



Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy

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Author	Linlay Anderson		
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Charter Outcomes	Number(s)
The Customer/landlord relationship	1. Equalities 2. Communication

Written By	Linlay Anderson
Department	Housing Management

Approval Date by Committee	
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Notes:

Policy drawn up with reference to -

Scottish Government 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland' (2010)

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – Updated 2023

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Data Protection (Scotland) Act 2018

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2015

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

The Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009

The Equality Act 2010

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (2022)

Angus Housing Association

Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy

1. Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to make all Angus Housing Association staff aware of their responsibilities for child protection under the Scottish Government 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland' (2021) Updated 2023, which provides a national framework within which all agencies, organisations and services work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It recognises that children and their families encounter a range of services at different points for different reasons and with different and changing needs –

all services, agencies and organisations now have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement.

Protecting children means recognising when to be concerned about their safety and understanding when and how to share these concerns. Angus Housing Association fully supports the Scottish Government National Guidance and makes the following information available for all staff and to raise awareness of their duty to report concerns and how to do so.

The Scottish Government has published a range of information on child protection. For further information please visit - www.gov.scot/policies/child-protection

Mission Statement

As an Association we recognise the NSPCC Mission Statement –

“Together, we can remove real and perceived barriers, valuing everybody who volunteers with, works for, supports or benefits from our work”

What is Child Protection?

Child protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. Child protection guidance provides overall direction for agencies and professional disciplines where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm.

2. Principles

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is anyone under the age of 18.

Every child has a right to protection from harm. All organisations that work with or encounter children should have safeguarding policies and procedures in place to help them keep children safe.

While child protection and child safeguarding are often thought to have similar meanings, there is a distinction. Child safeguarding is about keeping all children safe from harm, abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect. Having effective child safeguarding measures in place means the Association is proactively working internally and externally to ensure that children are kept safe.

The Westminster Government drafted six key principles of safeguarding that can also be implemented in child protection strategies. The 6 key safeguarding principles are:

Empowerment	People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
Protection	Support and representation for those in greatest need
Prevention	It is better to act before harm occurs
Proportionality	The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
Partnership	Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
Accountability	Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice

In contrast, child protection is protecting an individual that has been identified as being at risk of harm, abuse, violence, exploitation or neglect. Child protection encompasses part of child safeguarding measures but should be seen as the last line of defence in child safeguarding. This means that with appropriate and robust child protection measures and processes in place, the Association should be supporting and looking at ways to mitigate safeguarding. A key part of child safeguarding is spreading the message about keeping children safe, to challenge

community norms and build a community culture of always acting in the best interest of all children.

3. Legislation

The Scottish Government is responsible for child protection in Scotland. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work the Child Protection Key Legislation in Scotland –

- **Children Scotland Act 1995 -**
outlines the legislative framework for Scotland's child protection system. It covers parental responsibilities and rights, and the duties and powers local public authorities have for supporting and promoting the safety and welfare of children.
- **Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014 -**
This updated statutory guidance provides local authorities, health boards and other service providers advice and information on children's services planning.

This amends the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to ensure children's rights are upheld.

- **United Nations Convention of rights of the Child 2021 -**
By signing the UNCRC, Scotland and the UK agree that the rights of children should be protected and promoted in all areas of their life, including their rights to: education, freedom from violence, abuse and neglect, be listened to and taken seriously, a proper house, food and clothing, relax and play.
- **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 –**
The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (the Guidance) sets out responsibilities and expectations of everyone who works with children, young people and their families in Scotland and describes how agencies should work together to protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.
- **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) 2021 –**
GIRFEC is the Scottish Government's commitment to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time - so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential.

- **Safe Health Active Nurturing Achieving Responsible Respectful Inclusive (SHANARRI) 2021**

The eight indicators offer a consistent approach and language that can be used across organisational and geographical boundaries. The wellbeing indicators provide common language to describe a child's needs and identify concerns. They encourage practitioners to think about a child holistically and not just focus on one area. They are the basic requirements for all children and young people to grow and develop and reach their full potential.

4. Who is a child?

In Scotland, the definition of a child varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

Where a young person between the age of 16 and 18 requires support and protection, services will need to consider which legal framework best fits each person's needs and circumstances. The National guidance for child protection in Scotland gives more detail about this and explains how professionals should act to protect young people from harm in different circumstances.

5. What is child abuse and child neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug use.

Physical Abuse

Is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

There may be some variation in family, community or cultural attitudes to parenting, for example, in relation to reasonable discipline. Cultural sensitivity

must not deflect practitioners from a focus on a child's essential needs for care and protection from harm, or a focus on the need of a family for support to reduce stress and associated risk.

