

Statement of Best Practice in Joint Working Between Glasgow City Council and Social Housing Providers in Glasgow City Council

(No.13)

13 CHILD PROTECTION

1. PURPOSE OF STATEMENT

To establish a unified approach to dealing with child protection concerns across all socially rented housing in Glasgow.

This statement is part of suite of 13, which can be accessed via GCC web site (*insert link*), GGCNHS and GHA intranets and through the members pages of the web sites of SFHA and Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are committed to the protection of children and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children as of paramount concern. RSLs consider it the duty of all those employed or involved with the provision of affordable housing to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.
- 2.2 Where appropriate, the provision of Housing with Support predominantly relates to the specific needs of tenants, as set out in their Personal Support Plan. In providing and delivering these support plans there is a responsibility on the RSL to consider the safety and wellbeing of children who may visit tenants' homes or come into contact with tenants, both within the home or the immediate vicinity in which the home is situated.
- 2.3 The safety and welfare of children must be placed, in a considered manner, in relation to tenant support.
- 2.4 The actions of children may, in some instances, be a contributory factor in creating situations that may be against their own wellbeing and safety. However this should not impact on the need for staff to report child protection concerns immediately.

3 DEFINITION AND APPLICATION OF THE ATTACHED POLICY

- 3.1 The general definition of child abuse adopted in Scottish Executive guidance refers to circumstances where "a child or young person's basic needs are not being met in a manner which is appropriate to his or her individual needs and stages of development and the child is, or will be, at

risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s) or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of, charge of, or control over a child)."

- 3.2 Children and young people under the age of 16 and young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are affected by disability or are vulnerable will come within the scope and application of this policy. The safety and wellbeing of children may relate to concerns around neglect, or physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse.

The may mean, for example:

- Developing clear child protection strategies in respect of individual tenant risk assessments and risk management arrangements undertaken by Social Work Services and or the Police who would ask for RSL involvement and assistance in putting in place risk management arrangements where required.
- Giving consideration to safe and secure arrangements for children who visit tenants.
- Recognising that confidential information regarding possible risks to children will need to be shared with other workers, managers and other agencies on a "need to know" basis. It should be noted however that staff have a clear duty for anyone to report suspicions or concerns about a child being at risk to Social Work Services and/or The Reporter to the Children's Panel and/ or the Police (under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995)

4 REPORTING GUIDELINES

- 4.1 Any concerns a member of staff may have regarding the safety and wellbeing of children should be brought to the attention of their manager immediately.

- 4.2 Where there are significant concerns about imminent possible risk to children, staff should take immediate practical steps to manage this risk as set out in the guidelines in Appendix 1

- 4.3 The responsible managers must:

- 1) Ensure proper recording of all relevant reports, concerns, incidents, risk assessments and risk management strategies.
- 2) Ensure prompt (or where appropriate immediate) reporting of significant concerns or incidents to the relevant authorities, i.e. Care Manager, or Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) Office, or Social Work Standby, Police and/or the Reporter to the Children's Panel.

A list of the appropriate contacts is given in Appendix 2

In the absence of line management support, staff should report urgent and/or substantive child protection concerns immediately to Glasgow City Council Social Work Services, through their local CHCP and/or Police.

Guidance Note**Incident Informing and Reporting**

It may be that a child or young person will tell someone that they are being abused but that they show no obvious signs. It is crucial that if a child or young person says that he/she is being abused that the matter is taken seriously and passed on as a matter of urgency.

Write down the nature of your concern and anything the child or young person may have told you using, as far as possible, the words used by the child or young person. Remember to sign and date the notes taken.

In all instances the information given must be reported immediately to designated persons in senior management.

If staff observe occurrences or behaviour themselves, or where in receipt of information about such occurrences and behaviour from sources other than the child that lead them to suspect child abuse or neglect they should record this and report their suspicions to the appropriate Manager.

Where the information is given to staff out of hours it must be passed to the Social Work Services Stand by Service.

Staff making contact with Social Work Services and, or, the Police must make a note of the following:

- date and time of the contact
- name, address and full details of those contacted
- full details of who should be contacted for future follow up

What if it is someone within your RSL that you are concerned about?

