "page=201)

[Obesity as a cause for escalating concerns pg 162](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" \l "page=175)

[Parental alcohol and drugs use pg 156](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" \l "page=169)

[Parental mental health problems pg 143](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" \l "page=157)

[Parents with learning disabilities pg 142](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" \l "page=156)

[Poverty pg 137](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" \l "page=150)

[Serious Harmful behaviour by children above and below age of criminal responsibility pg 202](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#page=215)

[Transitional phases pg 199](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" \l "page=212)

[Unaccompanied and asylum seeking children pg 193](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" \l "page=193)

[Underage sexual activity pg 180](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" \l "page=193)

[When services find it hard to engage pg 138](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" \l "page=151)

##### 1.7: Recording concerns

Each agency is responsible for maintaining accurate and secure records.

Any practitioner who becomes aware of a child protection concern must record the basic facts as soon as possible. This should include **who** is involved, **what** happened, **where** and **when**. All practitioners should maintain accurate on-going records of their involvement with a child or family.

* All practitioners should ensure that they adhere to their own agency’s recording and storage protocols.
* Information should be recorded as soon as possible after the event.
* Recording should be concise and accurate, clearly differentiating between fact and opinion.
* Clear reasons for decisions should be stated.
* The Chronology of Significant Events should be kept up to date.

Further information regarding information to record can be found in [National Guidance pg 90](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#page=103)

Everyone should be aware that records may be used as evidence in Court, and the child and/or their family may request access to their records.

##### 1.8: Information sharing

Sharing relevant information as soon as possible is essential to protecting children from harm, by enabling robust risk assessment and planning. If asked for information as part of the Child Protection process, agencies or organisations must comply. Information shared should only be that which is necessary for child protection purposes. All staff and volunteers should be supported by their organisation to be confident in sharing information appropriately and be guided in working and applying the law by their organisation’s procedures.

It is not necessary to seek consent from a child or their parents before sharing information when there is a child protection concern. Consent requires people to have real choice and control about the sharing of their personal data. In most situations where there is a child protection concern, parents will not have real choice or control – the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration and overrides all other duties. Seeking consent may place the child at increased risk.

If in doubt about information sharing, seek advice from line managers, or those in the organisation with responsibility for child protection or information governance. **Seeking advice should not delay making a Child Protection Referral, or sharing basic factual information about the child and the nature and degree of actual or likely harm at any stage.**

**Restricted access** **information**

Restricted access information is information that cannot be shared freely with the child or parents, anyone supporting them, or practitioners not directly involved in the Child Protection process. It includes sub judice information which could compromise legal proceedings; information from a third party that could identify them if shared; information about an individual that may not be known to others, even close family members, such as medical history and intelligence reports; and information that, if shared, could place any individual(s) at risk, such as a home address or school which is unknown to an ex-partner.

* Restricted Access Information will not be circulated in writing prior to Child Protection Planning Meeting although will be shared verbally with those practitioners/agencies who need to know.
* Restricted Access Information shared or discussed during Child Protection Planning Meeting may NOT be shared with any other person, including the child and/or family, without the prior permission of the provider.

Further guidance on information sharing can be found in [National Guidance pg 27](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#page=40) and [GIRFEC Practice Guidance 4 – Information Sharing](https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-right-child-girfec-practice-guidance-4-information-sharing/pages/1/)

Local information sharing protocols can be found in the Child’s Planning Manual and Pan-Lothian and Borders Partnership: General Protocol for Sharing Information (See [Section 3)](#_Section_3:_Further)

##### 1.9: Analysis and professional judgement

Decision making and planning in the Child Protection process must be underpinned by a thorough analysis of the available information. Practitioners should exercise their professional judgement to understand the potential risk of harm, and the impact of any situation on a child.

Factors to consider in analysis include:

* The nature, extent and duration of the harm, including past occurrences or patterns of concern.
* The child’s experience, needs and feelings as far as they are known.
* The child’s development in context, including any additional medical, communication or developmental needs.
* Parent responses to concerns.
* The existence of any [specific circumstances](#_1.6:_Specific_circumstances), such as poverty, domestic abuse, or parental mental ill health or drug or alcohol use.
* Evidence from research.
* Known strengths and protective factors in the child’s family and wider world.
* What is unknown, uncertain, or unclear, as well as what is known.

Where more than one child is involved (eg in a sibling group, or care setting) care must be taken to consider each child individually: the impact of similar experiences may be different for each child, depending on their age, stage, and capabilities, and the protective factors available to them.

The GIRFEC tools [My World Triangle](https://www.gov.scot/publications/shanarri/pages/my-world-triangle/) and [Resilience Matrix](https://www.gov.scot/publications/shanarri/pages/resilience-matrix/), and the [National Risk Assessment Framework](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-risk-framework-support-assessment-children-young-people/) are available to all practitioners to aid analysis. Agencies and organisations may have additional specific tools, and practitioners should be familiar with these and the expectations of their use. Any tool should be used to support, rather than replace, a practitioner’s professional judgement.

Further information to support the use of professional judgement in determining the risk of significant harm can be found in the [National Guidance page 92](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#page=105)

##### 1.10: Alternative responses to the child’s situation

A key theme of the National Guidance for Child Protection 2021 – updated 2023 is that the most effective protection of children involves early support within the family, to prevent the risk of harm arising or to effect change before urgent or intensive interventions are required to keep a child safe from harm. The Scottish policy and practice model [Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/) aims to provide all children with “the right help, at the right time, from the right people”. Child Protection sits within the GIRFEC continuum of supportive, preventative, and protective work which can achieve this aim.

Not all Child Protection Referrals are in relation to “significant harm”. Risk is fluid, and professional judgement as to significant harm can change as the child’s situation changes and/or further information and understanding are gained.

