Guidance for Practitioners working with children and families

Guidance to support recovery from the COVID -19 pandemic

V2 16.08.20

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Purpose of this guidance

This guidance aims to clarify how practitioners should work together to support the wellbeing and welfare of children & young people in the aftermath of Lockdown. The guidance takes account of the many physical distancing restrictions placed on community planning partners and outlines how we will adapt our working practices and utilise our collective skills to support children and young people in keeping with the GIRFEC Operational Guidance.

This guidance has 5 sections:

Section 1 – The current content
Section 2 – Identifying vulnerability
Section 3 – Roles and Responsibilities
Section 4 – Safeguarding and Child Protection
Section 5 – Review mechanisms

This guidance will be routinely updated to ensure that evidence of what helps to mitigate risk informs our collective response.

Section 1 - The Current Context

We are currently moving into a recovery phase with many restrictions on working practices still in place. Many of our 'business as usual' working practices will require to be adapted to take account of these restrictions and ensure that children and young people get the right help, at the right time by the right people.

Many of the approaches adopted during the period of lockdown proved to be highly effective. Staff report that the speed of decision making and responsiveness of systems was far superior to our 'business as usual'. It is important that we retain the agility we developed during the pandemic to enable us to best support children and young people through recovery and beyond.

There are considerable restrictions in place with regard to staff accessing school buildings. It is important that all practitioners know how to access support from a range of agencies during this period.

Section 2 – Identifying Vulnerability

Universal and targeted services identified lists of children and young people considered most vulnerable prior to lockdown. These lists were brought together to ensure Children's Services had a shared understanding of levels of risk. Services have made frequent contact with around 3000 children as a result and approaches have successfully maintained levels of risk.

There is evidence that a small number of identified vulnerable children and young people have been less impacted by the restrictions than we feared but a growing body of evidence that there will be increased levels of vulnerability in some, most particularly those impacted by poverty and those with additional support needs.

Children's services are likely to see a significant increase in the number of children they deem vulnerable as a result of:

- Mental health needs including anxiety
- Stress in the family
- Unseen family circumstances
- Poverty
- The impact of loss of schooling and serves on those with additional support needs

A range of professional learning is available to practitioners to ensure they are well prepared to support children as they return to school buildings. This resource provides and framework for professional learning. It is not designed to impose a ceiling on staff development and practitioners are encouraged

to seek aspirational learning opportunities that meet their own professional development needs and those of their learners/setting. Further professional learning can also be found on EduSharepoint and through the Educational Psychology Service Hub. Through the period of lockdown and the phased reopening, many of our young people and their families will have endured heightened emotions and will be dealing with stress and financial worries due to the pandemic and resulting economic situation. A Guide on 'What to look out for in your pupils' (Appendix C) has been developed to support practitioners with key things to consider when engaging with young people in the new school term.

As a system there is need to enhance our use of data to enable us to be agile over the coming months. Children's Services will continue to compare levels of need and vulnerability to ensure that we continue to design services around presenting needs and levels of risk. This will enable us to maximise our collective impact and respond to changes in our children and young people.

Data around levels of risk will be captured and analysed by continuing to use Microsoft forms to request assistance wherever possible. This will help universal and targeted services keep local systems working well when under increased pressure and enable us to move resource where it is needed most.

Markers of vulnerability

Within the current context, the following list should be used as potential markers of vulnerability:

- Looked After Child at home or away from home in foster or residential care
- Children and young people previously looked after
- Children on the edge of care
- Children on the Child Protection Register
- Children subject to a current, ongoing Child Protection investigation
- Welfare concerns: e.g. parental substance misuse; mental health condition; domestic abuse
- Children in receipt of free school meals/those impacted by poverty
- Families whose needs are likely to have escalate significantly as a result of COVID-19 situation: e.g. lone parents of children with significant and complex needs; families unable to access respite: foster carers; kinship carers; young carers
- Pupils with additional support needs who have an Individual Education Plan
- Pupils who have experienced significant loss of learning
- Pupils who have significant health and/ or care needs identified within a Child's Plan or Coordinated Support Plan

In keeping with our GIRFEC Operational Guidance, multi-agency partners should continue to assess wellbeing, enhance single agency interventions and seek a multi-agency response if levels of vulnerability do not reduce.

Vulnerability should be assessed alongside known protective factors in a child's life. In accordance with the GIRFEC resilience matrix, consideration should be given to:

- stable family relationships
- parental understanding of child's needs
- whether the needs can be met and sustained at home during the period of school closure
- family resilience
- support networks, partnerships

There will be many children who are vulnerable who have been well supported at home during school closures, the challenge is identifying where this has not been possible and ensuring that we use our collective resource to reduce the level of risk.

