



Title	Child Protection Policy
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Maryhill Housing Association staff and Board Members can recognise signs of child abuse and neglect and are aware of what they should do if they are faced with a concern for a child or a young person.
Scope	<p>Board has responsibility for approving this Policy. Senior Management Team has responsibility for reviewing and monitoring the outcomes of this policy.</p> <p>The Director of Operations holds the lead responsibility for this policy with responsibility for the implementation delegated to the Head of Neighbourhoods & Communities.</p> <p>This policy applies to all Board and Committee members, members of staff whether employees of MHA, freelance, casual, or temporary agency staff irrespective of grade, position or length of service responsible for the management of properties within the Association.</p>
Definitions	<p>The general definition of child abuse adopted in Scottish Government guidance states: “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. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur.”</p> <p>The Scottish approach to child protection is based upon the protection of children’s rights. The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) policy and practice model is a practical expression of the Scottish Government’s commitment to implementation of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This requires a continuum of preventative and protective work.</p> <p>Abuse or neglect need not actually have taken place, there may instead be and identified significant likelihood of harm, abuse or neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or young person. Someone may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.</p>

	<p>Child and Young Person</p> <p>The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 defines a child or young person as being 16 years of age or under. In certain circumstances, such as children or young people with special needs, or children or young people subject to supervision requirements the upper age limit for protection from abuse or neglect may be extended to 18.</p>
<p>Policy Statement</p>	<p>We believe that all children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met. Children and young people should get the help they need when they need it, and their welfare should always be paramount.</p> <p>We believe that staff and Board Members have a responsibility to prevent, recognise and act on child abuse and neglect</p> <p>Types of Abuse</p> <p>The following definitions show some of the most common 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:</p> <p>Physical Abuse - is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person and 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.</p> <p>Emotional Abuse – is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has a severe and persistent adverse effect on a child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve verbal harassment of the child by criticism, threat, ridicule, taunting, or disparaging comments. These can lead to loss of confidence and self-esteem. It may involve the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on a child.</p> <p>Sexual Abuse – is defined as 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 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. 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, indecent images or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards children or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.</p>

This also includes **child sexual exploitation**, which is defined as follows; “The sexual exploitation of children and young people is a form of child sexual abuse which is often hidden, with distinctive elements of exploitation and exchange. In practice, the sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 might involve young people being coerced, manipulated, forced or deceived into performing sexual activities or allowing sexual activities to be performed on them in exchange for receiving some form of material goods or other entity, for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gifts or affection. Sexual exploitation can take place through the use of technology and without the child’s recognition.”

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 basic emotional needs.

Criminal exploitation - Criminal exploitation refers to 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. The victim may have been criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation may involve physical contact and may also occur through the use of technology. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to move and store drugs and money. Coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons may be involved.

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. Transfer or movement can be within an area and does not have to be across borders. Examples of and reasons for trafficking can include sexual, criminal and financial exploitation, forced labour, removal of organs, illegal adoption, and forced or illegal marriage.

The GIRFEC SHANARRI - indicators set out the essential wellbeing needs. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; to ensure adequate

supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); to seek consistent access to appropriate medical care or treatment; to ensure the child receives education; or to respond to a child's essential emotional needs.

Faltering growth refers to an inability to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones in the absence of medically discernible physical and genetic reasons. This condition requires further assessment and may be associated with chronic neglect.

Malnutrition, lack of nurturing and lack of stimulation can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. For very young children the impact could quickly become life-threatening. Chronic physical and emotional neglect may also have a significant impact on teenagers.

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. Such procedures are usually conducted on children and are a criminal offence in Scotland. FGM can be fatal and is associated with long-term physical and emotional harm.

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. Forced marriage is both a child protection and adult protection matter. Child protection processes will be considered up to the age of 18. Forced marriage may be a risk alongside other forms of so called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA). HBA includes practices used to control behaviour within families, communities, or other social groups, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or 'honour'.

Children's rights

Child protection in Scotland is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child including;

- The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect them. (Article 3)
- Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. (Article 12)
- Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad

	<p>treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. (Article 19)</p> <p>We will make sure that all staff and Board Members understand their role in relation to protecting children and are competent in recognising and acting on abuse and neglect.</p> <p><u>Training</u></p> <p>As an allegation of abuse can come to the notice of any member of staff at any time, all staff members will receive training in Child Protection Procedures, either as part of an initial induction, or as part of an ongoing training programme.</p> <p>Staff and Board Members will be made aware of the existence of the Child Protection Policy and Procedure, and their responsibilities in relation to the Adult Protection process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the provision of training • By issuing a copy of the policy to all new staff members • By publicising its existence at strategic points of office/service locations. • Staff can access this policy and the related procedure on the F drive – Policy Folder or request from their line manager. <p>We will promote an organisational culture of openness so that staff and Board Members can raise and report their concerns. Reporting a concern may be the first step in ensuring that a child or young person is protected.</p> <p>All children or young people whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, religious belief or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or neglect</p> <p>Appendix A to the policy details how the principles set out above will be applied.</p>
Approval	Board – March 2023
Policy Owner	<p>Head of Neighbourhoods & communities</p> <p>Responsible Director – Director of Operations</p>
Review	<p>March 2026</p> <p>The policy may also be reviewed in light of legislation, good practice, or internal structural and process change.</p>

