

## 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 through your supervisory officer and then to the Divisional Public Protection Unit for processing.

### (1) CORE DETAILS

#### Section 1.1

- Full name of the child/children for whom the concerns are related only
- Gender must be completed if known
- Ethnicity must be recorded and if the child is of an age where they are able 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 APPENDIX 3 of this document)
- Full date of birth or estimated date of delivery for an unborn child is essential. **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 all **additional** 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 APPENDIX 3 of this document)
- Full dates of birth or estimated date of delivery for an unborn child 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 1.3

- 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 1.4

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

#### Section 1.5

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 1.6

Details of GP; Midwife; 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.

Where this information is not known or refused by the child or family this must be recorded in this section of the form to reflect this.

## (2) DESCRIPTION OF CONCERN

### Section 2.1

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 2.2

This section refers to the child's well-being and describes what concerns there may be about a child. Below is an explanation of each category of concern:

1. Child is involved in anti-social or offending behaviour where any **one** of the following disposals may have been taken: informal contact; warning letter; formal warning; referral to the reporter.
2. Child is not attending school AND without explanation - this category covers children who are regularly failing to attend school without a reasonable explanation.
3. 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 well-being - 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.
4. Child's behaviour is having or may have an impact on the well-being of another child- this category covers anti-social behaviour, bullying, assaulting other children etc.
5. The way in which a child is cared for is having an impact on their well-being- this category covers parents or carers who are substance misusing, drunk in charge of a child, lack of parental care, child left unattended etc.
6. 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.
7. 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.
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 who has abused, ill-treated or neglected a child- this category covers children that live with or have significant contact with Schedule 1 offenders.
9. Child is a member of the same household - 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 in respect of the unborn child.

This section should also 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 2.3

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 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 2.4

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 2.5

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 2.6

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 2.7**

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 2.8**

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.

## **(3) POLICE CHECKS**

Full checks should be carried out on all nominals listed in the form to ensure that the maximum amount of information is known about the child, family, carers and associates. This information will assist in the assessment of what follow on action is appropriate for the child. Where systems cannot be accessed this should not delay any discussions with partner agencies, in particular social work services. Retrospective checks may be carried out and any significant information can thereafter be discussed or shared where appropriate.

**This part of the forms should NOT be copied to partner agencies and should be retained within the child's file for future reference.**

## **(4) INFORMATION SHARING & GATHERING**

Initial discussion should take place with a social work Team Manager, or another person designated in their absence, to carry out a joint assessment of the concern for a child or young person. This assessment may identify where additional services may be required and who might deliver this service. Where necessary discussion may take place with the child's Named Person, depending on the nature of the concern, to establish what action is appropriate. All discussions and decisions that are made must be recorded and shared with partner agencies to be sure that they are fully aware of any action that is being taken.

## **(5) REFERRAL TO THE CHILDREN'S REPORTER**

Following an instruction in 2007 from the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) all referrals being made to the Children's Reporter must now be evidenced clearly setting out the reasons why compulsion may be necessary. This is done using the well-being indicators and a summary of evidence.