

Guidance for completing a Child Concern Form (OP/56/86)

Note - this is a form to be used in any case where there are significant concerns about the welfare of the child. It must be submitted to the Children's Reporter, the Social Work department, the Designated Person in police for Child Protection and the Child Protection Unit within 48 hours.

(1) CORE DETAILS

Section 1.1

- Full names of all children in the household to be included
- Gender must be completed if known
- Ethnicity must be recorded and if the child is of an age it should be self assigned, if not details of ethnicity should be sought from the parent/carer. (The categories of ethnic origin are detailed in the Practitioner Guidance - APPENDIX 3)
- Full dates of birth are essential. Without this the child can not be identified properly by other agencies (Ages that are guessed or not given as dates of birth are not acceptable)
- Full postal address and contact telephone numbers must be recorded

Section 1.2

- Full names of adults in the household to be included
- Remember maiden names and alias'
- Full dates of birth are essential
- Details of any adult within the family or are residing with the family that are not present must also be noted

Section 1.3

- It is important to note details of any absent parent and what parental responsibilities they have if known

Section 1.4

- Full details of any siblings that are not accommodated within the home must be recorded as per Section 1.1, for example, living with relatives, in Local Authority Care.

Section 1.5

- Details of GP, Health Visitor, Nursery, Childcare, School must be noted. This is very important as when full implementation occurs the child's Named Person will sit within these agencies and information will be shared with them.
- Others refers to any other agency or Voluntary Organisation that may be involved with child or family, for example NCH, Sure Start, Social Work.

(2) DESCRIPTION OF CONCERN

Section 2.1

This section should be used to provide a clear comprehensive summary of the circumstances of the incident itself and why it caused concern. This section is critical to other agencies that will act on your information.

It is also crucial to record within this section any strengths or pressures for the child/ren and also information regarding -

- Heating, lighting etc
- Cleanliness of the home
- Obvious dangers i.e. open fires, exposed wiring etc
- Furnishings within the home including the child's bedroom
- Appropriate toys
- Interaction with the child by parent/carer
- Interaction with attending officers by parent/carer

This list is not exhaustive but is a guide to the type of information to be recorded to assist with the future planning for the child/ren.

It is important to record in this section your own observations of the child and the child's demeanour. It is not expected of officers to interview the child about the impact the incident has had on them, however it should be recorded if the child was upset, withdrawn, seemed unaffected etc.

Section 2.2

This section is included to allow officers to record if there have been any previous concerns for the child/ren or if there is information which would indicate that there may be concerns in the future.

It is important that if a family member or other person is taking steps to address the problem or parts of the problem it is recorded in this section. For example, if a family member is providing respite care at weekends to give a parent a break, that a parent or carer is accessing services to address substance misusing problems etc.

Section 2.3

This section has been included to record details of whether there are any additional needs firstly in respect of the child i.e. English is not their first language, an interpreter is required, any hearing or sight impairment, mobility issues. This information will assist with any future interview of the child or planning. Secondly, any additional needs for other members of the family or carer should be recorded as this may have an impact on the child or for their future planning.

Section 2.4

If the child or children have been accommodated away from the family home as a result of this incident out of hours Social Work Services must be contacted. Full details of those persons who are looking after the child or children must be noted including address and contact telephone number. Adequate checks must be carried out by police and social work to ensure that the persons who are caring for the children are suitable.

Section 2.5

It is good practice for officers attending incidents to check on the wellbeing of all children and to physically see that they are safe and well. There may be circumstances where this

is not possible, for example attending a domestic incident late at night and children are asleep in bed and have not been disturbed by the incident. If the children have not been seen this should be recorded and the reason why.

Section 2.6

All children and families must be informed that information will be shared with partner agencies about the incident they are attending. It is not necessary to detail exactly which agencies, however they must be aware that information MAY be shared with health, education, social work services or the Children's Reporter.

The family or child may express concerns about this and some families may have had poor relationships with specific agencies in the past. Details regarding this should be noted and shared, however it is important that assurances are not given to families that information will not be shared because of these issues.

Section 2.7

Within this section full details of any person causing any concern should be completed (formerly Suspect Details section). If there is more than one person they should all be listed here.

Section 2.8

Record details of the person raising the concern if it has not originated from the police i.e. name of the school teacher, neighbour. Details of officer submitting to be entered and form must be checked by a supervisor prior to submission. Details of any Social Worker involved to be entered and whether a medical examination was carried out to be recorded.

Section 2.9

The categories of concern have been re-worded and the previous categories were Physical, Sexual, Neglect/Emotional/Wilful III-treatment, Drunk in Charge, Other and Risk. Below is an explanation of each category of concern:

1. Child is not attending school AND without explanation - this category covers children who are regularly failing to attend school without a reasonable explanation.
2. Child's behaviour has caused, is likely to cause or is causing the child to come to harm or has an adverse effect on their health, safety or development - this category covers children who are self-harming, abusing alcohol or drugs, placing themselves at risk of harm, associating with others who place them at risk of harm, frequently reported as a missing person etc.
3. Child's behaviour has caused, is likely to cause or is causing another person to come to harm or has an adverse effect on the other persons health, safety or development - this category covers anti-social behaviour, bullying, assaulting other children etc.
4. The way in which a child is cared for (in a domestic context) has caused, is causing or is likely to cause the child to come to harm or has an adverse effect on their health, safety or development - this category covers parents or carers who are substance misusing, drunk in charge of a child, lack of parental care, child left unattended etc.

5. Child has been abused, ill-treated or neglected - this category covers the previous categories of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or where a child has been wilfully ill-treated or neglected.
6. Child is or is likely to become a member of the same household as a child that has been abused, ill-treated or neglected - categories of abuse as above.
7. Child is a member of the same household as an adult person who is subject (in a domestic context) to abusive behaviour of a third party - this category is specifically for domestic incidents due to the increase of recording and sharing information about such incidents. The current guidance from the Scottish Executive is that a Child Concern Form will be submitted when children are within the home even if they are not party to the incident AND if children usually reside within the home but were not residing there at the time i.e. staying with friends / relatives, a Child Concern Form will be submitted. Where the victim of a domestic incident is pregnant a Child Concern Form will be submitted.
8. Child is, or is likely to become a member of the same household, or has significant contact with a person whose character is such that there is reason to believe that the person might abuse or harm the child - this category covers children that live with or have significant contact with Schedule 1 offenders.