At key stages throughout the child protection process, a decision can be made that there is an alternative more appropriate response to the child’s situation.

* At Child Protection Referral
* At Interagency Referral Discussion
* At Initial and Review Child Protection Planning Meeting
* Where changed circumstances or new information leads to substantially increased or decreased perception of the risk of harm.

Alternative responses that should be considered include:

* **Emergency measures,** such as a Child Protection Order, or Exclusion Order, and including voluntary accommodation under Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Further details can be found in the [National Guidance page 108](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#page=121)
* **Referral to the Children’s Reporter** This should be based on consideration of the possible [Grounds of Referral](http://www.scra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Guidance-on-Referral-to-Reporter.pdf). A referral to the Reporter is not a suitable contingency plan to manage or mitigate risk; bringing the child into another system or process will not in itself make them safer.
* **Meeting Around the Child.** Where there is a risk of harm which is not considered to be “significant” the child and family may benefit from targeted multi-agency support and a Child Plan to promote their safety and wellbeing. Information can be found in the Child Planning Manual ([Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further)).
* **Family Group Decision Making**

##### 1.11: Transition for children aged 15+

These Child Protection Procedures apply up to the age of 16, and a child’s name will be removed from the Child Protection Register when they reach their 16th birthday.

Where a child’s name is placed, or remains, on the Child Protection Register after their 15th birthday, early consideration should be given to meeting any on-going support and safety needs following their removal from the Child Protection Register. Not all children will meet the three-point criteria for Adult Support and Protection interventions, and careful planning and collaborative work will be required to ensure that children and families are supported during this transition period.

Depending on the needs, capabilities, and circumstances of the individual, this might include, for example:

* Professional discussion between members of the Core Group and/or the Child Protection and Reviewing Officer and their adult services counterparts.
* Attendance of relevant adult services practitioners at Review Child Protection Planning Meeting(s) and/or Core Group meetings.
* A period of joint work between adult and children’s services, in furtherance of the Outcomes of the Child Protection Plan.
* Transfer from Child Protection Registration to Adult Support and Protection procedures where the child meets the three-point criteria.

The Child Protection Plan should reflect transition arrangements, and children and families should be supported to understand how and why service provision will change.

Further information to support positive transitions for children in need of protection can be found in the [National Guidance pg199](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#page=212)

##### 1.12: Disagreement and Dissent

The multi-agency context of the Child Protection process means that differences in professional judgement are at times inevitable. Robust discussion and respectful challenge of colleagues can be valuable part of the Child Protection process, furthering a shared understanding of the child’s situation and its potential impact on them.

Practitioners should make every effort to come to mutual understanding and agreement about the nature of the risk of harm to a child, and the appropriate response, through professional discussion and reflective supervision. Where this is not possible, the **Scottish Borders Joint Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection Escalation Protocol** (see [Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further)) provides an informal mechanism for practitioners to resolve differences of opinion.

Practitioners must also maintain responsibility for their own judgement. At times, a practitioner may remain concerned that the collective decision or response is not adequate to keep a child safe from significant harm, or there may be fundamental disagreement between agencies over the way to proceed in an individual case which cannot be resolved through the Escalation Protocol. The **Child and Adult Services Dispute Resolution Protocol** (see [Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further)) is a more formal mechanism for resolving such situations.

Where a practitioner has a concern about the conduct of a colleague, they should contact their agency’s Human Resources department to initiate Whistle-Blowing procedures.

Where a practitioner has a concern about the conduct of a colleague from a different agency, the Dispute Resolution Protocol will apply.

In both cases, where the conduct may cause significant harm to a child, the practitioner should report their concerns as per these procedures.

Parents and children may disagree with the contents of a Report, or the actions in a Child Plan. Where this is the case, their view should be noted and taken into account in subsequent decision making and planning.

Parents and children have no right of appeal against the decision of the IRD or Child Protection Planning Meeting. Involvement in Child Protection processes does not negate their right to make a complaint if they are unhappy with the conduct of individual practitioners, or the service they have received. They should be supported to understand their right to do this, and the relevant agency’s Complaints Process, by the Child Protection and Reviewing Officer or Lead Professional.

##### 1.13: Quality Assurance and learning from practice

The Public Protection Committee carries out various Quality Assurance activities, to ensure that our Child Protection Procedures are effective in reducing risk to children, support consistent practice and recognise patterns of concern. Quality Assurance activity highlights good practice as well as areas for improvement. Quality Assurance activity is reported to the Child Protection Delivery Group, with appropriate matters referred to the Public Protection Committee.

All practitioners may be asked to provide information to support Quality Assurance activity, which includes:

* Statistical data collection and analysis, against local and national performance indicators. Where timescales or targets have not been achieved, individual case records will be examined to determine the reasons for this and identify any strategic or operational action required.
* Statistical and qualitative data collection and analysis, via practitioner, parent, and child surveys.
* Themed audits. These provide an overview of a particular topic or aspect of Child Protection practice and may require a review the records of all children involved in the Child Protection process or a representative sample.
* Regular monitoring meetings, which provide an opportunity to identify and take action to prevent potential delays in appropriate response to the child’s situation.

The Public Protection Committee considers Child Protection practice to be of a consistently high quality across all agencies. Occasionally, Quality Assurance activity may highlight areas for improvement an individual practitioner’s practice. Relevant information will be shared with the appropriate Line Manager to be discussed through the appropriate professional supervision process.

**Learning Reviews**

Where a child has been significantly harmed or dies whilst involved in the Child Protection process, or in circumstances that suggest abuse or neglect was a contributory factor, the Public Protection Committee may undertake a Learning Review in order to bring together agencies, individuals and families in a collective endeavour to learn from what has happened in order to improve and develop systems and practice in the future and thus better protect children and young people.

# Section 2: The Child Protection Process

This section provides operational information relevant to all practitioners who may contribute to our Child Protection Process.