The current restrictions prevent educational support services from visiting individual children and young people in schools and any support required will be delivered using an appropriate digital mechanism. To enable effective monitoring of trend data all requests for assistance will be managed through the use of a Microsoft form. This ensures that one single referral system is in place for schools and a clearer understanding of demand so that services can reshape around emerging needs.

Hub provision and wider supports will continue to be made available to those with any wellbeing needs. Support can be accessed when the team around the child or young person have effectively captured the learner's voice and got a sense of the support that the learner feels is most likely to help them, it is imperative that pupil voice be captured at staff in school. Formal application for assistance is then made through the Emergency Resource Forum following submission of the Microsoft Form. Attendance at Hub provision and the working practices of support services will vary over time as levels of vulnerability change, this is important to ensure that our delivery of services reflects changing needs.

Considerations for children with medical conditions
Health Care plans should be reviewed to support children and young people in schools. Some children with medical conditions may benefit from an individual transition plan. Where a review of the health care plan or transition planning is deemed helpful, school staff, school nurses, relevant health professionals, parents/carers and children and young people should undertake this planning through Microsoft TEAMs.

The school Nursing teams and health professionals can be accessed through their Near Me arrangements. Schools should have details of their School nurse colleagues and the Community Paediatrician who is aligned to them. Contact with other professionals e.g. Specialists within Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital can be sought via Community Child Health or directly with the appropriate department.

Considerations for children with complex needs
Children and young people with complex additional support needs may have a broad range of needs, which require different support to be provided by a range of professionals. These include children and young people who:

- require a range of interventions and support to meet their needs
- have complex health needs that require medical support within school
- have a disability where support /therapy/equipment within school, attend a grant-aided special school or independent special school and who should be considered as having complex additional support needs
- require procedures to be undertaken within school which require risk assessment and PPE in line with Health Protection Scotland Guidance

Special School provisions will consider the resilience and vulnerability matrix in Appendix B to identify young people who are most at risk. Children and young people with complex additional support needs will require highly individualised plans written in collaboration with parents, carers and other key partners. The needs of families are likely to be quite changed and on-going dialogue and review with partners will help inform our response. Face to face meetings to consider needs will not be permitted and all planning meetings should take place remotely.

It should be noted that the change in routines and circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic may have increased the vulnerability of siblings residing with children and young people with complex additional support needs. Practitioners should be mindful of this when supporting families and act accordingly if they have concerns.

Considerations for children with support from Children's Social Work
All looked after children and young people are at the intensive level of provision. What support looks like and who provides it will be identified through the resilience matrix and through discussion with Lead Professionals with guidance available from the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT) where appropriate. Assessments of need will continue to take place in a virtual core group meeting where appropriate interventions will be agreed. Planned interventions should continue to be recorded in the child's plan.

Hub provision will continue to be made available to those deemed most at risk and this can be accessed through the Emergency Resource Forum following submission of a Microsoft Form. Those accessing Hub provision is likely to change over time as levels of vulnerability change.

Aberdeen City Council retain the discretion to use SAC LAC funding flexibly to support care experienced children and young people in ways which will have the most benefit. Designated Managers should ensure that the VSHT is alerted to any concerns for those who are Looked After so that swift action can be taken.

What if parents decline a place/support?
Parents may decide not to take a place in a provision offered for their child. If this is the case, the school and social work staff, where appropriate, work with parents and appropriate support agencies to agree an alternative support that will ensure the child and family's health and wellbeing. This should be kept under review in keeping with the GIRFEC Operational Guidance

If the child is known to Social Work, then this information should be passed on to the Lead Professional and the school Quality Improvement Manager.

Considerations for those impacted by poverty
Aberdeen City Council will resume the provision of Free School Meals on 17th August and the provision of vouchers will cease. It is anticipated that an integrated service delivery approach will be implemented when families are identified as being impacted by poverty. This will provide individuals with a single point of access to council and partnership agency services, This first line support model, with onward referral where appropriate, will streamline access to services and ensure person-centred support provision to our most vulnerable customers.

Considerations for children and young people who are/have been at risk online
All schools include learning which focuses on digital literacy which incorporates cyber resilience and internet safety. This includes learning about relationships, age appropriate content, reporting concerns, responding to unwanted contact and/ or cyberbullying. Schools may wish to use the Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible use of Mobile Technology in Schools or the 360 Degree Safe e-safety self-review tool.

Key messages and advice will continue to be shared with parents via school websites and social media. Information is shared with all via the digital learning hub.

Consideration for young people who are living with kin.
Given that many kinship carers are older they are more likely to have their own health vulnerabilities and/or be over 70. As such their social isolation/self-isolation may have adversely impacted on their ability to care and support the child/young person living with them. This in turn may increase the child's vulnerability. If you have growing concerns, please highlight these to the child's social worker.

