



East Lothian and Midlothian  
Public Protection Committee



# Staff Newsletter

## August 2025



Welcome to East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee's latest staff newsletter. Our articles contain hyperlinks to connect you to online resources.

### EMPPC

- Message from the Chair (p1)
- Learning Review Procedure (p2)
- Our Annual Report 2024/25 (p2)
- EMPPO has moved (p3)
- Welcome to new EMPPC members (p4)
- Meet the Committee (p5)
- Care Inspectorate updates (p6)
- Training update (p7)

### Adult Support and Protection

- CAPS Collective Advocacy (p8)
- National Framework for ASP Learning and Development (p8)
- Good Practice Guidance – Identifying and Responding to Hoarding (p9)
- ASpire webinar (p10)
- World Suicide Prevention Day (p11)

### Child Protection

- Me, myself and AI (p12)
- What is Contextual Safeguarding? (p13)
- NSPCC – low level concerns (p14)
- Podcast – Protecting babies from the effects of domestic abuse (p14)
- AI generated abuse (p15)

### Violence Against Women and Girls

- Equally Safe and Supported (p16)
- Safe & Together Institute:
  - Naming the perpetrator's impact on child development (p17)
  - What happens when play disappears (p17)
  - Your pet is not safe when you're not safe podcast (p17)
- Fearless (p18)
- Addressing men's violence against women and girls (p19)

### Spotlight on Good Practice in Record Keeping in Public Protection

(p19)

### Contact us

(p26)

## Message from Keith Mackay, Chair of EMPPC

“The school summer holidays have drawn to an end and parents and carers across our region are looking to tidy away the toys and the mess that a busy house accumulates in the summer months.

This thought process made me think about when does untidiness become hoarding?

In May we highlighted National Hoarding Awareness Week, so what did we learn from this?

Hoarding has been classified as a medical condition and is recognised as a mental illness. If allowed to go unaddressed hoarding behaviours can become significant and impactful on peoples lives. The why it happens is interesting as it could be the result of a traumatic event but could equally be the symptom of learned behaviours, mobility issues or a learning disability.

In the jobs that we do under the umbrella of Public Protection means that not only do we see a sliding scale of hoarding behaviours in our working lives with the people we interact with and the homes we visit but we may well recognise them in our own personal lives also.



The risks from hoarding are wide ranging from fire risk, infestations, trip hazards, social isolation and anxiety and depression and often then become an increased cycle of hoarding and therefore expanding higher risk unless addressed.

It’s an interesting topic because we all undoubtedly come across the issue but do we know how to be understanding, how to identify the level of the problem and then what actions to take? The EMPPC has given this a great deal of thought and we have produced [Good Practice Guidance – Identifying and Responding to Hoarding](#). This is a great resource document for all staff to use or refer to, to increase knowledge and ability to respond. Please take the time to cast an eye over this and widen your skill base.”

# Public Protection



rather than a focus on individual practice. As a multi-agency process, practitioners and managers come together to reflect, increase understanding and identify key learning. If anyone is asked to be involved in a Learning Review, information and support will be offered to support your involvement.

Our [Learning Review Procedure](#) is now available on the EMPPC Website page, at the bottom of the [About Us](#) page.

Learning from cases where a child or adult has died, been significantly harmed or put at risk of harm is an essential element of improving how we all work together to support and intervene to protect children and adults. This can be challenging and can raise anxiety for organisations – but we know that it is essential to create the right conditions to support open and honest reflection and learning, without blame or defensiveness. Our Learning Review Procedure, which is based on national guidance, sets out how we will always aim to approach Learning Reviews to create a culture of positive reflection and learning.

In a Learning Review we look at what factors in the systems, processes and culture of an organisation contributed to what happened,



We are proud to share our [Annual Report](#) which tells you what we have been doing to support practice, partnership working and oversight of Public Protection over the past year!

# Public Protection

**We've MOVED**



## East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office (EMPPO)

staff have moved from Brunton Hall in Musselburgh, to John Muir House in Haddington. You can now find us in Room 1008/25, on the first floor, in the older part of the building. We have a lovely new space and look forward to meeting new colleagues.

Thank you to the staff in Brunton Hall who looked after us so well over the years.



## To some new EMPPC Members!

Eamon John will join us at our next EMPPC in September having taken up his new role as Head of Communities and Partnerships in East Lothian Council.

Debbie Duncan and Laura White are our new Police representatives and were welcomed at our EMPPC Development session in May. Debbie has taken up post as the Detective Chief Inspector with responsibility for Adult Support and Protection and Child Protection in the Public Protection Unit, and Laura White has taken up post as the Detective Chief Inspector with responsibility for Domestic Abuse, Sexual Offending and MAPPA. Laura is also the new Chair of our Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Group, having chaired her first meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> August.