[2.1 Timescales for the Child Protection Process](#_Toc160039842)

[2.2: Reporting Concerns](#_Toc160039843)

[2.3: Child Protection Referral](#_Toc160039844)

[2.4: Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD)](#_Toc160039845)

[2.5: Joint Investigative Interviews](#_Toc160039846)

[2.6: Medical Examinations](#_Toc160039847)

[2.7: Child Protection Planning Meetings](#_Toc160039848)

[2.7b: Responsibilities prior to the Child Protection Planning Meeting](#_Toc160039849)

[2.7c: Responsibilities at the Child Protection Planning Meeting](#_Toc160039850)

[2.7d: Responsibilities following the Child Protection Planning Meeting](#_Toc160039851)

[2.8: The Child Protection Register](#_Toc160039852)

[2.9: Child Protection Plan](#_Toc160039853)

[2.10: Core Group](#_Toc160039854)

[2.11: Support following de-registration](#_Toc160039855)

[2.12: Pre-and Post-birth assessment and planning](#_Toc160039856)

[2.13: Parallel Processes](#_Toc160039857)

2.1 Timescales for the Child Protection Process

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Child Protection Referral** | As soon as possible where concerns are identified. |
| **Interagency Referral Discussion** | **Start**: As soon as possible following Child Protection Referral.  **End**: Within 28 calendar days of IRD start. |
| **Child Protection Planning Meetings** |  |
| Initial CPPM: | Within 28 calendar days of the IRD start date. |
| Pre-birth CPPM: | Within 28 calendar days of the IRD start date, and wherever possible by 28th week of gestation. |
| Transfer CPPM: | Within 28 calendar days of the request for transfer. |
| **Provision of Reports for Initial, Pre-birth and Transfer CPPM** | **Submission to Public Protection Unit:** 7 calendar days prior to the meeting  **Sharing with child and parent**: at least 5 calendar days prior to meeting. |
| Review CPPM: | **Where the Initial CP Case Conference is held on or before 31/03/2024, the first Review will be within 3 months, and 6 monthly thereafter.**  **For Initial CPPMs held on or after 01/04/20 2**  Within 6 months of the Initial CPPM, and 6 monthly thereafter.  Where there has been a **Pre-Birth CPPM,** Review CPPMs will be held every 3 months until the first Review CPPM following the child’s birth, and 6 monthly thereafter. |
| **Provision of Reports for Review CPPM** | **Submission to Public Protection Unit:** 10 calendar days prior to the meeting  **Sharing with child and parent**: at least 5 calendar days prior to meeting. |
| Discharge Planning or Post-Delivery Review Meeting | Following birth of unborn baby on Child Protection Register, prior to leaving hospital or as soon as possible for birth in community setting. |
| Reconvened CPPM: | Within 14 calendar days of the postponed or adjourned Child Protection Planning Meeting |
| **Documentation from Child Protection Planning Meetings** | **Outline CP Plan:** circulated to invitation list by Chair within 1 calendar day of the Initial or Pre-birth Child Protection Planning Meeting  **Updated CP Plan:** circulated to invitation list by Lead Professional within 7 calendar days of Review Child Protection Planning Meeting  **Note of the meeting**: circulated to Child Protection Planning Meeting invitation list within 14 days of the meeting. |
| **Core Group** |  |
| Initial Core Group meeting | Within 15 calendar days of the Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting |
| Subsequent Core Group meetings | At least every 6 weeks.  No more than 14 calendar days prior to Review Child Protection Planning Meeting |
| Step-down Meeting Around the Child | Within 15 calendar days of the child’s name being removed from the Child Protection Register. |
| **Documentation from Core Group** | **Record of Review**: shared within 14 calendar days of meeting.  **Child Protection Plan**: reviewed, updated, and circulated as required.  **Multi-agency Chronology:** reviewed, updated, and circulated as required. |

2.2: Reporting Concerns

Where there is a child protection concern, relevant and proportionate information must be shared without delay. Practitioners do not need to be certain that a child has been harmed or is at immediate risk of significant harm before reporting a concern.

**Practitioners across all agencies and sectors should ensure that they are clear as to the specific reporting policies of their agency, organisation, or service.**

Depending on role and agency or organisation’s guidance, reporting a concern may mean:

1. Informing the designated person (“child protection advisor/co-ordinator” or “responsible person”) within their agency or organisation
   1. The designated person will listen to concerns and give advice on what action needs to be taken. If appropriate they will make, or recommend making, a Child Protection Referral.
   2. Where a practitioner is unable to contact their designated person or they are not satisfied that the response is adequate to address the risk of harm to the child, they should make a Child Protection Referral without delay.
2. Making a [**Child Protection Referral**](#_2.7:_Child_Protection) directly to Social Work.

Where the child is known to have a Lead Professional, the practitioner or designated person should share information relating to the concern with them, whether or not the decision is made to make a Child Protection Referral.

2.3: Child Protection Referral

All Child Protection Referrals should be made by telephone.

Children and Families Duty Social Work Team: 01896 662787

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours): 01896 752111

All relevant information regarding the child and their situation should be shared.

Examples of relevant information include:

* Basic factual information about the child such as name, date of birth, address.
* The nature and degree of the actual or likely harm.
* The impact or potential impact of the harm on the child’s health and development.
* Whether other children are affected.
* The child’s experience, needs and feelings.
* Any additional needs, medical condition, communication or developmental difference, or disability that may affect their health, wellbeing, vulnerability, and care needs.
* The parent or carers’ response to concerns.
* Past events or concerns.
* Frequency or patterns of harm or suspected harm.
* The parents or carers capacity to protect and care for the child.
* The child’s culture, family network, community.
* Strengths or protective factors.
* The likelihood of risk of harm continuing or reoccurring.

