

Keeping Children Safe in Aberdeenshire

Children and Young People have the right to be protected and to be safe from harm from others; they expect that we, as adults will get them the help they need, when they need it.

Children and Young People expect us to:

- ~ Listen to them
- ~ Take them seriously
- ~ Involve them
- ~ Put them in touch with the right people
- ~ Think about their lives as a whole

To this end it is vital that everyone coming into contact with children and young people know what to do when child protection concerns arise.

What to do if a child/young person tells you that they have been abused

- ~ Stay Calm
- ~ Listen and hear
- ~ Do not promise to keep secrets - tell them you will have to let someone else know.
- ~ Reassure the child they were not to blame and they have done the right thing in telling you
- ~ Do not ask questions: it is not your job to investigate

Some Warning Signs

Physical Abuse

- ~ Unexplained or recurrent injuries/ burns
- ~ Improbable excuses or refusal to explain an injury
- ~ Apparent fear of physical contact - shrinking back

Neglect

- ~ Constant hunger and or tiredness
- ~ Inadequate clothing for weather
- ~ Poor personal hygiene
- ~ Wilful neglect by carers

Emotional Abuse

- ~ Continual belittling of oneself
- ~ Over-reaction to mistakes
- ~ Developmental delay
- ~ Excessively clingy behaviour

Sexual Abuse

- ~ Sexually explicit behaviour, language or knowledge (inappropriate to age/stage of development)
- ~ Self-harm, running away
- ~ Eating disorders
- ~ Sexually transmitted disease

Some General Points

- ~ What if I'm wrong? - you can only know what you know - there may be information held by others which substantiates your concerns or otherwise Remember that contacting social work or police informally to discuss concerns is always encouraged and may not always lead to a referral
- ~ Everyone has some responsibility to keep children safe - you need to know your own agency's policy and protocol
- ~ Treat all children and young people with respect
- ~ Ensure your own conduct is a good example to children
- ~ Ensure your actions cannot be misinterpreted
- ~ Be aware of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland and refer to when required
- ~ Protecting you relationship with a family or individual is never an option when there are child protection concerns - the welfare of the child is always paramount

What to do if you are concerned about a child/young person:

- ~ Discuss your concerns straight away with a senior member of staff / designated child protection person
- ~ Engage with the designated person about whether this information needs to be shared, and if so with whom, including consideration of the Named Person
- ~ Ensure all this information is accurately recorded, with reasons for any decision reached
- ~ If you cannot contact the designated person and there are immediate concerns for the child's safety, contact social work or police yourself

Never:

- ~ Trivialise or exaggerate child protection concerns
- ~ Have inappropriate physical contact with children/young people
- ~ Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of children/young people
- ~ Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour

The agency you report to will ask you for as much information as possible. The kind of thing they might want to know is:

- ~ Why you are concerned?
- ~ Is the child in immediate danger?
- ~ Are there other children who may be at risk?
- ~ Child's name, age, date of birth and address
- ~ Names of any adults who have care of the child
- ~ Who you think has harmed, or might harm, the child and when it may have happened?
- ~ Follow procedure on Aberdeenshire GIRFEC Website [Report a Child Protection Concern](#)

Useful Contact Numbers

Police Scotland Emergency 999 Non-Emergency 101	Social Work Offices Social Work Out-with Office Hours - 03456 08 12 06	NHS Grampian Designated Doctor/Nurse Consultant in Child Protection Tel: 01224 551706 during office hours Out of hours or urgent referrals: Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital & Dr Gray's Hospital, Tel: 0845 456 6000
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