

Aberdeenshire Schools Protecting Children & Young People

Identifying and Responding to Child Protection Concerns

August 2022



The aim of this presentation is to:

- Update and refresh schools on Child Protection awareness
- Confirm your school's Child Protection Coordinator
- Support colleagues across the school to be alert to, and aware of signs of potential child abuse and neglect
- Ensure all staff are clear how to respond when faced with a potential Child Protection situation
- Familiarise staff with Aberdeenshire's Child Protection protocols
- Enhance child protection knowledge and signpost to further support and guidance



Child Protection & Getting it Right for Every Child



Child Protection Arrangements in Schools

- **Always take action** if you suspect a Child Protection Concern
- Child Protection Coordinator is your contact in school
- Child Protection Coordinator cover arrangements
- Contacting Social Work or Police
- [Initial Referral Discussion \(IRD\)](#)

What is child abuse and 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.....”

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) (page 20)

Children with Disabilities

Scottish Government research tell us that children with disabilities are at greater risk of harm than non disabled children, yet are under represented within the Child Protection system.

The main contributing factors to this imbalance are thought to be due to the effects of the disability itself, and responses by practitioners.

Children who are very reliant on their carers, and have communication difficulties, behavioural disorders, learning disabilities, and sensory impairments, are particularly vulnerable.



Reasons for under-reporting abuse/neglect where children have disabilities



- A false belief people would not abuse a disabled child
- Parents/Carers trying their best under difficult circumstances
- Reluctance to challenge parents/carers who are already under stress
- Child or young person is less able to communicate
- Practitioners can struggle to disentangle indicators of abuse/risk from the effects of a child's disability
- Practitioners spending limited time with a child may not recognise behaviours (or changes) which indicate neglect or abuse
- Over reliance on a parent's explanation, without seeking the child's views



Disability & Abuse/Neglect

- Over-medicating children in order to manage behaviours
- Unwillingness to learn a child's communication systems
- Removal of a child's communication system
- Unjustified/excessive use of restraint
- Lack of stimulation or play
- Ill-fitting or missing equipment, e.g specialist footwear or splints
- Rough-handling
- Non-compliance with agreed actions in a Child's Plan

What Can We Do?

- Keep the child at the centre and improve our recognition of issues for children with disabilities
- Understand disability should not be a barrier to investigating child protection concerns
- Refer to Aberdeenshire Guidance on CP and disability.
- Be aware of additional supports available for children with disabilities

Types of Abuse

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Child Trafficking
- Criminal Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) (pages 20-22)

Examples of Abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve:

- hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating
- a parent or carer feigning symptoms of, or deliberately causing ill health to a child or young person they are looking after

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse may involve:

- conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved
- exploitation or corruption, or imposing demands which are inappropriate for the child's age or developmental stage
- repeated silencing, ridiculing or intimidation
- extreme over protection
- seeing or hearing abuse or another

Examples of Abuse

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves a child under the age of 16 in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, it includes:

- forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities which include non-contact activities such as:
 - involving children looking at or in production of indecent images
 - watching sexual activities
 - using sexual language towards them
 - encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) which 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

Examples of Abuse

Neglect

Neglect is persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs in an age and stage appropriate manner, and that is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's health or development

It may involve failure to;

- provide adequate food, shelter and clothing,
- protect a child from physical harm or danger,
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Neglect Toolkit

The Neglect Toolkit is a key resource for all services and supports all staff with identifying and dealing effectively with concerns related to Neglect. It was developed with and for the following Services:

- Education
- Police Scotland
- NHS
- Adult and Children's Services Social Work

The [Neglect Toolkit](#) can be accessed via the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC website](#)

An ALDO [NEGLECT e-Learn Module](#) is also available

Examples of Abuse

Criminal Exploitation

- Is 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
- Can occur through physical contact or through the use of technology

Child Trafficking

- 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

Examples of Abuse

Female Genital Mutilation

- 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

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

Observations & Behaviours which can indicate a CP Concern?

- Frequently dirty, hungry, inadequately dressed
- **Left in unsafe situation or without medical attention for illness/injury**
- Put down, insulted or sworn at
- **Seems afraid of parents/carers**
- Unexplained and unusual bruising or marks, repeated injuries
- **Burns, scalds & bites**
- Inconsistent explanation about an injury
- **Reluctance to go home**
- Reluctance to remove clothing
- **Change in school attendance pattern**
- Inappropriate sexual awareness, or sexually active
- **Unexplained/unusual amounts of money, or more than one mobile phone (can be CSE indicator)**
- Domestic violence in the home
- **Drug or alcohol abuse in the home**
- Unexplained changes in behaviour
- **Difficulty in making friends**
- Distrustful or Excessive attachment to adults

3 Key Questions in Child Protection

- Is this child or young person at immediate risk?
- What is placing this child at immediate risk?
- What needs to happen to remove this risk now?