If you have observed RSL staff acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned and feel the matter needs to be investigated you should contact the Director/Chief Executive outlining your concerns and the basis for them. They will take your concerns seriously and decide on an appropriate course of action. This may involve the use of disciplinary procedures and discussion of the matter with a referral to Social Work Services/Police.

Dealing with the child concerned**Supporting the child or young person**

It is important that employees and those involved with the child or young person act in a supportive manner. You should,

- Continue to listen with care
- Reassure the child or young person he/she was right to tell, if appropriate.
- Affirm the child or young person's feelings as expressed by them

- Do not question/interrogate the child or young person
- Do not show disbelief
- Avoid being judgmental
- Do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse
- Avoid displaying strong emotions

Confidentiality

If a child or young person may be at risk of harm this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those employed or involved with the organisation have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. Children, young people and their parents should always be told this.

Role of Senior Managers/Social Work Services

All concerns of a child protection nature should be reported to the relevant Social Work Services office. The Social Work Services office will seek to provide an appropriate person who has sufficient knowledge and expertise to deal with any concerns raised.

The RSL Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all cases of alleged or suspected abuse are treated seriously and attended to by Social Work Services.

If the RSL Manager is unhappy with the response from Social Work Services they should contact the local police office or the Reporter to the Children's Panel and outline their concerns to them.

What Happens Next

It is the duty of Social Work Services to investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the child or young person. Where it is alleged a crime has been committed against a child the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police.

The investigating Social Worker/Police Officer may require to speak to the person with whom the concerns originated. You should co-operate fully with any future enquiries.

The child or young person is likely to continue to be involved with staff in the future. RSL staff involved in reporting concerns must maintain contact with social work services to seek advice on the appropriateness of the contact and support to the child or the family.

Important Information and Contacts

The lists below are by no means exhaustive but are designed to give employees and people involved some guidance on how to recognise child abuse. Any information has to be seen in the context of the child or young person's whole situation and circumstances.

Different types of abuse may overlap or co-exist.

Physical Abuse

Defined as **"actual or attempted physical injury to a child, under the age of 16 where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented"**.

Possible signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries or delay in reporting them
- Excessive physical punishment
- Arms and legs kept covered even in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

Physical Neglect

Defined as occurring **"when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothes, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care results in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child."**

Signs of possible physical neglect

- Constant hunger or inappropriate/ erratic eating patterns
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Failure to seek appropriate/necessary medical attention
- Unhygienic home conditions

Non-Organic Failure to Thrive

Defined as **"children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (i.e. physical growth, weight, motor skills, organic reasons must have been medically eliminated and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established."**

Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive

- Significant lack of growth

- Weight loss
- Hair loss
- Poor skin or muscle tone
- Circulatory disorders
- Lethargy

Emotional Abuse

Defined as **"failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child"**.

Possible signs of emotional abuse

- Low self esteem
- Continual self deprecation
- Sudden speech disorder/ refusal to speak
- Fear of carers
- Severe hostility/ aggression towards other children
- Significant decline in concentration span
- Self harm

Sexual Abuse

Defined as **"any child below the age of 16 may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect exploits the child, directly or indirectly, with any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks."**

Possible signs of sexual abuse

- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Complaints of genital itching or pain
- Self harm
- Eating disorders
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Acting in sexually explicit manner
- Anxiety/ depression/ withdrawn
- Fear of undressing e.g. for physical exercise
- Low self esteem
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Running away
- Developmental regression
- Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults

Contacts

Agency/Organisation	Contact Details
Social Work Services – Local CHCP Office	See Glasgow Child Protection Website for up-to-date contact information www.glasgowchildprotection.org.uk/Professional/Contacts/
Social Work Services- Out of Hours Service	Social Work Stand By 35 Church Street Partick Glasgow. Telephone: 0800 811 505
Strathclyde Police	<i>Select relevant Address from attached list</i>
Scottish Children’s Reporters Administration (SCRA) <i>Select relevant Address from List opposite</i>	10/20 Bell Street Glasgow. G1 1LG East Team 0141 567 7909 North Team 0141 567 7928 South Team 0141 567 7947

Police

A Division

50 Stewart Street
Glasgow

0141 532 3000

C Division

1380 Maryhill Road
Glasgow

0141 532 3700

E Division

851 London Road
Glasgow

0141 532 4600

G Division

923 Helen Street
Glasgow

0141 532 5400