

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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Policy Owner	Housing & Care Director
Author	Lesley Carnegie, Governance & Assurance Manager
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Approved by	EMT
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Audience - Training and Awareness Method	Policy and quick guide to be distributed to all employees and covered in team meetings.
Effective Date	1 st May 2018

Internal References	Adult Support & Protection Policy Whistleblowing Policy
External References	Children (Scotland) Act 1995 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990 Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

Appendices	Child Protection - Quick Guide
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Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All children and young people have the right to be protected and kept safe from harm from others. We all as individuals have a responsibility to help protect them, whether we work with children or families, are a parent, family member or a concerned member of the community. Blackwood as an organisation also has a specific duty of care to children living in or visiting our properties, and will take all necessary precautions to safeguard their wellbeing.
- 1.2 The [Children \(Scotland\) Act](#) was passed in 1995, setting out the range and scope of interventions in the lives of children and their families, as well as outlining which agencies are responsible, in line with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). This legislation places a duty on all services – health, education, police, social work, care, housing and voluntary organisations – to improve how they work to support children and young people. Blackwood’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures ensures that these requirements are met.

2. Purpose & Principles

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Blackwood employees are fully aware of what they should do if they are faced with a concern for a child or young person.
- 2.2 All employees at all levels in all services should:
 - Have appropriate advice and training to make them aware of risks to children and understand their particular responsibilities in keeping children safe.
 - Have ready access to appropriate, relevant and up-to-date guidance that tells them what action to take if they are concerned about a child’s safety or welfare.
 - Understand what, how and when to report information to keep children safe, and be able to do so.
 - Have appropriate support from managers when they are concerned about a child.
- 2.3 Blackwood also requires checks of all relevant employees through the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme, as per the [Recruitment Policy](#), to further protect the children and young people who live in or visit our properties.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 The Children (Scotland) Act defines a child as someone who is:
 - Under 16 years of age or

- Still attending school or
 - Under 18 years of age and is under supervision.
- 3.2 Blackwood's Adult Support and Protection Policy provides detailed advice and guidance on dealing with concerns about the protection of adults.
- 3.3 'Child protection' means protecting a child or young person from abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not actually have taken place, there may instead be an identified significant likelihood or risk of harm from abuse or neglect.
- 3.4 '[Getting it Right for Every Child](#)' is Scotland's approach to supporting children and young people. It stresses the importance of understanding risks and needs within a framework of the child's world and wellbeing. It states that every child should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

4. Types of harm

4.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

4.2 The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child, but are not exhaustive. The individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child:

- **Physical abuse** is the causing of physical harm. This 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.

- **Emotional abuse** is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may involve the imposition of age – or developmentally – inappropriate expectations on a child.

It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child, but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

- **Sexual abuse** is any act that involves the child 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.

This may also involve human trafficking - the trade of children for the purpose of sexual slavery or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others.

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

- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's emotional needs.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 While Blackwood employees are not directly involved in services for children, they often have direct or indirect engagement with children, young people and parents. For example, housing officers visiting tenants may become concerned about children within a family, even without having seen the children. It is therefore everybody's responsibility to remain alert to circumstances in which children and young people may be harmed. Early action is often the best way of helping a family stay together as well as protecting the child.
- 5.2 Employees can assist the statutory agencies by bringing such cases to their attention. They may also have important information about families to contribute to a child protection investigation or assessment, and should be prepared to share this information and to attend conferences as required.
- 5.3 The first step for employees is to report concerns directly to their manager, except when a child or young person is in immediate danger, when the Police should be contacted at once.
- 5.4 It is the manager's responsibility to notify Social Work Services and / or the Police of any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person that are brought to their attention.
- 5.5 All information relating to child protection will be treated as highly confidential at all time, and only discussed with appropriate representatives.
- 5.6 Further guidance on action to be taken is outlined in the Child Protection Procedures (page 5) along with contact details for all Social Work Services (page 8).
- 5.7 Blackwood also undertakes to ensure that any contractor entering its properties is aware of and has access to this policy.