Considerations for young people who are pregnant
If you have a concern about a child or young person, raise this with your Child Protection Coordinator without delay. The safety and welfare of the young person should always be considered, and Child Protection policy followed where appropriate and consistently followed where the young person is under the age of thirteen.

Considerations to address learning loss
It will take school staff some time to get a sense of any learning loss. Once gaps have been identified resource should be allocated in order to achieve maximum impact. Consideration should be given to use of digital delivery to provide targeted input which could be accessed both in school and at home.

Considerations for those in need of support for learning
A holistic assessment of need should be undertaken and an Individual Education Plan put in place. Plans should prioritise a small number of priorities which should be carefully monitored. Approaches which are not positively impacting should be reviewed and amended quickly. Schools should amend the use of school resource (or additional allocations of support service resource) in the first instance. Advice and guidance from education support services can be accessed through the use of the

Microsoft form. This one means of accessing support will enable us to get a clear picture of demand and shape our services to meet needs.

Section 3 – Roles and Responsibilities

The universal services
Based on the risk and resilience factors, education and health professionals will identify and implement interventions to support individual children and young people as soon as a need has been identified. A flow of the staged intervention framework is available to support staff. Education and health should ensure that internal systems to support movement from universal to targeted are agile and streamlined to improve our responsiveness.

Universal Support

- Positive and respectful relationships are established with all learners and families
- Timely, clear and appropriate communication with all
- Clear and supportive transition planning is in place
- Increased opportunities for pupil voice to be heard, valued and acted upon
- Parent and pupils are fully involved in decision making that impacts on them directly
- Increased check ins with class teachers to ensure we identify changes to behaviour and respond timely and appropriately
- Differentiated and personalised learning and teaching is planned
- Resources are used creatively to respond to the needs of all and these include outdoor learning opportunities
- Changes in behaviour are viewed as a communication and result in further assessment
- Access to appropriate learning opportunities, including digital delivery if required

Targeted Support (in addition to the universal supports already in place)

- Appropriate interventions in place and recorded in an IEP/Child's Plan
- Increased check ins with a familiar adult or two where possible from school
- Increased Information sharing across all partners to ensure a network of support
- Access to specialist advice/intervention from those already working with school and the wider community and at times already known to the child:
    - Support for Learning staff based in school
    - Educational Psychology
    - Autism Outreach
    - Education Social Worker
    - Youth Work
    - Family Learning Team
    - Education Support Services
- School nurse service provision through any of the established Hubs/Emergency Childcare
- Access to advice/resource is through submission of the Microsoft Form to the Emergency Support Forum for those with a new or changing vulnerability
- Support from Third Sector organisations contracted through PEF and SAC funding
- Support from Third Sector organisations operational in the city

Specialist Support (in addition to the universal and targeted supports already in place)
Access to specialist advice by submission of the Microsoft Form to the Emergency Support Forum

- Regular contact with support services such as Educational Psychology or other support services as appropriate to need
- Access to one of the three partnership Hubs determined by the resilience matrix
- Access to support from one of our commissioned services

This list will be developed as we get a sense of the interventions having the greatest impact by tracking vulnerability centrally.

Emergency Support Forum (ESF)
It will be valuable to identify interventions which mitigate risks most effectively and an ESF process has been established to support both the provision of resource and the identifications of trends.

When schools have exhausted all resources, they will be able to ask the ESF to consider making provision. Schools will complete a simple Microsoft Form to enable requests to be considered. The range of potential interventions available will continue to be updated in light of emerging trends.

Roles and responsibilities across education
The overriding priority will be that protective and supportive services are provided as quickly as possible to children and young people. Staff should bear in mind that wellbeing needs, if not addressed, can swiftly progress into safeguarding concerns. Where you have a concern, please follow current child protection procedures and inform your QIM.

Your responsibilities as we head into the recovery phase are exactly the same in relation to child protection and looked after/ accommodated/ vulnerable children as they always were, in the first instance refer to local child protection guidance. You may not always be invited to planning meetings as normal, or these meetings may be virtual, particularly if urgent matters are being considered. You will be contacted afterwards or during these meetings for your input as a key partner for providing protection and support for children.

School staff are the eyes and ears of the system and should continue to monitor wellbeing closely. As schools focus on wellbeing in the early stage of a return to school buildings they should consider how wellbeing can be quickly assessed through digital check ins for example. Schools will require robust mechanisms to track wellbeing needs in keeping with their school Safeguarding Procedure. Ensure appropriate recording and analysis of chronologies at individual level. Schools should continue to monitor school data closely to help identify any emerging trends so that local systems can respond to the changing needs of children, young people and families.

Where a teacher has a child protection or wellbeing concern, they should contact their Child Protection Officer immediately. If teachers are not able to pass information to their Child Protection Coordinator, they should follow child protection arrangements immediately.