Emotional Abuse

Is persistent emotional ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. 'Persistent' means there is a continuous or intermittent pattern which has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm. Emotional abuse is present to some extent in all types of ill treatment of a child, but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse. It may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person
- Exploitation or corruption of a child, or imposition of demands inappropriate for their age or stage of development
- Repeated silencing, ridiculing or intimidation
- Demands that so exceed a child's capability that they may be harmful
- Extreme overprotection, such that a child is harmed by prevention of learning, exploration and social development
- Seeing or hearing the abuse of another (in accordance with the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018)

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

Is an act that involves a child under 16 years of age in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

For those who may be victims of sexual offences aged 16-17, child protection procedures should be considered. These procedures must be applied when there is concern about the sexual exploitation or trafficking of a child.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of indecent images, in watching

sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person under 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur through the use of technology. Children who are trafficked across borders or within the UK may be at particular risk of sexual abuse.

Criminal Exploitation

Refers to the action of an individual or group using an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator. Violence or the threat of violence may feature. The victim may have been criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation may involve physical contact and may also occur through the use of technology. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to move and store drugs and money. Coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons may be involved.

Child Trafficking

Involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, exchange or transfer of control of a child under the age of 18 years for the purposes of exploitation. Transfer or movement can be within an area and does not have to be across borders. Examples of and reasons for trafficking can include sexual, criminal and financial exploitation, forced labour, removal of organs, illegal adoption, and forced or illegal marriage.

Neglect

Consists in persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty is an indicator of both support and protection needs.

'Persistent' means there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent which has caused or is likely to cause significant harm. However, single instances of neglectful behaviour by a person in a position of responsibility can be significantly harmful. Early signs of neglect indicate the need for support to prevent harm.

The GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators set out the essential wellbeing needs. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); to seek consistent access to appropriate medical care or treatment; to ensure the child receives education; or to respond to a child's essential emotional needs.

Faltering growth refers to an inability to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones in the absence of medically discernible physical and genetic reasons. This condition requires further assessment and may be associated with chronic neglect.

Malnutrition, lack of nurturing and lack of stimulation can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. For very young children the impact could quickly become life-threatening. Chronic physical and emotional neglect may also have a significant impact on teenagers.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This extreme form of physical, sexual and emotional assault upon girls and women involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Such procedures are usually conducted on children and are a criminal offence in Scotland. FGM can be fatal and is associated with long-term physical and emotional harm.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional abuse. Forced marriage is both a child protection and adult protection matter. Child protection processes will be considered up to the age of 18. Forced marriage may be a risk alongside other forms of so called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA). HBA includes practices used to control behaviour within families, communities, or

other social groups, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or 'honour'.

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021)

6. Recognising General Signs of Abuse

Abused children and adults may be afraid to tell anybody about the abuse. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame or confusion – particularly if the abuser is a parent, caregiver or other close family member or friend. Anyone working with children, young people or adults at risk needs to be vigilant to the signs listed below.

Whilst these signs do not necessarily mean that someone is being abused, they probably indicate that there are some problems which should be investigated.

- Regularly experiencing nightmares or sleeping problems
- Changes in personality
- Outbursts of anger
- Changes in eating habits
- Showing an inexplicable fear of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people
- Self-harming (includes head banging, scratching, cutting)
- Not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries
- Showing violence to animals, toys, peers or adults
- Regular flinching in response to sudden but harmless actions, e.g. someone raising a hand quickly
- Lacking in confidence or often wary/anxious
- Children with knowledge of "adult issues" e.g. alcohol, drugs, sex.
- Regressing to the behaviour of younger children

Whether or not a child's behaviour or appearance is concerning depends on their age or stage of development.

Children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities or health-related issues may be at a different developmental stage to most of their peers. However, those who have experienced abuse or neglect from a young age may also display developmental delays compared to others their own age. In such cases, the lack of a clear medical explanation for these delays may be an indicator of abuse.

Recognising Signs of Abuse in Children – Infancy to Preschool

- Does not cry or respond to parent's presence or absence from an early age (usually because they have learnt that their parent will not respond to their distress, this is known as a lack of attachment)
- Late in reaching developmental milestones such as learning to speak, with no medical reason
- Significantly underweight but eats well when given food
- Acting out excessive violence with other children
- Talks of being left home alone or with strangers

Middle Childhood

- Talks of being left home alone or with strangers
- Lacks social skills and has few if any friends
- Shows lack of attachment to a parent
- Becomes secretive and reluctant to share information
- Acting out excessive violence with other children

7. Reporting concerns

In Scotland, there is no legal requirement to report concerns about a child's welfare. However, section 2.1 of the National guidance for child protection states that all agencies have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement (Scottish Government, 2021b)

How to report a concern

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on **999**. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns.

- Follow your organisational child protection procedures
- Contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by email help@NSPCC.org.uk where their trained professionals will talk through your concerns and provide you with expert advice
- Contact the appropriate Local Authority Children's Social Work Team
- Contact the local Children's Reporter, independent officials can decide if any legal interventions need to be made to protect a child
- Contact Police Scotland if you are concerned that a child is in immediate danger.

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Services will risk assess the situation and take action to protect the child as appropriate either through statutory involvement or other support. This may include

making a referral to the local authority. However where a staff member has concerns a child is in immediate danger they should contact Police Scotland on 999.