If the answer to the first question is yes, Child Protection protocols must be followed immediately

**Respond
Calmly**

How to respond to a child protection disclosure

**Contact Child
Protection
Coordinator**

**Allow the child to
speak freely**



**Don't correct the
child's language**

**Explain you
need to share**

**Investigation is done
by trained Child
Protection Services**

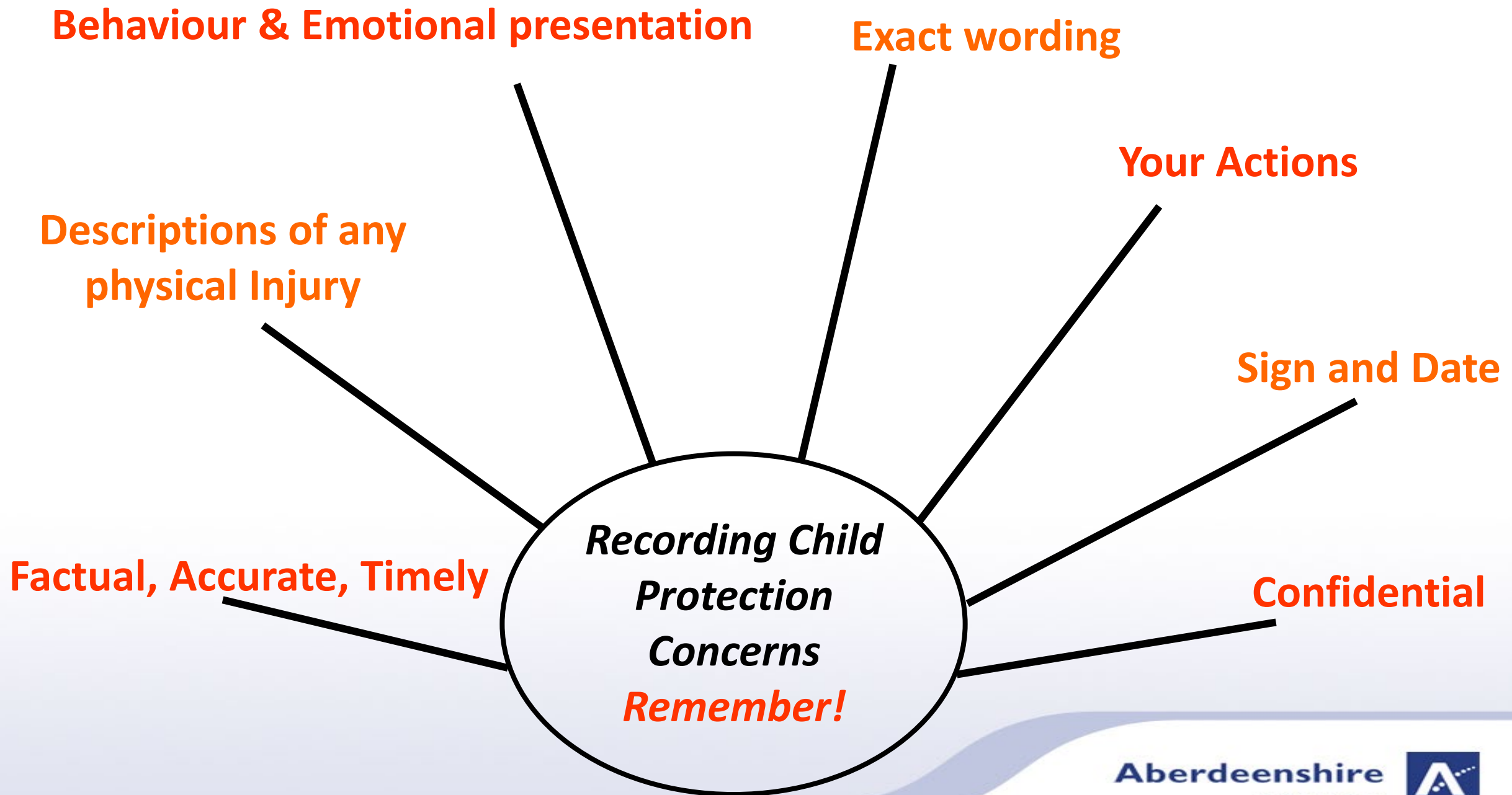
Reassure

OBSERVE, LISTEN, RECORD, REPORT

**Avoid leading or
closed questions**

**Let child know
help will be
provided**

Act immediately!



Concern About A Child?



