

OUR VISION

“We want every child, young person and their families, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances, to live in a healthy, safe, home environment, within strong communities free from prejudice, poverty, exclusion and discrimination, to enable them to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to their communities throughout their lives”.

OUR VALUES

“Children are best protected by identifying the strengths that exist for them at home, in their extended families, schools and in their communities, and by building on these strengths to enable them to continue to live within their communities wherever possible”.

OUR AIM

“child protection is everyone's job
...it's our job”



Fife Child Protection Committee
www.fifechildprotection.org.uk

Information Sharing Guidance

- **It's our responsibility** to ensure that the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount
- **It's our responsibility** to ensure that the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults get the help they need when they need it
- **It's our responsibility** to ensure that the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults are cared for and protected
- **It's our responsibility** to ensure that when you have a concern we share and exchange information with other professionals
- **It's our responsibility** to ensure that you understand your own agency's information sharing arrangements and comply with them
- **It's our responsibility** to ensure that you are confident and competent when sharing and exchanging information with other professionals and do so quickly and effectively
- **It's our responsibility** to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults. Data Protections and Confidentiality **does not** prevent you sharing and exchanging information with other professionals and adults.

Useful Reference Documents

- Scottish Government (2003) Sharing Information About Children at Risk: A Guide to Good Practice;
- Scottish Government (2004) Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter;
- Scottish Government (2004) Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards;
- Fife's Multi-Agency Vulnerable Adults Protection Procedures;
- Fife Child Protection Committee Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines.

Further Information

Should you require any further information, advice or guidance we would encourage you to look online at:

www.fifedirect.org.uk/informationsharing

Further advice on a wide range of child protection matters can also be found at:
www.fifechildprotection.org.uk



a practitioners and
managers guide to



Information Sharing



All children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to care and protection. Their welfare is paramount. All practitioners and managers across the public, private and voluntary sectors are responsible for ensuring that children, young people and vulnerable adults get the help they need when they need it.

In 2007 the Fife Chief Officers' Public Safety Group provided all practitioners and managers with guidance letters on Information Sharing. This guide replicates and reinforces that guidance again.



Ronnie Hinds
Chief Executive, Fife Council



Norma Graham
Chief Constable, Fife Constabulary



George Brechin
Chief Executive, NHS Fife

Local Context

We all appreciate the commitment and hard work which everyone involved puts in on a daily basis here in Fife and we want to build on the good practice demonstrated here in Fife. We are also well aware that this is very challenging and demanding work, often in difficult circumstances and that, by working together we can, and do, make a difference to the lives of these vulnerable client groups.

The protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in its widest context, is "everyone's responsibility and everyone's job" and cuts across all aspects of private life and professional business. We all have a duty, individually and collectively, to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities and in our society.

On many occasions, this will require practitioners and managers to seek and exchange personal information about individuals. We are however aware that questions of confidentiality can and sometimes do get in the way of ensuring the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We would like to try to clarify the position and reinforce the importance of sharing and exchanging information where the care, welfare and safety of these client groups are concerned.

General Principles

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to privacy and the utmost care should be taken when handling information on their personal circumstances. We endorse the need for a sensitive and an ethical approach when working in partnership with children, young people and vulnerable adults, together with their families and carers.

Where we have a concern about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or we are made aware of such a concern, we all have a responsibility to share and exchange relevant information with other practitioners. We should do so timeously, with confidence and adhere to our own service/agency procedures when doing so.

Recent inquiry reports have highlighted many misconceptions about confidentiality and we would simply remind you that existing legislation does not prevent you from sharing and/or exchanging information where there are clear concerns about the care, safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This requirement also extends to all practitioners and managers working with adults where there may be substance misuse, mental health and/or domestic abuse issues. They must be particularly alert to the needs of any dependant children and young people.

National Policy and Guidance

We would draw your attention to the Scottish Executive, (now Scottish Government) document Sharing Information About Children at Risk: A Guide to Good Practice (2003) which states:-

"If there is reasonable concern that a child may be at risk of harm this will always override a professional or agency requirement to keep information confidential. All professionals and service providers have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm."

We would also endorse the Scottish Government's Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter and Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards (2004) which also provide you with good practice advice on this and wider child protection matters.

As practitioners and managers you should continue to adhere to these principles at all times in your work and practice here in Fife.

We hope this advice and guidance will go some way to assist you in being confident and competent in the sharing and exchanging of information. In doing so, you will add to the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in Fife and improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable people in our community.