Where support is currently, or was previously, offered to the family to address the risk of harm (eg through a Meeting Around the Child), information about this, and the extent to which it has been successful, should be shared.

Practitioners making a Child Protection Referral should complete and return a Confirmation of Referral Form ([Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further)) and an up-to-date Chronology of Significant Events with Analysis immediately following the referral telephone call. Where the child is known to have a Lead Professional, a copy of the Confirmation of Referral Form should be shared with them.

The Child Protection Referral should be recorded as per agency or organisation guidelines. Where a decision has been made not to share information, this should be clearly documented with the reasons for not sharing.

Additional guidance on what information to share and record when making a Child Protection Referral can be found in the [National Guidance pg 90](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#page=103)

2.4: Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD)

An Interagency Referral Discussion ensures a co-ordinated assessment and planning process up to the point a Child Protection Planning Meeting is held, or a decision is made that alternative action is required.

An IRD is a process, rather than a single meeting or discussion, and may begin out with normal office hours with a focus on any immediate protective actions. Whilst an IRD can be requested by any agency, the decision to start an IRD will be made by a designated practitioner from Social Work, Health, or the Police. Where a designated practitioner initiates an IRD, all other agencies must engage with the process.

Designated practitioners are:

* Child Protection and Reviewing Officers.
* Child Protection Nurses.
* Police Officers based at the Public Protection Unit.
* Paediatrician with responsibility for Child Protection.
* Social Workers in the Emergency Duty Social Work Team (for Child Protection Referrals out of office hours).
* Police Response Inspector (for Child Protection Referrals out of office hours).
* Line Managers of any of the above staff.

Designated practitioners from Social Work, Health and the Police must participate in an IRD. Representatives of other services or organisations included as appropriate for the individual child and their circumstances. These representatives should be sufficiently senior to assess and discuss available information and make decisions on behalf of their agencies, and could include:

* Child Protection Education Officer.
* A representative of a third sector organisation with significant involvement with the child.

IRD participants are responsible for checking their agency’s information systems and sharing all relevant information. The IRD may request additional information from any service or organisation, and this must be provided.

**Decisions and planning**

The Interagency Referral Discussion considers what is already known about the child, their family and the circumstances that led to the Child Protection Referral. Participants will consider whether the available information indicates that a child is at risk of significant harm and determine what the appropriate response should be. Decision making is not a one-off event but happens throughout the process as an understanding of the child’s experience and circumstances develops.

Further investigations or assessments may be required to inform decision making. These may include:

* A [Joint Investigative Interview](#_2.5:_Joint_Investigative) or [medical assessment](#_2.6:_Medical_Examinations).
* an assessment of the parents’ ability to care for the child.

The IRD should consider the [full range of responses](#_1.10:_Alternative_responses) that can address any perceived risk of harm to the child, in order to determine the most appropriate and proportionate action to be taken, including the need for emergency measures.

Where the available information indicates that there is a likely risk of significant harm, and a Child Protection Plan will be of benefit to the child, the IRD should convene a Child Protection Planning Meeting.

It is best practice for the IRD to make a final decision within 14 calendar days of starting, to allow time for reports to be written and shared with the child and family ahead of an Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting.

Where there are specific circumstances (such as risk of harm from a Schedule 1 Offender, or suspected or actual Child Sexual Exploitation) the IRD should consider the use of relevant local protocols contained in [Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further) of these Procedures.

Whatever the outcome, the IRD should clearly identify who is responsible for progressing the follow-on action, and discussing with the child, parents, and any relevant agencies or services.

**Interim Safety Planning**

As soon as possible the IRD will identify any critical actions required to secure the child’s immediate safety, ensuring these are clearly recorded as Actions from the IRD.

Where a decision is made to proceed to a Child Protection Planning Meeting, the Child Protection and Reviewing Officer will create and share an Interim Safety Plan. This should clearly identify who is doing what to ensure the child’s immediate safety; who is responsible for seeing the child and how often; and who is responsible for monitoring the plan prior to the Child Protection Planning Meeting.

Any Actions from the IRD, and/or Interim Safety Plan will be communicated to the child, parents and any other relevant people by the child’s allocated Social Worker. Each IRD participant will liaise with relevant front-line staff in their agency to ensure that actions are understood and carried out.

**Closing the IRD**

The IRD should be closed when there is multi-agency agreement about the level of assessed risk; the need for a CPPM or other action, and an Interim Safety Plan (where required) has been devised and shared.

The IRD should clearly identify:

* What feedback to the referrer is appropriate, and who is going to provide this.
* Who will inform the family of the outcome of the IRD.

**Recording of IRDs**

The Social Work representative will maintain a comprehensive, on-going, record of the IRD discussion and decisions made. Other agency practitioners will ensure that the IRD is appropriately documented in their agency records.

Further information on the Interagency Referral Discussion can be found in [National Guidance page 95](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#page=108)

2.5: Joint Investigative Interviews

An IRD will decide whether a Joint Investigative Interview (JII) is needed. The purpose of a JII is to:

* learn the child’s account of the circumstances that prompted the enquiry.
* gather information to permit decision-making on whether the child, or any other child, needs protection.
* gather sufficient evidence to suggest whether a crime may have been committed against the child or anyone else.
* secure evidence, as appropriate for court proceedings, for example, a criminal trial or a Children’s Hearing proof.

Joint Investigative Interviews are carried out by Social Workers and Police who are specifically trained to interview children and vulnerable witnesses using the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM). The Joint Investigative Interview process is co-ordinated through the Public Protection Unit.