## Meet the Committee

In this edition, meet our link inspectors, Val Holtom and Rania Hamad

Val and Rania told us that “The Care Inspectorate is the independent scrutiny, assurance and improvement support body for social care and social work in Scotland. Val and Rania are strategic inspectors for Strategic Scrutiny within the Assurance and Improvement Directorate. The Strategic Scrutiny teams have a focus on the scrutiny, assurance and improvement of services provided by local authority social work and partnerships. We look at services for children and families, adults and older people and people involved with the justice system. We explore how adults’ and children’s rights are promoted and upheld, the extent to which they are enabled to exercise choice and control in how their support is provided, and the outcomes they experience. Val, the East Lothian link inspector, works with the team responsible for the strategic scrutiny of adult services. Rania, the Midlothian link inspector, works with the team responsible for the strategic scrutiny of justice services.



Val ↑

Rania ↓



## Meet the Committee

In this edition, meet our link inspectors, Val Holtom and Rania Hamad

Each council area in Scotland has a strategic inspector from the Care Inspectorate allocated to it to undertake the link inspector role. As part of this role, they are required to monitor the performance and quality of *all* social work services in their areas, including public protection arrangements.

Val and Rania attend EMPPC not as core members of the Committee, but as part of the link inspectors' key responsibility to monitor the performance of, and support improvement in, their area's public protection arrangements. They also meet regularly with the PPO Manager and the Independent Chair of EMPPC, as well as the Chief Social Work Officers, Chief Officers, and senior social work managers in East Lothian and Midlothian.

Where there have been any inspections or scrutiny activity in East or Midlothian, Val and Rania are also responsible for monitoring each area's progress with their associated improvement plans and signing these off once complete.

More widely, the link inspector role also involves identifying factors which are supporting social work services to deliver good or improved outcomes and any barriers or risks to this; identifying good practice within social work services and disseminating this more widely; and supporting each area to build capacity for continuous improvement.

Val and Rania very much appreciate the opportunity to attend EMPPC and the welcome they receive from the Committee and others across East and Midlothian."



You can read more about the work of the Care Inspectorate on their website <https://www.careinspectorate.com/>

## Joint inspections of services for children and young people subject to compulsory supervision orders living at home with their parents or carers



As part of the strategic scrutiny plan this year the Care Inspectorate will work with [scrutiny partners](#) to take a more focused look at the experiences and outcomes of children and young people subject to compulsory supervision orders living at home with their parents or carers.

The joint inspections will look at the services provided for them by Health workers (for example, School Nurses, Health Visitors and Doctors), Social Workers, police officers and other people who work with them and their families. Four inspections across the country will take place between now and the end of March next year. Watch this [webinar](#) to learn more about the way in which joint inspections are conducted.

[Midlothian's last joint inspection](#) of children in need of care and protection was in February and March 2020 and [East Lothian's last inspection](#) of children at risk of harm was in October 2023 to April 2024.

## Public Protection scrutiny

Earlier in August, two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate and Health Improvement Scotland met with our Chief Officers (our Critical Services Oversight Group) to talk about what a Public Protection Scrutiny programme might look like. You can read more about the development of this [here](#).



# Training update

## EMPPC Training Calendar

Our [training calendar](#) for the year is on our website. This will help you and your manager to identify what courses and briefings are coming up that might be relevant for your role. Please note that we do not take registrations for training before we advertise them, which is usually around 12 weeks before the course, so we ask you to wait until we advertise a course and respond by completing the online form in the email that accompanies the flyer. We tend to have enough spaces on our training courses so please do look out for them!

You do not need to sign up to a briefing as we do not limit the number of people who can come to these events.

## Join us for our next online Learning Review Briefing



Look out for our flyer for this event. This session will focus on the findings from a Review commissioned by Camden Safeguarding Partnership earlier this year following the removal of four children after allegations of abuse. The Review highlighted significant learning around the importance of understanding the barriers to working more effectively with parents who have learning disabilities or mental ill health, and the issues around the conflict between parents' wishes and a child's needs. If you need the MS Teams link to join, contact [emppo@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:emppo@eastlothian.gov.uk)



## Collective advocacy East Lothian and Midlothian

**Collective advocacy happens when a group of people with similar experiences get together to raise issues and try to change things.**

[CAPS Independent Advocacy](#) are offering a service for adults with mental health issues (diagnosed or undiagnosed) who have experience of Adult Support and Protection processes. They can share their experiences of Adult Support and Protection with the collective advocacy worker, Amy, at a time that is convenient for them. The findings can be shared anonymously by CAPS through our Adult Support and Protection Sub-Group to help us make sure that our improvement work is informed by feedback from people who have lived experience of Adult Support and Protection. If you know anyone with health issues with experience of Adult Support and Protection processes, please let them know that this service is available. The adult or someone on their behalf should contact the CAPS Collective Advocacy worker, Amy, for further information [amy@capsadvocacy.org](mailto:amy@capsadvocacy.org) or by telephone on 07910 983 030, or [collective@capsadvocacy.org](mailto:collective@capsadvocacy.org).

