This leaflet has been prepared by your local **Child Protection Committee**.

The Child Protection Committee is made up of senior representatives from across the range of local agencies in your area concerned with child welfare.

The Child Protection Committee meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of local and national interest concerning the protection of children. The Child Protection Committee also promotes interagency working and training in the field of child protection and ensures that local polices and procedures are in place for responding to child protection concerns.

This leaflet is for you if you work with children or come into contact with children. It explains what to do and who to contact if you have concerns about a child.

Details are given about what is likely to happen if the child is believed to be in need of protection.
**Compulsory Measures of Supervision** - Statutory arrangements for monitoring and intervening where necessary.

**Criminal Injuries Compensation** - Financial compensation for a person who has been the victim of a crime of violence.

**Domestic Abuse** - Domestic violence is physical, sexual, mental or emotional abuse by a partner, family member or other member of the household. It may be a single incident or a series of incidents.

**Interagency Co-ordination** - Different agencies working together harmoniously.

**Interagency Collaboration** - Different agencies working together on a joint project.

**Looked After Child**

- Child whom the local authority has given accommodation under section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Child who is the subject of any supervision requirement under section 70 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Child who is the subject of a warrant from the court or the Children’s Hearing system
- Child who is the subject of a child assessment order or a child protection order
- Child who is the subject of a parental responsibility order

**Looked After and Accommodated Child** - Child who is cared for by the local authority usually in foster care or a residential unit.

**Looked After and Accommodated Review (LAA)** - Meeting to review progress and plans for a child in foster care or in a residential establishment.
This might include one or more of the following:

- No further action – no concerns
- Offer of help or support to the child and their family
- Referral to another agency for help or support

In the case of ongoing concerns about a child:

- A multi agency meeting (known as an Initial Child Protection Case Conference) will be convened
- In a small number of cases immediate emergency action may be required to protect the child – Child Protection Order, Exclusion Order, Emergency Police Powers.
- Further criminal enquires, or report to the Procurator Fiscal may be required
- Referral to the Reporter may be required

The leaflet should be read in conjunction with existing child protection policies and procedures within your own organisation or agency.

**Everyone’s Responsibility to Protect Children**

Most children grow up in homes where they are loved and well cared for. However, for a variety of reasons sometimes a child may be harmed or mistreated in a way that is abusive. In such cases it is important that the child and their family receive help and support to ensure that the child is properly cared for and protected.

All children have a right to grow up in a caring and safe environment. All adults have a responsibility to protect children. This includes:

- Parents
- Family members
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Professionals
It is also important that agencies are kept informed of what is happening and that feedback is given to the referrer at the end of this process.

Once the investigation has been completed all relevant information is recorded by the agencies involved in the investigation. The social worker will record the information on a CP1 Form (Child Protection Investigation) and the police will maintain a record of the relevant information on the appropriate police information system.

This will include, details of the initial referral, family background, assessment of risk and needs of the child. It will also include a recommendation of any further action required to protect the child from and ensure their safety and wellbeing in the future.

The Senior Social Worker in conjunction with a Senior Social Work Manager and where appropriate, The Family Protection Unit Supervisor or other appropriate Police Supervisor, will decide on the next course of action.

What is Child Abuse?
There are different types of abuse.

- Physical injury – being hit, kicked, punched
- Physical neglect – not being properly fed or clothed, poor hygiene
- Sexual abuse – inappropriate sexual behaviour or language by an adult towards a child
- Emotional abuse – constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated

Who are Abusers?
Children are usually abused by a parent or some other trusted adult. There are occasions when a child may be abused by someone unknown to them. However these occasions are very rare. Abusers come from all walks of life.

• Members of the public
• Voluntary organisations, youth groups etc
• Religious organisations
action to protect the child and will usually undertake this task together.

At all times the welfare of the child comes first.