For further information regarding SCIM, see [Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM).](https://www.cosla.gov.uk/about-cosla/our-teams/children-and-young-people/joint-investigative-interviews-of-child-victims-and-witnesses)

**Practitioners undertaking JIIs should follow their agency procedures and guidance.**

2.6: Medical Examinations

The decisionto carry out a medical assessment and the decision about the type of medical examination is made by a Paediatrician informed by the IRD. The purpose of a Child Protection medical assessment is to:

* establish what immediate treatment the child may need.
* provide a specialist medical opinion on whether or not child abuse or neglect is a likely cause of the child’s presentation.
* support multi-agency planning and decision-making.
* establish if there are unmet health needs, and to secure any on-going health care (including mental health), investigations, monitoring, and treatment that the child may require.

Consideration will be given to how the child may be examined in child-friendly surroundings, with the right support for their age, stage and understanding. The number of examinations will be kept to a minimum.

As far as can be achieved in the circumstances, the IRD should ensure the examining doctor is provided with:

* all relevant information about the cause for concern.
* information on previous concerns about abuse or neglect.
* the inter-agency plan to meet the child’s needs at this stage.
* relevant known background of the family or other relevant adults.
* information from joint investigative interview if available.
* preparatory discussion with the relevant social work and police officer.
* preparatory meeting with parent or carer and child.

For further information regarding medical examinations can be found in [National Guidance pg 104](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#page=117)

**Practitioners undertaking medical examinations should follow their agency procedures and guidance.**

The Flowchart for Medical Assessment (NHS Borders) **c**an be found in [Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further)

2.7: Child Protection Planning Meetings

Child Protection Planning Meetings are convened on behalf of the Public Protection Committee and are chaired by Child Protection and Reviewing Officers.

The Chair, wherever possible, will not have any direct involvement with the case or have any supervisory responsibility in relation to any practitioner who is involved in the case. They will be sufficiently objective to challenge contributing services on the lack of progress of any agreed action, including their own.

The Chair is responsible for the scheduling, administration, and process of Child Protection Planning Meetings:

* Ensuring appropriate timescales, participation (including any appropriate [exclusion](#_1.3b:_Parent_and) from attendance) and record keeping.
* Where a Child Protection Planning Meeting considers more than one child, ensuring the needs and rights of each individual child are taken into account. This may, for example, including inviting relevant adults into the meeting at different times depending on which child(ren) they are parent for.
* Ensuring that there are appropriate facilities available for parents or children attending only part of a meeting.
* Ensuring that parents and the child understand the purpose and process of the meeting, and their rights.
* Ensuring that the views of parents and the child are represented in the meeting and taken seriously.
* Facilitating discussion focussed on analysis and decision making.
* Where the Child’s name is place on the Child Protection Register, identifying the Lead Professional and Core Group Members.
* Ensuring an accurate record is made and disseminated appropriately.

All effort must be made to undertake the Child Protection Planning Meeting on the scheduled date. Occasionally, the Chair may decide it is necessary to postpone the meeting, for up to 14 calendar days, for example, if:

* parents are unavailable due to a medical appointment, Court appearance, or Children’s Hearing or other significant event,
* a key agency is unable to provide a representative.

To provide consistency for the child and family, the same person should Chair the Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting, the Initial Core Group meeting, and all subsequent Review Child Protection Planning Meetings wherever possible.

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2.7b: Responsibilities prior to the Child Protection Planning Meeting

**Provision of reports**

Each agency invited to the Child Protection Planning Meeting will submit a Report, including a Chronology of Significant Events with Analysis, using the appropriate format, detailing involvement with the child and significant adults in the child's life.

Reports to Child Protection Planning Meetings should include:

* **Risk factors** Who or what is presenting a risk to the child, and their impact on the child.
* **Child’s vulnerabilities** (anything about the child that increases the impact of the risk).
* Any factors which reduce the risk (**protective factors**); and
* **Evidence** to support their risk analysis (what they have seen or heard, or their professional knowledge based on research/experience).
* For **Review Child Protection Planning Meeting:** what has changed since the previous Child Protection Planning Meeting.
* A **recommendation** as to whether the child’s name should be added to/remain on/be removed from the Child Protection Register.

Practitioners should refer to their single agency guidance as to the content and format of their report.

Reports will be **submitted** to the Public Protection Unit:

* Initial, Pre-birth and Transfer CPPM: seven calendar days prior to the scheduled date of Child Protection Planning Meeting
* Review CPPM: ten calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the Child Protection Planning Meeting.

All information, other than **Restricted Access Information**, contained in reports will be shared openly with the parent(s)/carer(s) and the child at least five calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the Child Protection Planning Meeting.

All information shared by practitioners must be used and stored appropriately by those receiving it. Where agencies cannot undertake the secure storage of information, they should not keep it.

**Ensuring representation**

A multi-agency perspective is necessary to gain a holistic picture of the child’s circumstances. The CPPM Chair will determine suitable representation to enable effective analysis and decision making.

All invited agencies should ensure that they have appropriate representation at a Child Protection Planning Meeting. Agencies must ensure that their representative is fully informed and able to bring all relevant information to the Child Protection Planning Meeting, including relevant and proportionate information about parents, carers and other significant adults.

Where it is not possible for the specific practitioner invited to the Child Protection Planning Meeting to attend, an alternate should be identified. The Chair, child and their parents should be informed as soon as possible prior to the meeting date. When determining whether to postpone or adjourn a Child Protection Planning Meeting to enable agency representation, the Chair will balance the need for suitable representation with the best interest of the child to proceed in a timely manner.

For an Initial or Pre-Birth Child Protection Planning Meeting to be Quorate, there must be representation from:

* Social Work
* Police
* NHS
* Education/early Years (for all cases where a child attends)
* Any other services involved with the child and/or their family, as deemed appropriate by the Chair.

For a Review Child Protection Planning Meeting to be Quorate, there should be representation from at least 3 of the above agencies or services, as deemed appropriate by the Chair.

