



**WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
AFFECTED BY PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH
DIFFICULTIES**

JOINT PROTOCOL BETWEEN

**PERTH AND KINROSS EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
(ECS) – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE**

AND

**PERTH AND KINROSS HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CARE (HCC) –
ADULT CARE TEAMS¹**

**Getting it Right
in Perth and Kinross**
Helping children be the best they can be

¹ Whilst this Joint Protocol refers to joint working between Children's Services and Adult Council Services, work is being taken forward over the summer/autumn 2011 to extend and include it provisions to other services and agencies, in particular with Health.

What to do if you are worried about a child or young person?

If you are worried or concerned about a child or young person you should contact the Perth and Kinross Child Protection Duty Team or Tayside Police Public Protection Unit:-

Perth and Kinross Child Protection Duty Team - (24 hours)	01738 476768
Tayside Police Public Protection Unit	0300 111 2222
In an Emergency	Call 999

child protection – it's everyone's job

Document Control

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1. Introduction

This protocol formalises the mutually agreed working arrangements between **Perth and Kinross Education and Children's Services (ECS) – Children and Families Service** and **Perth and Kinross Housing and Community Care (HCC) – Adult Care Teams, including Mental Health, Access, Drugs and Alcohol, Criminal Justice and Locality Teams** when *working with children and young people affected by parental mental health difficulties*.

This protocol relates equally to *unborn and/or pre-birth children* as well as *children and young people affected by parental mental health difficulties*.

These working arrangements will include the mutual provision of professional information, advice, support, supervision and where necessary consultancy to staff working with *unborn and/or pre-birth children* and/or *children and young people affected by parental mental health difficulties* and will be underpinned by information sharing, risk assessment, joint visits and good case file note recording.

2. Aims

The aims of this Protocol are to ensure that **Social Workers and Social Care Officers, working within ECS – Children and Families Service** and **staff working within HCC – Adult Care Teams, including Mental Health, Access, Drugs and Alcohol, Criminal Justice and Locality Teams** are:-

1. aware of the agreed local arrangements to be followed when working with *unborn and/or pre-birth children*, whose parents and/or carers may be affected by parental mental health issues;
2. aware of the agreed local arrangements to be followed when supporting *children and young people*, whose parents and/or carers may be affected by parental mental health issues;
3. aware of what to do if they need to seek child care and/or protection and/or mental health information and/or advice regarding parents and/or carers who may be affected by parental mental health issues – particularly in an emergency and/or out of hours situation; and;
4. clear about the role of Mental Health Officers, particularly in terms of child protection.

3. Application

This protocol applies to:-

- **All practitioners and managers within ECS – Children and Families Service** who work with unborn and/or pre-birth children, as well as with children and young people, who may be affected by parental mental health difficulties; and
- **All practitioners and managers within HCC – Adult Care Teams, including Mental Health, Access, Drugs and Alcohol, Criminal Justice and Locality Teams** who identify any unborn and/or pre-birth children, as well as with children and young people, who may be affected by parental mental health difficulties.

4. Agreed Procedures

- **Within Perth and Kinross, all child care and/or protection concerns should normally be reported to the Child Protection Duty Team on 01738 476768 (24/7/365);**
- After initial screening, where there are still child care and/or protection concerns these will be investigated in compliance with existing local child protection procedures and/or arrangements, either by an ECS – Children and Families Service Social Worker or a Social Care Officer, very often in partnership with the Police;
- If any practitioner identifies a concern with an unborn and/or pre-birth child, or with a child or young person affected by parental mental health difficulties then that concern should be passed to the Child Protection Duty Team (24/7/365);
- All concerns relating to an unborn and/or pre-birth child are investigated in line with the [NHS Tayside Unborn Baby Protocol](#), via the Perth and Kinross CHP Senior Nurse Child Protection who can be contacted on 01738 564295;
- If an ECS – Children and Families Service Social Worker or a Social Care Officer carries out a home visit and has concerns about the mental health or wellbeing of a parent and/or carer then, where that concern is either severe or indeed obvious, that person's GP should be contacted immediately and without delay;

Remember the care and welfare of the unborn and/or pre-birth child, or the child or young person is paramount