Appendix A

Reporting concerns

Concerns about a child or young person can arise in a number of ways, for example an accumulation of concerns, a single significant incident, observation on child/parent interaction, or information from a relative or a member of the public.

In situations where there is immediate danger

Where a member of staff or Board Member identifies a situation that requires immediate response – for example a child or young person requires urgent medical treatment, advises they feel suicidal or is subject to ongoing violence and requires assistance they should call the appropriate emergency services on 999

If a member of staff or Board Member is in immediate danger, they must leave the scene and not return until it is safe to do so

The staff member should inform their line manager immediately. Board Members should inform a member of the Association's Senior Management Team. Depending on the incident it may be appropriate for the Manager to place a health and safety alert on the tenant account.

If the child or young person is considered to be at risk but not in immediate danger:

Members of staff and Board Members must report their concerns as soon as possible on the same working day to their line manager/Senior Management Team Member after seeing or hearing something which indicates a child or young person is the subject of - or is at risk of - neglect or abuse.

It is important that front line staff and Board Members record basic information regarding their concerns including any comments the child or young person has made and any observations witnessed by the staff or Board member.

In such instances, the staff/Board member should, as soon as reasonably practicable, make a note of the following details. This will help to clearly and accurately report what they have seen or heard to their line manager/Senior Management Team member.

- Name, address, approximate age of child or young person
- Date and time of the incident
- Reason for concern in as much detail as possible including time, date, location etc
- Any injuries observed
- Details of any witnesses
- Any personal safety issues anyone should be aware of

Staff/Board Member responsibilities

It is not the staff/Board member's role to investigate the incident in any way and on no account should a member of staff/Board Member question a child or young person who is the subject of, or is at risk of, neglect or abuse.

The responsibility of the front-line member of staff/Board Member is solely to report any concerns they may have to their line manager/Senior Management Team Member.

Members of staff and Board Members must report any concerns they have to their line manager/Senior Management Team member at the earliest opportunity on the same working day, providing as much detail as possible as outlined above. If the line manager is unavailable, concerns must be reported to another manager or the second line manager.

The line manager/Senior Management Team member is responsible for reporting details of the incident or concern to the appropriate social work team. Managers should also flag any reported incidents to a Senior Manager and may discuss or seek advice before the referral is made.

This will be done the same working day and a form AP1 (**Appendix B**) will be completed and submitted to the social work team within one working day.

Before making a referral, Managers should consider whether to speak to the parents before sharing concerns with social work or the police. In general, it is considered good practice to let parents know what we are intending to do. However, this might place the child in a more dangerous situation or prejudice the outcome of any subsequent social work or police investigation. Advice may be sought from the social work team or the police where required.

Related Issues

Adult protection

It is important to be aware when dealing with child protection concerns, if there are adults present or connected with the child, there could also be adult protection concerns. A separate Adult Protection Policy provides guidance as to the actions staff/Board Members should take in relation to adult protection concerns.

Confidentiality and GDPR

Information provided to us will normally be treated as confidential and will not be passed to a third party without the consent of the subject. However, our privacy statement states that we may disclose personal information to other agencies under certain circumstances.

This includes sharing information for the purposes of law enforcement and the statement allows us to share information with Police Scotland, Local Authority Departments and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Appendix B

Maryhill Housing Child Protection Form (CP1)

A referral can be made to Glasgow City Council social services team by contacting Social Care Direct on 0141 287 0555.

The following information should be included in any referral made. If you do not have all the information you should give as much information as you can.

Child's name	
Child's Address	
Child's Date of Birth	
Parents name and current whereabouts	
Details of person making referral and involvement with the child	
What the concerns are and why they have arisen	
Any recent changes in the child's behaviour or presentation	
Details of anything the child has said which has made you concerned	
Are there other children in the household	
Are any other agencies currently involved with the child?	
Have you had any previous concerns about this child or other children in the household?	

Does the child have any disability or special needs?	
Are you aware of any cultural or religious factors which need to be taken into account?	
Have you told the parent(s) of your concern and if so what was their reaction?	
Any other relevant information?	

Signature

Name

Date