2.7c: Responsibilities at the Child Protection Planning Meeting

All practitioners attending a Child Protection Planning Meeting should ensure that they:

* Are fully informed about the child’s situation and able to bring all relevant information to the Child Protection Planning Meeting.
* Can attend for the complete meeting.
* Contribute to information sharing, analysis and decision making during the meeting.

**Restricted access information** will be discussed without the family present. The Chair will explain to the family why this will happen. Such information may not be shared after the meeting with any other person without the explicit permission of the provider.

**Analysis**

Child Protection Planning Meetings must focus on analysis: making sense of information in order to inform decisions and next steps. Child Protection Planning Meetings should consider:

* Why risks may have arisen - the reasons, triggers, history.
* What they mean for the child/ren - their significance and impact.
* How, if possible, they may be addressed - how best to manage, minimise and resolve.
* At **Review Child Protection Planning Meeting**: What difference has a Child Protection Plan made for the child, and are the family able to sustain change?

Where a Child Protection Planning Meeting considers more than one child, attention should be given to considering the potential different impact of the situation on each individual child.

Further useful information to support effective analysis can be found in the [National Guidance page 92](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#page=105); and [National Guidance page 127](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#page=140).

**Adjourning a Child Protection Planning Meeting**

Occasionally the Chair may decide that there is a need to adjourn the Child Protection Planning Meeting, for example if:

* New information becomes available, which requires consideration or clarification.
* Significant gaps in available information make decision making unachievable, including any planned assessments or examinations that are incomplete.
* Unforeseen absence of parent(s) or critical professionals meaning the meeting is not Quorate.
* An attendee becomes distressed or angry to the extent that it is not possible to continue with the meeting.

An adjournment may be for a few minutes, or a longer period, depending on the reasons. Where the Child Protection Planning Meeting will not resume on the same day, the Interim Safety Plan will remain in effect. It should be reviewed prior to adjournment to ensure that it remains appropriate to ensure the safety of the child.

In all cases, the Child Protection Planning Meeting must be scheduled to reconvene within 14 calendar days.

**Decision making**

**The Scottish Borders procedure for decision making at CPPM diverges from the National Guidance for Child Protection 2021 – updated 2023.**

Practitioners in attendance at the Child Protection Planning Meeting will be required to make a clear statement as to whether they believe the child is at risk of significant harm and their name should be placed on (or remain on) the Child Protection Register. Parents, the child and any support person or advocate are not required to make this statement.

* Where a Child Protection Planning Meeting considers more than one child, or there is an imbalance of agency representation, the Chair will identify the appropriate practitioners to make this statement for each child. This decision and the reasons for it will be clearly recorded in the meeting documentation.
* Where there is a split decision, the Chair will make the final determination.
* Where there is irreconcilable difference of opinion, individual practitioners who consider that insufficient action is being taken to reduce the risk of harm to the child should consider using the Escalation Protocol ([Section 3](#_Section_3:_Further)).

Where an unborn baby is placed on the Child Protection Register, the Child Protection Planning Meeting should agree arrangements for a [post-birth meeting.](#_2.12:_Pre-and_Post-birth)

When a child’s name is placed on the Child Protection Register, a Lead Professional and Core Group membership will be agreed. A multi-agency [Child Protection Plan](#_2.9:_Child_Protection) must be put in place. The child Protection Planning Meeting will agree the desired Outcomes for the child and a Child Protection Plan for further development at the Initial Core Group Meeting.

Where the child is not considered to be at risk of significant harm, or their name is removed from the Child Protection Register, the Child Protection Planning Meeting should consider [alternative single- or multi-agency responses](#_1.10:_Alternative_responses) and identify the practitioner responsible for progressing this.

**Referral to the Children’s Reporter**

The Child Protection Planning Meeting must consider whether a referral to the Children’s Reporter should be made. If a referral to the Children’s Reporter is to be made, the Child Protection Planning Meeting should agree who will do this and by when.

**Documentation**

A dedicated note-taker, who has no active role in discussion or decision making should be available for all Child Protection Planning Meetings. The note of the meeting should be a concise reflection of the discussion, in a form that everyone can understand. It should clearly identify:

* who was in attendance at the meeting, and the reasons for absence of any invitees.
* what Reports were considered.
* the risks and protective factors for the child;
* the perceived impact on the child;
* decisions made.

2.7d: Responsibilities following the Child Protection Planning Meeting

Immediately following the Child Protection Planning Meeting, the Chair will:

* ensure that the child’s details are accurately recorded on, or removed from, the local Child Protection Register.
* inform the child’s parents of the outcome of the Child Protection Planning Meeting if they are not present.

The Chair will ensure that any documentation is circulated to the invitation list:

* **Outline CP Plan:** circulated to invitation list by Chair within 1 calendar day of the Initial or Pre-birth Child Protection Planning Meeting
* **Updated CP Plan:** circulated to invitation list by Lead Professional within 7 calendar days of Review Child Protection Planning Meeting
* **Note of the meeting**: circulated to Child Protection Planning Meeting invitation list within 14 days of the meeting.

All agencies should ensure that the child’s record is updated according to their agency guidelines, including amending any Child Protection marking where the child’s name has been added to, or removed from the Child Protection Register.

The Lead Professional should ensure that parents and the child understand:

* the decisions that were made at the Child Protection Planning Meeting.
* what will happen next, including any actions for them in the Child Protection Plan.
* their rights, including the right to make a complaint.

2.8: The Child Protection Register

The Child Protection Register assists in the identification and co-ordination of information about, and support for a child who is considered to be at risk of significant harm.

The Child Protection Register contains limited information on a child and family. It includes:

* the full names, including known other names, dates of birth and current and previous addresses of a child.
* names of the general practitioner, social worker, and any other agencies involved.
* the dates of Child Protection Planning Meetings held for the child.
* a record of all enquiries in respect of a particular child or family.

