Reporting of Child Protection Concerns – Initial Referral Discussions

The Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) is a joint process that Social Work, Police, Health and Education staff must follow when they are responding to a Child Protection referral in order to agree a plan for the investigation.

The purpose of an Initial Referral Discussion is to ensure all relevant information is shared and analysed to ensure that any Child Protection Investigations are based on a reasoned, informed and considered plan. The sharing of this process should lead to a child-focused course of action being agreed between relevant parties.

Simply what do we know, what are the risks, what course of action are we taking.

There may be circumstances when the Police require to capture evidence of a crime from a child/young person and there are no child protection concerns, therefore an IRD would not be necessary. In such circumstances, Police Scotland may request a JII is conducted in order to progress their investigation. However, prior to progressing to JII, Social Work are required to check their records to ensure there is no other information which may change this initial assessment. If the child/young person is known to Social Work and the circumstances of the enquiry add sufficient concerns that it may meet the threshold for an IRD, they may request that an IRD is held prior to JII.
### Initial information gathering

- Date, time and place of the disclosure for raising of concern
- Are you clear about the circumstances and parties involved?
- Current situation of the child i.e. Are safety measures in place?
- Consider whether a crime has or is likely to have been committed.
- Consider whether the child has been a witness to an offence.

### Without delay

**Does the situation require an immediate response to protect the child?**

If so, contact Police or Social Work immediately.

**Timeline**

**Within 1 hour**

**Required action**

1. **Initial information gathering**
   - Date, time and place of the disclosure for raising of concern
   - Are you clear about the circumstances and parties involved?
   - Current situation of the child i.e. Are safety measures in place?
   - Consider whether a crime has or is likely to have been committed.
   - Consider whether the child has been a witness to an offence.

2. **Receiving agency completes initial information gathering**

3. **Receiving agency refers to Social Work without delay**

4. **Social Worker completes initial checks & discusses with Line Manager**

5. **Is the child at risk of harm?**
   - Yes: Social Worker contacts Police
   - No: Follow GIRFEC Processes

6. **Does the child have a wellbeing need?**
   - Yes: Police / Social Work discussion to agree if an IRD is to take place
   - No: No further action required

7. **Feedback to referer, parents and partner agencies**

8. **Hold IRD and agree plan for investigation including JII and medical**
   - Yes: Undertake investigation CP1 & CP2 to Social Work Manager
   - No: Social Work Manager to consider the need for a CPCC

9. **CPCC to take place within 21 days of the decision to go to conference**

10. **Referring agency (Police / Social Work) chair and minute the meeting and complete, update and circulate IRD paperwork within 7 calendar days to attendees and contributors.**

11. **Initial information gathering during school holidays, as the school is closed, the police IRD desk, or duty Social Worker will contact E&CS on 01467 537111**

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### Preparation

- Ensure safety measures are in place
- Clarify circumstances and details of parties involved
- Confirm a crime has or is likely to have been committed

**Notes**

- **CPCC to take place within 21 days of the decision to go to conference**
- **GIRFEC Processes**
- **JII and medical**
- **Agree further research / checks with other agencies (see over)**
- **Agree time of IRD**
- **Agree tasks - notification of IRD to Health & Education.**

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**Aberdeenshire Council**
### Responding to Child Protection Concerns

#### Multi-Agency Guidance

**Initial Checks by Children’s Social Work (CP1 form)**
- Carefirst database with reference to adult as well as children’s services
- Legal status history
- Child Protection Register – registration history. (plus registration history if the child has been on another local authority CPR)
- Looked After Child and placement history
- Child Protection and Looked After Child history for, siblings, step siblings and half siblings
- Child’s personal network
- Allocated Worker
- Professional network
- Agency checks – Police, Health and Education

### Research / Checks in preparation for IRD

**Police Scotland (for child, parents and significant others)**
- PNC
- CHS
- VPD concern reports
- Criminal intelligence
- Crime file
- Legacy files i.e. Historical files pre VPD
- STORM

**Education**
- Check PPR records for Child Protection and MAAPM history
- Risk factors
- Protective factors
- Communication issues/requirements – current communication methods used
- Disability
- Risky behaviours
- Family circumstances – risks and supports
- Health issues
- Circumstances of other significant family members, i.e. siblings
- Evidence in relation to the current enquiry which becomes relevant.
- Attendance
- Developmental stage

**Health**
- **Check Child Health Record**
- Check GP records
- Discuss GP information with GP Practice – as per local agreement in place
- Contact Specialist CP team – notify paediatrician of time of IRD – identify if any information held by secondary care
- Consider any disabilities and how these impact on the child i.e. communication, developmental age and stage
- Consider Protective factors
- Consider Risk factors