6. Training

- 6.1 This policy and procedure will be made available to all employees at all times. In addition, all employees who visit customers' homes will receive training in Child Protection Procedures either during initial induction or as part of their ongoing training programme. Refresher training will be provided as appropriate.

Child Protection Procedures

1. Identifying Signs of Abuse or Neglect

1.1 Children rarely tell if they are being abused. However there may be signs that a child is being abused or neglected. These can include:

- Having unexplained bruising or injuries.
- Appearing afraid, quiet or withdrawn.
- Being reluctant to go home or running away.
- Appearing constantly hungry, tired or untidy.
- Being left unattended or unsupervised.
- Having too much responsibility for their age.
- Using inappropriate language for their age.
- Drawing pictures of inappropriate subjects.
- Acting in a sexually inappropriate way.
- Misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Telling you something that sounds as though they have been hurt by someone.

1.2 There can also be behaviours shown by parents that should cause concern:

- Acting in an aggressive, violent or sexual manner towards a child or young person.
- Misusing drink or drugs while caring for a child.
- Leaving their child unattended or with unsuitable adults.
- Lacking awareness or denying any injury.
- Being involved in criminal activity or associating with dubious characters.
- Repeatedly refusing access to their house.

1.3 If you have concerns about a child or young person, or if a child or young person tells you something, you need to take this seriously and do something about it without delay.

2. Reporting Your Concerns

2.1 You should report any concerns as soon as possible to your manager. If they are not available then you should contact the Regional Manager.

2.2 However, if you consider a child or young person to be in **immediate danger**, do not wait. **Call the Police on 999**. You can contact your manager once you are satisfied that the child is safe.

- 2.3 Your manager will contact the local Social Work Services (see page 7 for contact details) who will be able to advise whether a specific form needs to be completed and explain next steps. To ensure the child gets the best possible help:
- Give as much information as you can about the child and their family.
 - Describe what it was that you saw or heard and why it concerned you.
 - Include details of anything else they should be aware of, for example the circumstances of the family or any other risks.
- 2.4 You should be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information concerning child abuse and discuss this only with the appropriate representatives.
- 2.5 If you are unhappy with the response from your manager, you should contact your Regional Manager who may contact Social Work Services and outline your concerns and the basis for them.
- 2.6 If you are unhappy with the response from Social Work Services you can raise this with your manager who will decide whether the Care Inspectorate or Police should be informed.

3. Allegations Involving Employees

- 3.1 In situations where the alleged abuser is an employee the first step is still to inform your manager, who will contact the relevant authorities, as above.
- 3.2 If your concerns are about your manager then you should inform your Regional Manager or the Human Resources Team. You can also contact Social Work directly to pass on your concerns and seek further advice.
- 3.3 In cases involving employees, Blackwood's Disciplinary Procedure will be followed. However, care must be taken to ensure that internal investigations do not undermine or impede any external investigations being undertaken by statutory agencies. It may be appropriate to suspend the employee concerned while these investigations take place. Advice should always be sought from the Human Resources team before proceeding.
- 3.4 In cases involving care employees, the Scottish Social Services Council will be contacted by the appropriate Manager from Blackwood. The decision will be recorded in the employees' personnel file.
- 3.5 Blackwood's Whistleblowing Policy is available to all employees.

4. What Happens Next

- 4.1 When you contact a professional about your concern, unless the child is in immediate danger, they will make some initial enquiries before taking action. They will check whether the child is known to them and what information is held. All information will be treated seriously and acted upon.
- 4.2 Following enquiries professionals may:
- Take immediate action to secure the safety of the child.

- Provide support, help or advice to the family.
- Provide a service to the child or family (for example help with childcare) and, where necessary, referral to another agency may be provided.
- Conduct criminal proceedings.
- Record the concern but take no further action at this time.