**Adding a child’s name to the Child Protection Register**

A child’s name may be added to the Scottish Borders Child Protection Register by majority decision at:

* Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting
* Pre-Birth Child Protection Planning Meeting
* Transfer Child Protection Planning Meeting

**Removing a child’s name from the Child Protection Register**

A child’s name may be removed from the Scottish Borders Child Protection Register:

* At any Review Child Protection Planning Meeting, where child is no longer considered to be at risk of significant harm.
* When a child becomes Looked After away from home (see [Parallel Processes](#_2.13:_Parallel_Processes))
* Where a child reaches the age of 16 (see [Transition for children aged 15+)](#_1.11:_Transition_for)
* Following a Transfer Child Protection Planning Meeting, where the child’s name has been added to the Child Protection Register of another local authority area.

Parents may also choose to withdraw from the Child Protection process, resulting in the need for the child’s name to be removed from the Child Protection Register. Parents should be informed in writing once this has been done.

**Access to the Child Protection Register**

The Child Protection Register is kept up to date by Children and Families Social Work on behalf of the agencies represented on the Scottish Borders Public Protection Committee. Senior personnel of these agencies are entitled to access the Child Protection Register and each agency has its own procedure for this.

Enquiries as to whether a child’s name is included in the Child Protection Register should be made to:

Child Protection Unit, Marigold Drive, Langlee, Galashiels. 01896 664159 [cpu@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:cpu@scotborders.gov.uk)

or out of office hours Emergency Duty Social Work Team 01896 752111 [edt@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:edt@scotborders.gov.uk)

The Child Protection and Reviewing Officer or their representative will:

* Take the name, professional address and contact number of the enquirer and advise that they will be phoned back.
* Ring the enquirer back, to confirm whether the child’s name is on the Child Protection Register or not and whether there have been previous enquiries.
* Record the enquiry on the Child Protection Register.

2.9: Child Protection Plan

When a child is considered to be at risk of significant harm by a Child Protection Planning Meeting a multi-agency Child Protection Plan must be put in place. There should only be one multi-agency plan for a child at any given time. If there is already a multi-agency Child’s Plan in place when child’s name is placed on the Child Protection Register, this should be incorporated into the Child Protection Plan as appropriate.

A Child Protection Plan should:

* be specific to the individual child.
* focus on addressing the identified risks to the child, both immediate and longer term.
* be developed in partnership with the child and parents.
* identify specific, measurable outcomes that evidence the impact of interventions for the child.
* identify contingency plans for implementation when the plan is not working.
* be written in plain language which can be understood by everyone involved, including children and families.
* be SMARTER: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Evaluated and Re-evaluated.

The Child Protection Planning Meeting should identify the most appropriate person to ensure that the child understands their Child Protection Plan.

For further information on sharing a Child Protection Plan with a child, see National Guidance, [Practice Insight 17](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-practice-insights/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023-practice-insights/govscot%3Adocument/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023-practice-insights.pdf)

The effectiveness of the Child Protection Plan is monitored by [the Core Group](#_2.10:_Core_Group).

2.10: Core Group

When a child’s name is placed on the Child Protection Register, membership of the Core Group must be agreed at the Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting and recorded in the note of the meeting. Members should be those who have direct and on-going involvement with the child and/or family.

The **Initial Core Group** should be Chaired by the same Child Protection and Reviewing Officer as the Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting. This Core Group meeting will focus on developing the Child Protection Plan with specific actions to meet the agreed Outcomes.

Thereafter, the Core Group is responsible for the day-to-day implementation, monitoring, and review of the Child Protection Plan in partnership with children and their families. All members of the Core Group have responsibility for the Child Protection Plan and must work together to ensure its success.

The Core Group should:

* **Be coordinated by the Lead Professional.** In most circumstances, this will be the allocated Social Worker.
* **Agree who is responsible for seeing and speaking to the child.** This should be no less frequently than on a weekly basis, and in most circumstances will be the allocated Social Worker.
* **Agree who will ensure that the child’s views are represented.** Wherever possible, this should be the practitioner the child chooses.
* **Communicate regularly between meetings**, sharing relevant information as required.
* **Review progress** and update the Child Protection Plan. Where significant changes to the Child Protection Plan are required, the CPRO should be consulted within 3 calendar days of the Core Group meeting.
* **Request an early Review Child Protection Planning Meeting** if appropriate. This could be because progress is not being made, risks are perceived to have increased significantly, or new risks have presented. Conversely, it could be because significant progress has been made and the Core Group believe that the child’s name could be removed from the Child Protection Register early.
* **Activate contingency plans** promptly when progress is not made, or circumstances deteriorate.

**Documentation**

The Chair will complete a Note of Meeting and update the Child Plan and/or multi-agency Chronology of Significant Events as required. All Core Group members should receive a copy of these within 14 calendar days of the Core Group Meeting.

2.11: Support following de-registration

Where a child’s name is removed from the Child Protection Register, there must always be sufficient support in place to maintain the achieved reduction in the risk of harm to the child.

Where a child’s name has been removed from the Child Protection Register because:

* **Compulsory Measures** are in place, this will be through the associated processes.
* **They have reached the age of 16,** this will be through services agreed with Adult Services.

**In all other cases,** the child and family should receive step-down support through a Meeting Around the Child (MAC).

The first MAC should be held within 15 calendar days of the Review Child Protection Planning Meeting, and thereafter, the guidance in the Child’s Planning Manual applies.

All members of the MAC should be alert to the potential for the re-emergence of risk of significant harm for the child. Where the Child Plan is considered to be insufficient to manage the risk of harm, [a Child Protection Referral](#_2.7:_Child_Protection) should be made by the Lead Professional.

2.12: Pre-and Post-birth assessment and planning

Young babies are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Early assessment can identify when a woman and / or her partner may require additional support to enable them to achieve the best health and wellbeing outcomes for their baby and minimise any potential risk of harm.