- The ECS – Children and Families Service Social Worker or a Social Care Officer should then carry out a check of the Social Work SWIFT system to ascertain whether or not that parent and/or carer is known to the HCC – Mental Health Team. If so, they should be contacted for immediate information and advice. The Social Work SWIFT system should always be updated;
- If the parent and/or carer is not known to the HCC – Mental Health Team, or the case is no longer an active case, then the ECS – Children and Families Service Social Worker or a Social Care Officer should make contact with the:-
 - Access Team, Duty Social Worker – 0845 30 111 20
 - Outwith Hours Service (OOHS) via the Perth and Kinross Social Work Out of Hours Service on 01738 476768
- On being informed of such a concern, the Duty Social Worker will also carry out a check of their database/system to ascertain whether or not the parent and/or carer is known to them. If the case is active, that information will be recorded and, if necessary passed immediately to the key worker/key team including the allocated MHO. In urgent situations the Duty Social Worker will contact the Duty Mental Health Officer (MHO) and/or Medical Staff known to be working with the parent and/or carer;
- Where the parent and/or carer has a mental disorder, the Duty Social Worker should contact the Team Leader of the Mental Health Team to discuss the situation and ensure that allocation of an appropriate worker is progressed through the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) for further assessment, if no immediate response is required;
- Where the parent and/or carer has a dual diagnosis – parent and/or carer has both mental health and drug and/or alcohol problems, the Team Leader of respective Teams should discuss how to progress and allocate appropriately;
- ECS – Children and Families Social Worker or Social Care Officer may also simply wish advice on the implications for parenting, which might present themselves when a caregiver has a specific mental disorder;
- ECS – Children and Families Social Worker or Social Care Officer will complete a Children and Families Child Protection Risk Assessment whilst the MHO will complete a Sainsbury Adult Risk Assessment, which they will copy to each other

if required. (An amalgamated child protection/mental health risk assessment tool may also be developed for use in these circumstances);

- The respective workers in the ECS – Children and Families Service and HCC – Adult Care Services will then liaise and work together on the child care and/or protection concern;

The Mental Health Officer (MHO) Role:-

If there are serious concerns about the parent and/or carer's mental health, it will be necessary to contact a Mental Health Officer (MHO) who will then exercise several options, depending on the nature of the child care and/or protection concerns under investigation:-

Contact the Duty Mental Health Officer (MHO) – During Working Hours via Murray Royal Hospital, Elcho Ward on 01738 562280; or

1. Consult with the parent and/or carer's GP. The MHO may have to give advice to GPs re overriding consent issues and dovetailing with the [Getting our Priorities Right \(GOPR\)](#) approach. The OOHS Duty MHO will consult with emergency GP;
2. Consult with the Duty Psychiatrist and deal with logistics of bringing the parent and/or carer into the Murray Royal Hospital for further assessment, if the parent and/or carer is consenting to this;
3. Arrange for a joint-visit with the ECS – Children and Families Social Worker or Social Care Officer, which will permit the ECS – Children and Families Social Worker or Social Care Officer to focus on the child/young person whilst the MHO focuses on the parent and/or carer;
4. Arrange a joint-visit with the GP or Approved Medical Practitioner, if available, depending on the severity of the disorder displayed and the urgency of the situation;
5. The [Getting it Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) approach and practice model requires practitioners from all agencies to consider the following *five* key questions and to seek addition support as required:-
 - *What is getting in the way of this child or young person's well-being?*
 - *Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?*
 - *What can I do now to help this child or young person?*

- *What can my agency do to help this child or young person? And*
 - *What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?*
6. All these actions will be recorded in the individual risk assessments and in any joint action/risk management plan.

5. Related Policy and/or Legislative Documents (Electronic Links)

There are a number of key policy and/or legislative references including:-

[Scottish Government National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010](#)

Key Messages for Practice

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010](#) (Pages 118 – 120):

Children and Young People Affected by Parental Mental Health Problems

- *The child's needs should always be considered by services involved with the parent or carer. Where concerns are identified, these should be shared with children's services.*
- *Joint working across adult and child services is essential to ensuring children are protected and their needs met. Understanding of the differing roles should be promoted locally.*

In Perth and Kinross, all child care and/or protection concerns are investigating in compliance with the [ECS Child Protection Procedures 2008](#).

The [NHS Tayside Unborn Baby Protocol](#) is also relevant for all unborn and/or pre-birth children.

- [Getting our Priorities Right \(GOPR\)](#)
- [Early Years Framework](#)
- [Children's Charter](#)
- [Framework for Standards](#)

- [Getting it Right for Every Child](#)
- [Scottish Government National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines 2011](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Initial Screening and Inter-Agency Referral Discussions \(IRD\) Multi-Agency Protocol](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Information Sharing Protocol for Staff Working with Children and Families in Need or at Risk](#)
- [ECS Child Protection Procedures 2008](#)
- [NHS Tayside Unborn Baby Protocol](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Joint Protocol – Working with Children and Young People Affected by Parental Learning Disability](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Guidance – Working with Hostile and Non Engaging Parents and Carers](#)