- Police Scotland 101
- JCPT 01224 306879/7
- Children's Reception Team 0800 7315520
- Emergency Out of Hours social work 0800 7315520

Child Protection Coordinators in schools continue to undertake all duties. If serious concerns are raised that the existing partners to the plan cannot address, then contact social work for advice and guidance. If you have an immediate child protection concern, contact police or social work without delay.

Head Teachers are responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of their pupils. The needs of children and their families are likely changed and Head Teachers should consider the systems they need to ensure they have oversight.

Establishment Contacts are the key points of contact and first response for vulnerable children. Head teachers, guidance teachers and pupil support teachers for example will still have the same role they always had.

The role of **Lead Professional** continues to be in place, acting as coordinator of planning for highly vulnerable children. Meetings may have to take place virtually and any change in Lead Professional still has to be agreed following a multi-agency meeting.

Corporate Parenting responsibilities remain in place and school representatives may be contacted by Lead Professionals for information or foster parents/ carers for advice. Looked after children at home will be a particularly vulnerable group, and will be prioritised during this situation, particularly if they are part of a family who are self-isolating due to COVID-19.

Children's Social Work Services
The safety and wellbeing of our children and young people remains a priority during this time.

Over the course of the past 4 months there has been a drop of in the numbers of children referred to Children's Social Work from all agencies. All indications are that as we emerge from lockdown and schools return, we are likely to see a rise in child protection concerns and child protection caseloads due to the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on families and wider society. Stresses arising from Early Learning and Childcare, school and business closures, family confinement and isolation alongside physical and psychological health impacts are likely to have been a trigger for abuse and neglect.

High stress home environments will increase the likelihood of domestic abuse much of which will have gone unreported. We also are aware that individuals or groups have used the pandemic as an opportunity to exploit children/young people for criminal or sexual purposes. Consequently, as children and young people re-establish relationships with trusted adults, they may well recount abusive/neglectful experiences endured during lockdown. Staff should be alert to the indicators of abuse and neglect many of which will be more subtle in nature. If you have unspecified concerns about a child or young person, please contact the child's allocated social worker to discuss. If the child is not known to Children's Social Work, please contact the Joint Child Protection Unit to discuss your concerns and possible next steps.

The rights of children have not altered during the pandemic, and nor do professional responsibilities in relation to child protection. The protection of children must continue to be prioritised.

Children's Social Work have maintained contact with all children known to them during lockdown. Each child/family have recurringly been risk assessed during lockdown. This has informed the nature of contact with the family. For those children assessed at greatest risk they will have received weekly face to face visits from their allocated social worker. Separately the use of a range of digital tools have been used to support children, young people and families. Feedback from families has indicated that this more natural and less intrusive form of support has diminished our capacity to support families but has been more welcomed and, in many instances, enabled more trusting relationship's to be formed.

Section 4 - Safeguarding and child protection

Locally there is no change to how children should be referred to Children's Social Work. Where there is an immediate child protection concern please continue to call **Police Scotland on 101 or the Aberdeen Joint Child Protection Team on 01224 306877 (0800 731 5520 for emergencies out of office hours).**

Where your concern is not of an acute or immediate nature but nonetheless you have professional concern for the wellbeing of a child, referrals to children's social work should continue to be directed to the **Children's Reception Team on 0800 731 5520.**

Child Protection guidance reflects that child protection is part of a continuum of collaborative responsibilities upon agencies working with children. This critical area continues to require good professional judgement, based on assessment and evidence, informed by the perspectives of the team around the child, including the child and family. However the COVID-19 pandemic has required minor adjustments to be made as to how we undertake key child protection processes.

A) Interagency Referral Discussions
There has been some adjustment made to the Inter-Agency Referral Discussion process to take account of the COVID pandemic and revised Scottish Government National Child Protection Guidance. The IRD flowchart has been updated https://www.aberdeengettingitright.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IRDProcedureCOVID19-1.pdf

- Single Points of Contact
    - NHS remains the same; contact the admin team via 01224 559276 (normal number) and they will identify a representative from Health Visiting Service.
    - Education, contact will be made with the child's Head Teacher/Child Protection Co-Ordinator by phone/email.
- The risk assessment part of the IRD record must include reference to how the risk assessment has been carried out in light of any COVID-19 related restrictions (such as social distancing, self-isolation of child and/or family, restrictions on gatherings, working from home, indirect contact). In all cases, the safeguarding of the child is paramount.

The IRD flowchart highlights that an IRD will now have responsibility to recommend the need for a Child Protection Case Conference. This ensures that all relevant partners actively contribute to this decision. Where there is not unanimous agreement for the need for a CPCC the IRD will be passed to a Children's Social Work Service Manager for their consideration and determination.