Usually social work and police will want to:

- Speak to you (the referrer!)
- Speak to the child
- Speak to the parent
- Speak to any other relevant person – other family members, teacher, health visitor, initial referrer etc.
- Make further enquires if necessary
- Take further action if necessary – arrange medical examination

It is recognised that this can be a very difficult time for children and their families, and it is important that all agencies work together to make this process as smooth as possible to help minimise the stress experienced.

Throughout the process it is important that, children and their families are listened to and consulted and given the necessary information, support and help required.

life and are not restricted to any social class, religion or culture.

**What might make you Worried about a Child?**

Children rarely tell if they are being abused, however, there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of a child being abused or neglected:

**The child may:**

- Have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Be afraid to go home
- Appear hungry, tired or unkempt
- Be left unattended or unsupervised
- Have too much responsibility for their age
- Be acting out in a sexually inappropriate way
- Be misusing drugs or alcohol
Not all children who are abused or neglected will display these signs and equally a child may display some of these signs and symptoms for other reasons. At times there may be other reasons why you are worried.

The adult

- May be acting in a violent or sexual manner towards a child
- May be misusing drugs or alcohol while caring for a child

These are some examples of what might make you worried about a child, or you may know of other things that are happening which means you need to take action to protect the child.

What to do if you have general concerns about a child

Sometimes it can be difficult to know if a child is being abused or at risk of abuse. You might have general concerns about a child but be unsure whether the child is at

Making a referral to social work or police

When making a referral to social work or police, you should ask for the Duty social worker (social work department) or the Duty officer (police). The social worker/police officer will ask you to give as much information as possible and will also ask that you confirm the referral details in writing.

When social work or police receive information about possible child abuse they must act on this information. This action can take a number of different forms including checking their own records and gathering more information on the child and family from other agencies.

Sometimes it becomes clear at a very early stage that the child is not at risk and no formal child protection action is required. However support may be offered to the child and family instead.

In other circumstances significant concerns may emerge where formal child protection action is required. In such circumstances social work and police have a legal responsibility to investigate and take any necessary
• Whether the child said anything which has made you concerned
• Whether there are any other children in the household
• Whether there are any other agencies currently involved with the family (if known)
• Whether there have been any previous concerns about this child or other children in the household
• Whether the child has any disabilities or special needs
• Whether the parents are aware of the concerns and if so what is their reaction

If any of the above points are not known referral should not be delayed to allow such details to be obtained. Undue delay may place the child at further risk. If you are worried about a child you must report your concerns to your line manager or designated child protection person for your organisation. It is also advisable that at this point you check your agency’s child protection procedures. If you are unsure about agency procedures or do not have access to a line manager for advice you can contact any of the following for advice on what to do next:
• social work
• health visitor
• family doctor
• teacher or nursery staff
• police officer
• children’s reporter

If a child tells you something has happened:

Do
• Stay calm
• Listen to the child
What to do if a child tells you or you believe a child is being abused or at risk of abuse

If a child tells you something, or you believe a child is being abused or at risk of abuse, you must report your concerns to your line manager immediately. If there are child protection concerns then a referral should be made to social work or in an emergency the police. This will either be made by your line manager or yourself depending on your organisation’s procedures and structure.

When a referral is made to social work or police, the following details are required:

- The child’s name, address and date of birth
- Parent’s names and current whereabouts
- Child’s present whereabouts
- Your details e.g. your involvement with the child
- What the concerns are and why they have arisen
- Any recent changes in the child’s behaviour or presentation

Don’t

- Ask too many questions
- Make any false promises
- Express shock or anger at what is being said to you
- Interpret what the child is saying to you – just record and report
- Delay listening to the child or passing on your concerns
- Carry out an ‘investigation’ into the allegation

- Keep any questions to a minimum – only ask open questions
- Reassure the child they were right to tell
- Tell the child what you’re going to do next
- Record in the child’s own words what has been said
- Act promptly and immediately report to your line manager or designated child protection officer