Concerns about
a child

Contact
Child Protection Coordinator (CPC)
Or
Cover for the CPC
Or
Senior Member of Staff

If Unavailable

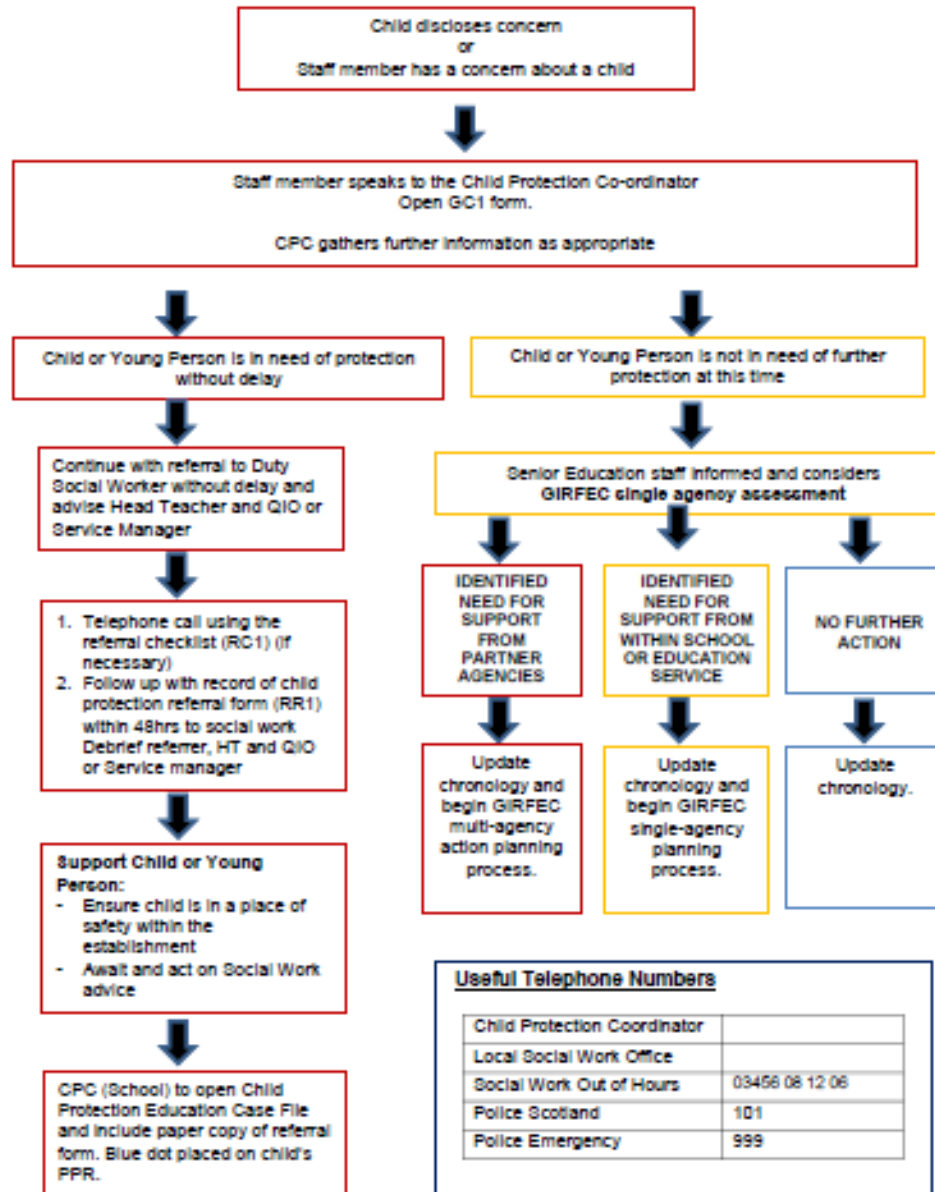
Contact [DutySocial Worker](#)

Do not take it
home!

Remember

- **Observe**
- **Record**
- **Report**

Child Protection Procedure in Education Flow Chart
Recognising actual or potential harm to a child



Useful Telephone Numbers

Child Protection Coordinator	
Local Social Work Office	
Social Work Out of Hours	03456 08 12 06
Police Scotland	101
Police Emergency	999

Booklet 3
“Practice and Guidelines”
Child Protection Advice and Guidance

Adult Protection

School staff may also become aware of a parent or carer who is believed to be an “Adult at Risk”. This is based on a 3 point test and defined as an adult who:

1. Is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests,
2. Is at risk of harm, and
3. because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults not so-affected.

You can call the Adult Protection network on [01467 533100](tel:01467533100) for advice or find further information on the [Aberdeenshire Adult Protection and support webpage](#)

Further Support and Guidance on Child Protection

- [Education Child Protection Guidance and Advice](#)
- [Aberdeenshire Multi-Agency GIRFEC Child Protection website](#)
- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#)
- [ALDO - GIRFEC Portal](#)