Child Vulnerability

Factors that may interact to create vulnerability

- Abuse, neglect or any early adverse experience
- Disrupted family life, including family breaking and care experience
- Domestic Abuse
- Bullying and peer pressure
- Absence from education
- Running from home or care
- Experience of exclusion or isolation, especially in transitional phase
- Drug and alcohol use
- Poverty or Homelessness
- Poor health and low self-esteem
- Learning disabilities and autism
- Living with attitudes that normalise exploitation and violence in sexual relationships
- Access to adult pornography and experience of attitudes that normalise sexual violence
- exploration of same-sex relationships and questioning of sexual orientation or gender identity can also result in children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) being more vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Possible Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- Going missing from home or school during the day, overnight or longer
- Multiple callers/visitors including unknowing adults/older younger people
- Entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults
- Evidence of/suspicion of physical or sexual assault
- Disclosure of assault followed by withdrawal of an allegation
- Unplanned pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections (STI's)
- Peers involved in sexual exploitation
- Drug/alcohol use
- Isolation from peers/social networks
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school or college
- Relationships with controlling adults
- Unexplained money or gifts, including expensive clothing, new phones and other items
- Frequenting areas known for adult prostitution

- Children under 13 years asking for sexual health advice
- Concerning use of mobile/internet/online devices (sending/receiving sexual images)
- Multiple phones or SIMs, being protective of a phone, abnormally high volume of secretive calls, change in behaviour as a result of phone contacts
- Depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts

However, CSE can occur without obvious indicators, and careful assessment is needed to explore the meaning of the indicators above, which may be related to other issues.

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021)

8. Missing Children

The Association will assist all relevant agencies including social work, police and relevant Local Authority wherever possible in the search for children or young adults reported as missing. This will include utilising office space and offering the support of staff in the search if required.

9. Complaint and Allegations Against Staff

Where a referral to social work relates to the actions of a member of the Association's staff the relevant Line Manager will liaise closely with the appropriate Local Authority Social Work Department.

Any complaints or allegations against staff will be investigated in line with the Association's Disciplinary Policy.

10. Designated Child Protection Lead (DCPL)

The Association has a Designated Child Protection Lead (DCPL) and acknowledges that having a specific member of staff as a named person in respect of child protection is good practice.

However, in the first instance staff should raise and report any concerns to their relevant line manager who will be responsible for ensuring the correct procedures are followed. Staff and line managers are responsible for keeping clear records and advising the DCPL Named Person of all concerns raised.

The Association recognises that providing a named person ensures that all allegations of abuse are reported to a central point to allow a consistent response and to maintain an overview of reports from staff.

The named person/post will monitor issues and detect trends as these occur.

Our named person/post is:

Position/Contact Details	Name
Position	Tenant Engagement Officer
Contact Details	07850910680
Second Named Person	
Position	Director of Housing Services
Contact Details	07794266873

11. Procedures

The Association has developed Procedures to supplement this Policy.

The Association will assist all relevant agencies including social work, police and relevant Local Authority wherever possible in the search for children or young adults reported as missing. This will include utilising office space and offering the support of staff in the search if required.

12. Confidentiality

There is a clear requirement across agencies to co-operate in relation to the protection of children and young people seen to be at risk of harm. The Association will ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place for staff to report any concerns to Social Work Services and/or the Police, should this be applicable in the circumstances. The Association will also ensure that appropriate processes are in place in relation to any ongoing involvement and assistance required by the Association, in consultation with the relevant statutory agencies, towards effective risk management and continuing support to the service user.

To ensure appropriate protective measures can be put in place, it is recognised that confidential information will need to be shared with other staff, managers and other agencies on a “need to know” basis.

The Association staff have a duty to report concerns about a child thought to be at risk of harm (refer to the Association Guidance and Procedures). Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Whilst confidentiality guidelines should be adhered to, concerns regarding Child Protection will always override the confidentiality requirement to protect children and young people. No guarantees of confidentiality should be given to a tenant, customer, service user or professional in Child Protection cases.

Child Protection concerns may come from several sources. For example:

- *events witnessed by staff during home or office visits;*
- *information from other tenants, residents or other professionals;*
- *things children tell them directly.*

13. Equal Opportunities

In developing and implementing policies covering all aspects of our work, Angus Housing Association will ensure that our strong principles and commitment to equality of opportunity are evident. In line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 the Association operates in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and observes the equal opportunity requirements described in Section 106 of the Act. The Association also takes account of all applicable legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and relevant Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Our Policy recognises the protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ Age | ▪ Race |
| ▪ Disability | ▪ Religion or belief |
| ▪ Gender reassignment | ▪ Gender |
| ▪ Marriage and civil partnership | ▪ Sexual orientation |
| ▪ Pregnancy and maternity | |

14. Training

The Association will ensure that all staff are aware of the Associations duties in relation to Child Protection and that all staff complete Child Protection Training, which may differ for staff members who are required to undertake home visits.

15. Policy Review

The Association will review the Child Protection Policy in November 2029, or as required following a substantive legislative or regulatory change.

