

## REFERRAL GUIDANCE- Children & Families Social Work Service.

The following information is a guide to support a better understanding of the factors to consider when making a referral to the Children & Families Social Work Service. Its aim is to offer support for practitioners in assessing an unborn baby/child/young person's (UBB and C&YP) level of need and to consider what type of services/resources may meet these needs. This guidance also details what processes to follow if the assessment indicates the need for a social work service.

The Getting it Right in Fife Framework's staged intervention model refers to a continuum of need across universal, additional, and intensive. Assessment isn't a static process and needs and risks for UBB and C&YP can change over time. Social Work intervention is likely to be positioned at the high end of additional / intensive in terms of the continuum of need. It is important that all agencies understand the needs of each individual UBB and C&YP within their own context and that each situation is unique and specific to them. Assessment practice underpinned by the [National Practice Model](#) and applying the 5 GIRFEC questions is the agreed partnership approach to ensuring good quality assessment and timely support is in place to address wellbeing needs, concerns, and risks. Partnership awareness of the range of support services in localities is important to ensure support is accessed and available to respond to wellbeing needs early.

It is only by completing an assessment and chronology that practitioners can gain a clear understanding of a UBB and C&YP level of need and risk and what would be the appropriate service response.

### Who to refer and when.

For early support separate guidance is in place for referrals to the Children & Families Family Support Service (FSS) via the Social Work Contact Centre. The FSS provides a response and intervention to children and young people assessed as requiring a level of additional support. Referrals to the Social Work Service via the SWCC – ([sw.contactctr@fife.gov.uk](mailto:sw.contactctr@fife.gov.uk)) should be for UBB and C&YP assessed as being vulnerable or at risk and require a Social Work assessment. Some examples of situations that may require a referral include:

- The need for a range of agencies to provide additional/intensive support.
- A section 23 assessment (children affected by disability) where a parent or guardian has requested this and Self-Directed Support planning.
- The need to assess UBB and C&YP who may be at risk of significant harm or significant impairment to health or development and require specialist support led by the Children and Families Social Work Service.
- Concerns that statutory intervention is required through the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).
- Emergency removal from home.
- Consideration of an Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) and from that a Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM).

Referrals to the social work service would be for an UBB and C&YP whose needs are unlikely to be met solely by the midwife, named person, or by earlier coordinated support by single agencies including the Third sector.

**Where there are concerns that an UBB and C&YP may have been abused or may be at risk of significant harm, child protection processes should be initiated.** A core agency i.e., Health, Police or Social Work can raise an IRD which will start the formal process of information sharing, assessment, analysis, and decision making. Single agency guidance is available and should be followed.

### **Referral Process**

In line with the refresh of the Child Wellbeing Pathway and considering wider policy, there has been a focus on streamlining processes to ensure services are both accessible and available and assessments are evidence based.

### **Social Work response on receipt of a referral**

When the social work practitioner in the SWCC receives a referral, they will:

- Check social work records to determine any current or previous service involvement.
- Discuss the referral with the referrer.
- Discuss the referral with the named person if available.
- Discuss with the family – unless this would lead to a child protection concern.
- Decide on next steps and whether the criteria for social work intervention is met, options include:
  - No further action (NFA) for social work as criteria not met and request the referrer and named person considers alternative supports.
  - Allocate to an area team for a home visit within 5 days.
  - Allocate to an area team for a visit same day.
  - Send to the Child Protection team and progress an IRD.

Referrals to the SWCC are screened on the day they arrive. Timescales are dependent on the information provided on the level of need/vulnerability/risk included within the referral. Referrals screened as highest priority are allocated at the time of referral and will be prioritised for assessment. All others should be completed within 20 working days. The named person will be notified by the SWCC of the outcome of all referrals and the reasons for the recommendation.

**This referral form has been designed to replace the NoCC form and is to be used for all referrals to the Social Work Service for an UBB and C&YP who do not currently have an allocated social worker or referrer is unaware of current social work involvement.** Police Scotland will continue to use the Vulnerable Person's Database (VPD) system.

**For all children who currently have an allocated social worker please contact/email them directly, if the matter is urgent (Child Protection) and contact cannot be made, please speak with the duty worker. The Children & Family Area Team duty number or email are operational from 8.48 am – 5.00pm Monday - Friday, EOOHS from 5pm and public holidays. Duty numbers and email addresses for Children & Families Teams are in this link:**



Duty numbers and  
email addresses for