B) Joint Investigative Interviews (JII)
The above safeguards should also be taken into consideration when looking to arrange JIIs. This will include considering how to safely facilitate transport to the JII and how to exercise social distancing when conducting interviews. There should again be a clear discussion with the adults within the family regarding any presenting COVID-19 symptoms and appropriate safeguards should be applied.

Safety planning should be paramount when there is consideration being given to the timing of the JII. Where there are immediate risks these should be evaluated by both Police Scotland and by Children's Social Work.

C) Child Protection Case Conference and the Child Protection Register (CPR)
At the time of concluding the investigations and progressing to an Initial Child Protection Case Conference, the following interim measures should be in place and considered as follows:

a) Child Protection Case Conferences will occur in a blended format. Based on feedback from parents and staff parents will be invited to attend initial Child Protection Case Conferences the in person. These will be held at the Quarry Centre. The parents will meet with the Chair and the child's social worker. All other attendees will be invited to attend virtually via Microsoft Teams.

b) Review CPCC's will occur on a virtual basis via Microsoft Teams. Where the Review is being asked to consider ruling out rehabilitation to parental care then the parents ill be invited to attend in person. Additionally, there may be instances where it is considered a face to face meeting would be appropriate out with the criteria noted above e.g. a parent with significant mental health difficulties or unable to access Microsoft Team. This will be the exception rather than the rule and will require discussion between the Lead Professional and IRO with final decision lying with a Service Manager.

c) Following the start of lockdown routine Review CPCC's were put on hold with priority given to Initial CPCC's and CPCC's where de-registration was being considered. Overdue review CPCC's, are now being progressed taking a risk-based approach to prioritise these. Dates will be issued by the Administration Team allowing sufficient time for information to be pulled and reports submitted. In relation to children of school age, the programme for recommencement of those Review case conferences will begin in the week of 11 August when schools start to return

to ensure Education professionals familiar with the child and family can contribute to the discussion and decision making.

d) In relation to de-registration, these will be conducted as a paper exercise where it is clear to the Chair that all professionals and the family support this. This reduces numbers of meetings, reduces pressure on professional time and is compliant with ongoing public health expectations. If de-registration is not the clear recommendation from all partners, or circumstances are such that a meeting would be beneficial for any reason, a virtual Review meeting will be convened.

e) Child Protection Core Group Meetings and other multi agency meetings will continue to be held via Microsoft Teams.

D) Looked After Children

It is recognised that our Looked After Children are likely to be particularly vulnerable at this time, particularly those at home.

As with Case Conferences a number of Looked After Reviews were cancelled at the start of lockdown. The backlog of Reviews is being worked through and are again occurring in accordance with statutory timescales.

Looked After Reviews are being held utilising Microsoft Teams. Where the review is considering ruling out a return to parental care then parents will be invited to attend the review in person with the Chair and allocated social worker. Other attendees will be invited to attend via MS Teams.

The unique needs of the child and their family circumstances may require individual arrangements to be made for their or their parents' attendance. This will be the exception rather than the rule and will require discussion between the Lead Professional and IRO with final decision lying with a Service Manager.

E) Children's Hearings

The COVID-19 pandemic is also having an impact on how Children's Hearings are conducted. There is still a need for reports to be submitted to SCRA within the established timescales to support decision making. The resumption of face to face Children's Hearings was announced early on the Scottish Governments Route Map out of lockdown. The premises in Aberdeen City don't allow for larger number of attendees consequently there is a blended approach being taken to the resumption of Children's Hearings but with an increasing emphasis in the child/young person being invited to attend in person.

Where numbers don't allow for other professionals to attend in person, they will be invited to attend via a virtually secure link established by SCRA.