The early identification of factors which may place a baby at risk, during pregnancy and / or during the postnatal period following birth, is therefore crucial for a proactive prevention approach for the protection of vulnerable children.

Where an unborn baby has been placed on the Child Protection Register, particular care must be taken to ensure their safety in the period immediately following their birth. A **Hospital Discharge Meeting** (for babies born in a hospital setting), or a **Post-Delivery Review Meeting** (for babies born at home or in another community setting) will be held to ensure that existing plans are appropriate to meet the needs of the child.

The meeting should:

* be Chaired by the Lead Professional.
* Include Core Group members.
* Include appropriate Ward or Community health practitioners.
* Review and amend the Child Protection Plan, as required, in light of:
  + The needs of the baby;
  + Observed parenting capacity;
  + Home circumstances and living arrangements.
* Consider whether emergency measures or referral to the Children’s Reporter are required.
* Be documented as per the Core Group.

The first **Review Child Protection Planning Meeting** should be held within 3 months of the Pre-birth Child Protection Planning Meeting. Review Child Protection Planning meetings will continue to be held every 3 months until the first Review after the child’s birth.

Whenever there have been changes in circumstances which indicate significantly changed risk of harm to the child, the Lead Professional will consult with the CPRO who Chaired the Pre-Birth Child Protection Planning Meeting.

Further information can be found in the Scottish Borders Multi-Agency Pre-Birth Guidance ([Section 3)](#_Section_3:_Further) and the [National Guidance page 118](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#page=130)

2.13: Parallel Processes

Wherever possible, a child should be involved in only one professional process and have one Child Plan. Periods of overlap can occur when:

**1) a child’s name is added to the Child Protection Register and they have an existing multi-agency Child Plan.**

Core Group meetings will replace any scheduled Meeting Around the Child. Any practitioner involved in the Meeting Around the Child who is not involved in the Child Protection process should be provided with a brief, clear explanation as to what is happening.

The Initial Child Protection Case Conference and Initial Core Group should consider the existing Child Plan when developing the Child Protection Plan.

* It should not be assumed that existing supports will end, particularly where the child has a strong relationship with the practitioners involved. The Core Group should explore how existing supports can further the identified desired Outcomes for the child.
* A balance should be struck between consistency of support, and any new actions required for the child’s safety and protection, to ensure the Child Protection Plan is realistic and achievable.

**2) a Compulsory Supervision Order is put in place for a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register, AND they begin living away from home in foster, kinship or residential care.**

The multi-agency Child Plan and processes for a Looked After Child should provide sufficient action and monitoring to ensure the child’s safety, and the child’s name will be automatically removed from the Child Protection Register.

* The Lead Professional should explain this situation to the child and parents as soon as practicable.
* De-registration will be formally acknowledged by the Chair as a matter of business at the start of the first Looked After Child Review Meeting.
* The multi-agency Child Plan will consider, and where appropriate incorporate, Outcomes and Actions from the Child Protection Plan, to ensure the child’s safety and provide consistency of support.

Where a child begins living away from home as a result of a Child Protection Order the above process will apply at the point an Interim CSO is put in place.

Further information can be found in the National Guidance [Part 4](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#page=149)

[Children who are Looked After Away from Home pg 184](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" \l "page=197)

[Reunification or “return home” pg 187](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#page=200)

[Preventing the repeated removal of children pg 188](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#page=201)

**3) a Compulsory Supervision Order is put in place for a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register, and they remain living at home.**

**OR the child whose name is on the Child Protection Register begins living away from home in a voluntary care arrangement under Section 25 (S25) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995**

The Child’s name will remain on the Child Protection Register, and Child Protection Procedures will continue to apply. Review of the Compulsory Supervision Order will be through the Core Group and Child Protection Planning Meeting.

* The Lead Professional should explain this situation to the child and parents as soon as practicable.
* The Lead Professional should consider scheduling an early Core Group Meeting to review the Child Protection Plan in light of the changed circumstances.
* The Child Protection Plan will incorporate any actions required to meet specified measures of the Compulsory Supervision Order or support the voluntary care arrangements. Where significant changes are required, the CPRO should be consulted.
* Consideration should be given to the inclusion of foster or kinship carers and/or other practitioners in the Core Group.
* The first Review Child Protection Planning Meeting will consider whether the Compulsory Supervision Order, or voluntary care arrangement, is a strong enough protective measure for the child’s name to be removed from the Child Protection Register.

# Section 3: Additional protocols, forms and templates

This section contains multi-agency protocols that may be relevant to the specific circumstances of a child or family, and shared forms and templates. A list of available documents is below.

The most up to date versions of our specific local protocols, forms and templates are held in the [CP Procedures Section 3: additional protocols, forms and templates](http://www.sb-cpc-procedures.org.uk/cp-additional-protocols/) part of our CP and ASP Procedures Website.

**Allegations against foster carers**

**Bruising in non-mobile children**

**Child Death Review SOP**

**Child Planning Manual**

**Child Trafficking**

**Child Sexual Exploitation Procedure**

**Child on Register Moving from other areas**

**Child on Register moving out of area**

**Children Affected by Parental Drug or Alcohol Use (CAPSM) Guidelines**

**Chronology with Analysis protocol**

**Confirmation of CP Referral form**

**CSE Checklist**

**Domestic Abuse**

**Dispute Resolution Policy**

**Escalation Policy**

**Keeping Children Safe and Well Tool**

**Medical Examinations Flowchart (NHS)**

**Neglect Toolkit Pathway**

**Pan-Lothian Information Sharing Protocol**

**PPU Joint Working Protocol (Children and Adult services)**

**Schedule 1 disclosures IRD Protocol**

**SuDIC Guidelines (NHS)**

**Vulnerable Young Persons Protocol**