

Complex Child Abuse Investigations: Guidance for Services in Aberdeenshire

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) advises that each investigation of complex abuse will be different, depending on the situation, its scale and complexity. Accordingly, thorough planning, effective inter- agency working and attention to the welfare needs of child victims and adult survivors is essential.
- 1.2 In Aberdeenshire there is a long standing practice of a “Strategy Meeting” being convened when either social work or the police considered that an additional level of planning and co–ordination to day to day joint practice is required.
- 1.3 This guidance for services in Aberdeenshire on complex child abuse investigations strengthens existing good practice to better reflect local and national learning about circumstances that may be considered complex, some of which are described in in pages 145 – 156 of the National Guidance.

2 Stage One: Initial Decision Making

- 2.1 The decision to regard a matter as being “complex” is one that is made is made jointly by the police and social work.
- 2.2 The decision to regard a situation as “complex” includes those described in the national Guidance but is not confined to these.
- 2.3 The decision to regard a concern as “Complex” will be agreed between the Head of Children’s Social Work Services or Service Manager and Detective Chief Inspector or Detective Inspector.
- 2.4 In reaching this decision both services will agree on the convening, chairing and recording of the deliberations of the initial strategic planning meeting.
- 2.5 Both services will agree how Chief Officers will be advised of the complex issue and by whom.
- 2.6 Both services will agree which other services will be involved in the initial strategic planning meeting.

3 Stage Two: Strategic Planning

3.1 While not exhaustive the strategic planning meeting will:

- Establish the terms of reference for the investigation
- Take ownership of the strategic leadership of the investigation
- Agree the staffing of the investigation, including any need to approach neighbouring areas for assistance
- Agree any necessary protocols
- Consider any additional need for support, de-briefing or counselling provision for staff involved in the investigation
- Decide the process for continuing strategic oversight and being informed of the progress of the investigation
- Consider a need for a communications strategy

4 Stage Three: Protection and Support

4.1 Notwithstanding the aforementioned strategic oversight, protection and support to individual children will be provided through established child protection processes and practice.

4.2 Where appropriate the outcome of individual Joint Investigative Interview's (JII's), Child Protection Case Conferences (CPCC) will be shared with the overall strategic planning arrangements above.

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