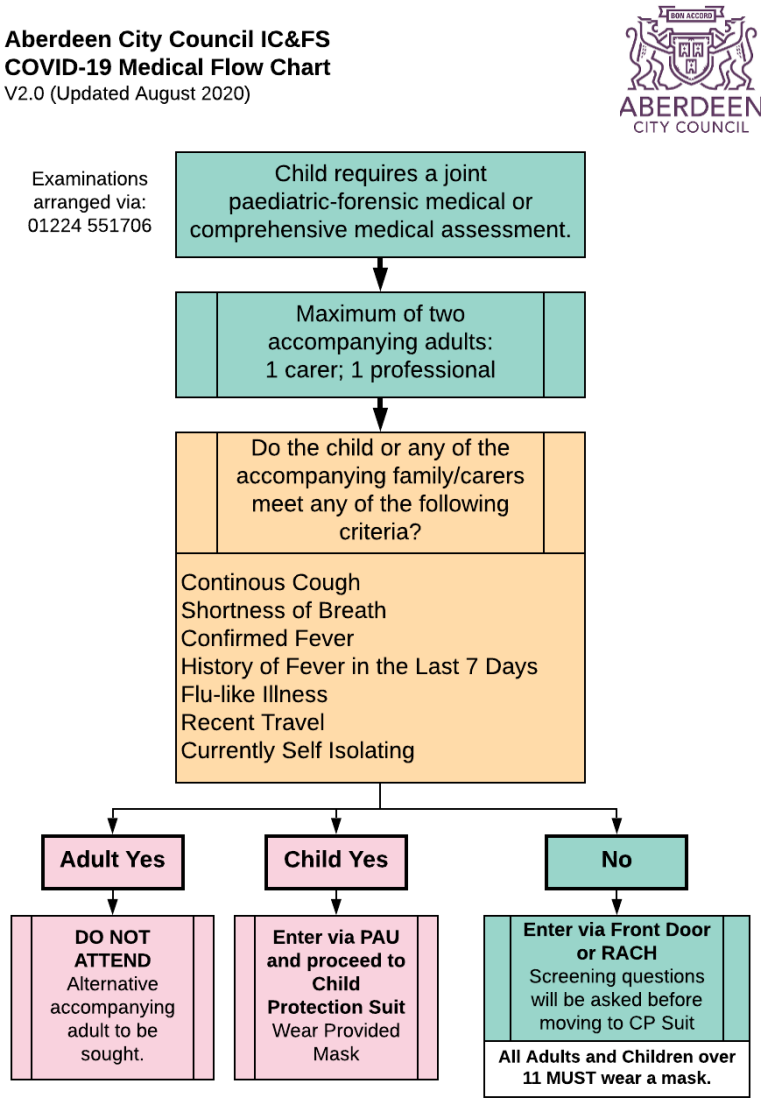
F) Recording

Recording of key information is essential throughout this period. General recording should be extended to include details of any family who are self-isolating in order to ensure that staff have awareness and can take necessary precautions / provide additional support such as food and fuel.

It is also the case that our own staff members are likely to require periods of isolation and as such the recording of information will be essential for workers taking over who are not familiar with the family.

It is anticipated that as staffing resource may become under significant strain, at such times, the recording of essential and risk related detail should be prioritised.

Medical flow chart



Section 5 – Review mechanism

In these are unprecedented times, we aim to adhere to our established multi agency practices with minimum adjustment. Good professional judgement and good practice will help keep Scotland's children safe and we must rely on what the data tells us in order to plan effective provision.

As an integrated service, we generate and gather a vast array of data. It is important we consider this data through the lens of self-evaluation for improvement. We are working in unchartered territory and, therefore, we are adapting our systems to meet the needs of our children and families in these challenging circumstances. Regardless, these systems must improve outcomes for children and families.

The Emergency Support Forum (ESF) will use a variety of data generated from the request forms in order to promote consistency across the system by sharing the good practice identified. The vulnerability markers can be used to syphon data with the view of tracking and monitoring children/young people in 'at risk groups'. This same data can be used as a vehicle to strengthen our universal and targeted offer as trends emerge with the hope that fewer children and families reach the stage of requiring specialist input i.e. proactive measures and early intervention.

Similarly, data relating to the referrals of children and young people to children's social work will be analysed weekly and will help inform the changing need of our children, young people and their families and inevitably will require further adjustment in how we respond and support. We know from research into the impact of COVID-19 that levels of anxiety and mental distress have seen steep increases. While the newly developed Psychological Resilience Hub is aimed at combating this we can still expect to see such in our children and young people.

Routine monitoring of data sets held by the Child Protection Committee will continue. These existing data sets, in addition to the new data sets which have been established to support our Covid-19 response, will be analysed on a weekly basis to inform a review of our local systems.

Care for people
The Council has established "Aberdeen Together" to coordinate support to the citizens of Aberdeen City. As part of this data is being drawn together to understand the impact of COVID-19 across the City. This data set has enabled a far more holistic appreciation of vulnerability and a move away from data being siloed within clusters.

There has been significant progress developing our use of data over the pandemic. These data sets will contribute to the development of a data dashboards for the GIRFEC group (and the other strategic groups which have a responsibility for public protection. Going forward the GIRFEC group will assume a far greater focus on quality assurance and improvement across services.

