

---

**To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

**On: Thursday 24 August 2023**

---

**Report by: Chief Social Work Officer**

---

**Heading: Interagency Child Protection Update**

---

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The protection of vulnerable children is a key responsibility for Renfrewshire Council. The authority works in partnership with the NHS, Police Scotland, and a range of other statutory and voluntary sector services to protect children identified at risk of significant harm.
  - 1.2. Locally the leadership for interagency child protection work is located within the Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee (RCPC). RCPC has membership from all of the partner agencies involved in protecting children in Renfrewshire and has an independent chairperson. RCPC is accountable to the Renfrewshire Chief Officer Group and provides regular updates to the public protection member/officer group.
  - 1.3. The Scottish Government published new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in September 2021. Recognising that services were in recovery from the COVID pandemic the timescale for implementing the guidance was set for October 2023.
  - 1.4. This report provides an update on the Renfrewshire position on implementing the 2021 national guidance.
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the education and children policy board notes the content of this report.
-

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The protection of vulnerable children is a shared responsibility for all services in the public and independent sectors. There is a recognition that the public has a responsibility to help protect children. The message from Scotland's children is that "it's everyone's job to make sure I'm ok".
- 3.2. To promote the protection of children and to ensure that appropriate supports and services are in place there is a requirement for each local authority area to have a child protection committee. The local child protection committee has the following responsibilities:
  - Provide leadership within and across partner organisations on child protection.
  - Undertake self-evaluation and improvement work.
  - Ensuring learning and development of staff.
  - Support to staff to discharge their responsibilities in child protection.
- 3.3. In Renfrewshire the child protection committee membership includes the Director of Children's Services, the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice/Chief Social Work Officer, the Head of Education, the Chief Officer of Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Detective Superintendent Renfrewshire Public Protection Unit, the Public Protection Medical Lead for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and the Head of Health and Social Care (RHSCP). RCPC has an independent chairperson and a Lead Officer. The independent chairperson, John Paterson recently retired from the role and a new independent chairperson, Tam Baillie is taking up the role in September 2023.
- 3.4. The Renfrewshire Chief Officer Group is the Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council, the Divisional Commander for Police Scotland and the Nurse Director NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The Chief Officer Group has oversight of the work of RCPC.
- 3.5. Renfrewshire has a Member Officer Group for public protection. This group receives regular reports from RCPC and Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee.
- 3.6. RCPC has responsibility for ensuring that the guidance available to staff locally reflects the national guidance. The Scottish Government produced new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in September 2021. The Scottish Government advised that all local areas require to have their local guidance compliant and reflective of the national guidance by October 2023.
- 3.7. Within Renfrewshire a review of the local guidance was carried out in the period September 2021 to December 2021 to identify where improvements could be made immediately to improve the protection of children in Renfrewshire. Some immediate changes were put in place in relation to the approach to how child protection investigations were carried out, the process

for making decisions on how protection plans for children were developed and how the views of children and families were presented and considered.

- 3.8. In addition, an iterative improvement approach was taken over the period January 2022 to March 2023. The improvements included the involvement of education staff in the initial referral discussion process for responding to child protection referrals, the way decisions and interim safety plans were devised and shared with children and families, improving the way services responded to young people aged 16-17, and the way services responded to child protection concerns outwith the immediate family (referred to as contextual safeguarding).
- 3.9. Since March 2023, RCPC has worked to revise fully the Renfrewshire Interagency Child Protection Guidance to ensure it is fully compliant with the National Guidance issued in September 2021. The refreshed and revised Renfrewshire Interagency Guidance has been issued to staff for implementation from 14 August 2023 when school staff return.
- 3.10. Over the past 12 months RCPC has revised its approach to self-evaluation and improvement activity. A new sub-group has been established to ensure that RCPC has a robust model of self-evaluation and improvement activity. The sub-group has ensured that all agencies have in place internal evaluation processes to support the multi-agency evaluation and improvement approach. Staff were recently asked to complete a survey on the protection of children across Renfrewshire. The survey results are being analysed and will be presented to the meeting of RCPC in September 2023. RCPC will conduct a multi-agency case file audit in November 2023 to inform the development plan for the following 12 months.
- 3.11. Over the last twelve months RCPC has attempted to improve communication with front-line staff about the work of the committee. After each meeting of the committee a staff newsletter has been produced. The newsletter has allowed individual members of RCPC to introduce themselves to the staff across the partnership and highlight activity.

---

## Implications of this report

1. **Financial Implications**  
None.
2. **HR and Organisational Development Implications**  
None
3. **Community Plan/Council Plan Implications**  

Safer and Stronger	- Children and families receive the right support to ensure they are safe at home and in the community.
--------------------	---

**4. Legal Implications**

The authority works within the legal framework to discharge its duties to children involved in the child protection system.

**5. Property/Assets Implications**

None.

**6. Information Technology Implications**

None.

**7. Equality and Human Rights Implications**

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only.

**8. Health and Safety Implications**

None.

**9. Procurement Implications**

None.

**10. Risk Implications**

None.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

**12. COSLA Policy Position**

None.

**13. Climate Risk**

None.

---

**List of Background Papers**

None.

---

*Children's Services*

*JCTLG*

*26 July 2023*

**Author:** John Trainer, Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice/Chief Social Work Officer

**0141 6218 6860**

**[john.trainer@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:john.trainer@renfrewshire.gov.uk)**