4.3 Each local authority area has a Child Protection Committee involving Social Work, Education, the Police and NHS, following locally agreed Inter-Agency Protocols. Your Social Work contact will be able to advise you of their specific process.

4.4 The investigating officers may need to speak to the employee from whom the concerns originated. Managers and employees within Blackwood will co-operate fully with any Police or Social Work Services enquiries, and managers will ensure employees are facilitated in this.

Contacts

Local Authority Social Work Services	Aberdeen City	0800 7315 520 ChildrenAndFamilies-Reception@aberdeencity.gov.uk
	Aberdeenshire	0345 608 1206 / out of hours 0345 608 1206
	Angus	08452 777 778
	Argyll and Bute	01546 605517 / out of hours 01631 569712
	Clackmannanshire	01259 225000 / out of hours 01786 470500 customerservice@clacks.gov.uk
	Dumfries & Galloway	030 33 33 3001 / out of hours 0300 343 1505 contactcentreadultsocialservices@dumgal.gov.uk
	Dundee City	01382 307999 / out of hours 01382 307964 csintake.admin@dundeecity.gcsx.gov.uk
	East Ayrshire	Kilmarnock - 01563 554200 / Cumnock – 01290 427720 / out of hours 0800 328 7758 social.work@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
	East Dunbartonshire	0141 777 3000 / out of hours 0800 811 505 childprotection@eastdunbarton.gov.uk
	East Lothian	01875 824 309 / out of hours 0800 731 6969 cf-dutyteam@eastlothian.gov.uk
	East Renfrewshire	0141 577 3003 / out of hours 0300 343 1505
	Edinburgh City	0131 200 2324 / out of hours 0800 731 6969 socialcaredirect@edinburgh.gov.uk
	Falkirk	01324 506400 / out of hours 01786 470500 childcare.reviews@falkirk.gov.uk
	Fife	03451 551503 / out of hours 03451 550099 SW.ContactCtr@fife.gov.uk
	Glasgow City	0141 287 0555 / out of hours 0300 343 1505 scdchildrenandfamilies@glasgow.gov.uk
	Highland	0800 902 0042 / out of hours 0845 601 4813 CPAdmin@highland.gov.uk
Inverclyde	01475 715365 / out of hours 0300 343 1505 InverclydeHSCP.communications@ggc.scot.nhs.uk	
Midlothian	0131 271 3413 / out of hours 0800 731 6969 cfreferrals@midlothian.gov.uk	

Local Authority Social Work Services	Moray	01343 563900 / out of hours 03457 565 656 intaketeam@moray.gov.uk
	North Ayrshire	01294 310300 / out of hours 0800 328 7758 rsirvine@north-ayrshire.gcsx.gov.uk
	North Lanarkshire	01698 332100 / out of hours 0800 121 4114
	Perth & Kinross	01738 476768 childprotection@pkc.gov.uk
	Renfrewshire	0300 300 1199 / out of hours 0300 343 1505 childrenandfamilies@renfrewshire.gov.uk
	Scottish Borders	01896 662787 / out of hours 01896 752111
	South Ayrshire	01292 267675 / out of hours 0800 328 7758 InitialResponseTeam@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
	South Lanarkshire	0303 123 1008
	Stirling	01786 471177 / out of hours 01786 470500
	West Dunbartonshire	Dumbarton - 01389 608080, Clydebank - 0141 562 8800/ out of hours 0300 343 1505
	West Lothian	01506 282252 / out of hours 01506 281028/281029 socialwork@westlothian.gov.uk
Police	Emergency	999
	Non emergency	101
Regulatory Bodies	Scottish Social Services Council	0345 60 30 891
	Care Inspectorate	0345 600 9527 enquiries@careinspectorate.com
Other	Scottish Children's Reporter	0131 244 8600 communications@scra.gsi.gov.uk
	National Child Protection Line	0800 0223222
	Childline	0800 1111
	NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
	Family Lives	0808 800 222