Chief Social Work Adviser's letter -18 March 2020
https://socialworkscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OCSWA-letter-to-Chief-Social-Work-Officers-18-March-2020.pdf

Child Protection Guidance 2014
https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland/

Appendix A
Wellbeing Exemplar to guide universal and targeted discussions

Learners	***Attending***	***Attending Other Setting/Blended Learning***
Safe	Do you feel you have any worries? Who could help with this? Are you making good choices in your relationships? Have you any worries? Who can you ask for help if you are worried or scared? Do you know how to keep yourself safe – socially? Online?	
	Do you know how to ask a teacher for support? Do you have any worries about returning to school? What could help with these?	Do you know how to contact your teacher? Does someone at home know how to contact them? Do you feel safe if you are alone at home? Do you have contact details in an emergency? Are you keeping yourself safe online and making good choices?
Healthy	Do you know how to have positive mental health? Physical health? Who could help with this? Are you making good choices with meals and snacks? What sort of activities are you doing? What makes you happy? Are you able to do this? What could you do instead?	
	How are you managing the new routine?	Do you have a timetable or routine? Does this include active learning and physical activities?
Achieving	What has been your biggest success today/ this week? Have there been any challenges to your learning? Are you able to access learning? Apart from learning set by school, are you trying to learn or improve a new skill or a new hobby? How do you know when you are successful?	
		Have you asked your teachers for help through online learning? Do you need to? Is there anything else you could do? What would you need to do to make this happen?
Nurtured	How are you feeling? Are you able to speak honestly about this? Are you speaking to your friends about how you are feeling? Is there anything else you could do? Anyone who could help?	
	How have friendships been since returning to school?	Is someone checking in on how you are feeling? Are you keeping in touch with family or friends who you can't go and see as you normally would?
Active	What are you doing to keep physically active? What are you doing to keep mentally active? How could you fit this into your new routine?	
		What else could you be doing? Are you able to do this safely?
Respected	Do feel respected? Are you respecting others?	
	Are you respecting others around new measures in school?	Are you respecting others when you are online? Are you doing your best to respect those you live with? Is there anything else you could be doing?
Responsible	Do you have any responsibilities at home like looking after siblings, cooking for yourself?	

	How are you managing with them? Given the changes that are taking place, can you tell me what social distancing means? Can you tell me why we need to wash our hands regularly? Are you doing this?	
	Do you think you are managing your own learning? Do you need any support to manage this?	Have you increased responsibilities at home? You are now more responsible you for your own learning, is there anything you could do better? Who or what could help?
Included	Do you feel included? Is there anything you could do to help others feel more included?	
	Have you made connections with people since returning to school? Is there anything that would help support this?	Do you have friends or family that you can keep in touch with? Is this planned? How often? Is this working for you? What else could help?
	Is there anything school, teachers, myself or anyone else could help with?	

Appendix B Triangulation and risk assessment - Pupil vulnerability – Covid-19
Please complete on an as and when basis or x1 monthly - information may lead to altered level of support. Please Note Y (Yes) or N (no)

SOCIAL WORK COLOUR KEY: RED CONTACT LEVEL - AT LEAST WEEKLY AMBER CONTACT LEVEL - AT LEAST FORTNIGHTLY GREEN CONTACT LEVEL - AT LEAST MONTHLY

Pupil:	**DOB:**						
Key considerations	**Date:**						
Complex addition support needs							
Child protection register							
Child Protection concerns or vulnerability							
With Social Work team							
Referral made/pending for SW support							
Multi agency child's plan							
CSP – coordinated support plan							
Free school meal							
Significant deprivation level (SIMD 1-2)							
Single parent / single child							
Single parent/ more than one child							
Parent/carer designated 'key worker'							
More than one child with ASN							
Parent/carer in vulnerable category							
Looked after/ care experienced							
Pupil on 'edge of care'							
Designated care package - reduced service							
Designated care package suspended							
Would return to in school cause distress?							
Would continuing to learn at home cause distress?							
Can learning needs be met at home (with school support)?							
Can care needs be met at home?							
Can change of routine be accommodated at home?							
Can medical needs be met at home?							
Can behaviour needs be managed at home?							
Can the family sustain home life?							
Is school provision a protective factor which cannot be provided elsewhere?							
Parental decision to keep child at home							
Social work level of vulnerability							
School Doctor level of vulnerability							
3rd sector level of vulnerability							
School level of vulnerability							

Appendix C

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN YOUR PUPILS

A guide for school staff

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

In Aberdeen City, the COVID-19 response has led to education being delivered online for a total of 13 weeks, for the majority of learners. Through the period of lockdown and the phased reopening, many of our young people and their families will have endured heightened emotions and will be dealing with stress and financial worries due to the pandemic and resulting economic situation. Individual experiences over this time will vary, and research suggests that for around 80% of our young people, educators and families will have supported learning to stay on track (Hattie, 2020).

Many aspects of lockdown will have had positive impacts on children and young people; families enjoying spending more time together, increased outdoor activity, and individualised approaches to learning developed. However, it is hard to fully gauge how the unprecedented situation has impacted on the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Care should be taken by all staff to support young people on their return to school. The foundation of schools are relationships, and we must use our unique relationships with learners now to promote resilience and provide support.

Key things to consider when engaging with young people in the new school term:

EXPERIENCES:

HOME EXPERIENCES

- An unsettled, chaotic or unpredictable environment at home (domestic violence, parental alcohol or drug misuse, parental mental health).
- Poverty - financial pressures, access to healthy nutritious food, stigma of benefits.
- Young carers with limited relief from duties.
- Looked After Children - changes in support levels and patterns.
- Stress of 24/7 relationship in homes.
- Living with ASN siblings.
- Online activity increased, and more vulnerable to bullying, abuse and exploitation.

BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS

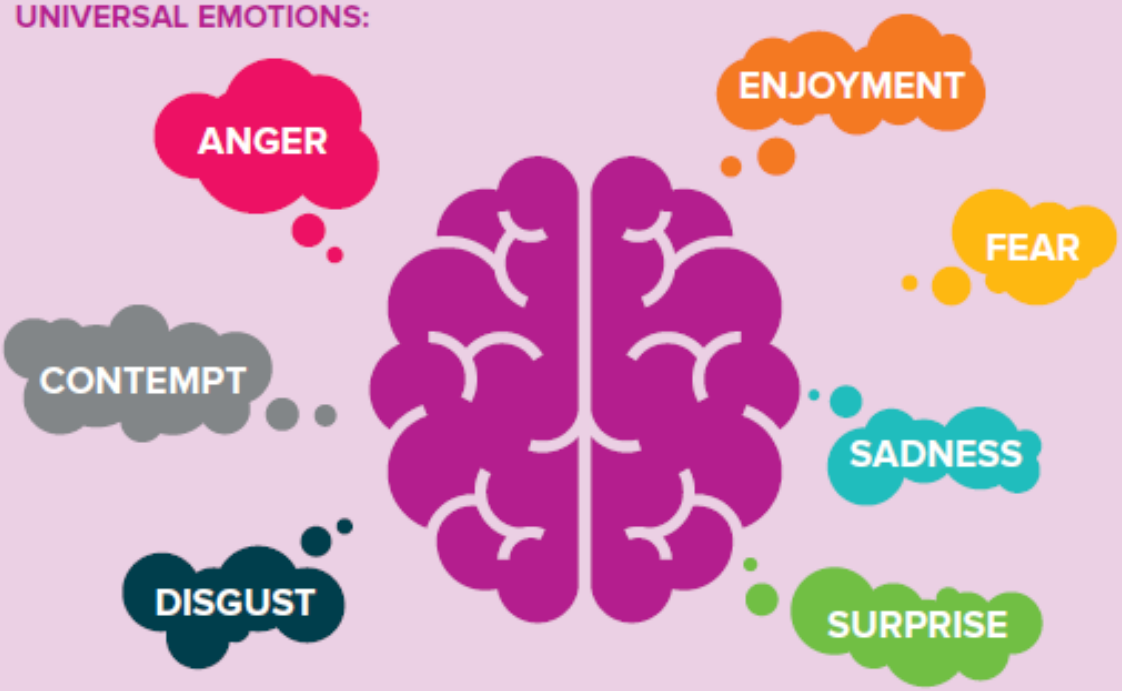
- Death of family member or friends.
- Lack of usual mourning process – funerals and opportunity to say goodbye.
- Loss of normal routine and restricted access to family and friends.
- Death of George Floyd and the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement.
- Loss of 'normal' school experience – limited engagement, different experience of education e.g. Hubs.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSITION

- Concern about the school environment being so different and mixing with more people.
- Difficulty adhering to classroom conventions after long break from school setting (focus/ attention/not enough sleep).
- Anxiety about returning to school - of being bullied or of leaving family.

All emotional experiences are okay, give children and young people time to explore their own and others' feelings.

UNIVERSAL EMOTIONS:



The lower brain and the limbic system are the areas of the brain where our emotions are received from the world around us and from our feelings and thoughts. These areas process our emotions and send messages to other parts of our brains which impacts on how we respond.

Things to keep in mind (6 Principles of Nurture):

- **Children's learning is understood developmentally**
  – respond to individuals as they are, with non-judgemental and accepting attitudes. One size does not fit all.
- **The classroom/school offers a safe base**
  – the day is structured by routines, with adults who are predictable and reliable. You are part of a team and a wider community.
- **Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem**
  – listen to and respond to your young people. Engage in reciprocal shared activities (playing/talking about events or feelings). Relationships and connecting will take priority over learning initially.
- **Language is understood as a vital means of communication**
  – informal opportunities for talking and sharing are just as important as more formal lessons.
- **All behaviour is communication**
  – ask yourself what the young person may be trying to tell you with their behaviour. When feelings are understood, difficult situations can be diffused more easily.
- **Transitions are significant in the lives of children**
  – changes in routine can be particularly difficult for vulnerable children but can be better managed through preparation and support. Capitalise on the closer communication between parents and school.

This short video highlights key thoughts around re-connecting with learners as they return to school:
https://nipinthebud.org/information-films/tips-for-returning-to-school/