## National Framework for Adult Support and Protection Learning and Development



The Scottish Government is developing its first Adult Support and Protection Learning and Development Framework. The final version is due at the end of 2025. The framework has been produced to support the delivery of Adult Support and Protection learning. Within it, core competencies are set out for each different workforce level, and it is intended to be used for all staff and volunteers who may come into contact with adults as part of their role and applies to all organisations operating in Scotland.

There is a [7-minute briefing](#) which gives a short overview on the framework.

# Adult Support and Protection



Our new [Good Practice Guidance – Identifying and Responding to Hoarding](#) provides useful information on what hoarding is, why people hoard and how to work with those who have the issue. Hoarding is a recognised mental health condition, often rooted in past trauma. The guidance supports us all to work with people who hoard in a trauma informed way. This includes identifying good practice principles like:

- Take time to get to know the person, refuse to be shocked. Be kind and compassionate towards the adult about their situation.
- Going at the person's pace.
- Finding the right tone when talking about the hoarding.

The Guidance also includes resources to support further learning and support your work. There are links to videos of people talking about their own hoarding experiences and what helped.



There are also bite sized videos of professionals discussing different aspects of hoarding, offering insights and tips for working with someone who hoards. There is also a helpful checklist to support staff and managers to review the support and response to hoarding.

# Adult Support and Protection



## ASPIre 2025: Commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking and links to Adult Support and Protection (webinar)

The latest ASPIre (Adult Support and Protection innovation and reflection event) took place in May. It focused on Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and links to Adult Support and Protection. These issues can involve the exploitation of adults with vulnerabilities. The coercion can occur through force, fraud, or manipulation. The types of harm that can be caused include sexual harm, physical harm, emotional harm and financial harm.

The whole session runs to 2 ¾ hours, so you can access the [presentations](#) or go to the section you want to watch

[ASPIre 2025 - Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking and links to Adult Support and Protection webinar](#)

At **6 minutes - Operation Begonia** (Police Scotland and Scottish Government's collaborative approach to challenging demand for prostitution and supporting those with experience of it).

At **49 minutes Linda Thompson from the Women's Support Project** makes the links between Commercial Sexual Exploitation and other forms of VAWG.

Linda reminds us that to support our learning it is important to engage in the “hard content, which is not easy to hear, so please do take care” . Do refer to our [Training Self Care Pack](#) if you want to access supports when hearing about real life experiences of women. Linda uses a case example of Alice to tell a story about how someone can be drawn into Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

At **1 hour 29 minutes Audrey Hand from the TARA project** (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance) supporting women who are trafficked for the 10 purpose of Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

# Adult Support and Protection



## ASpire 2025: Commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking and links to Adult Support and Protection (webinar)

### Could someone who is at risk of harm through Commercial Sexual Exploitation or Domestic Abuse also be an adult at risk under the Adult Support and Protection legislation?

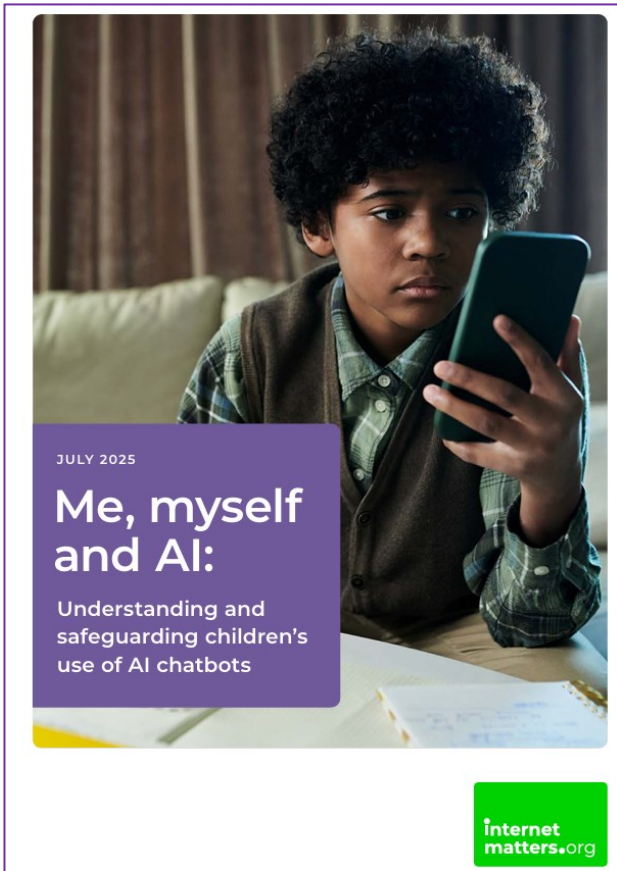
We hear why the answer is yes. At **2 hours 13 minutes** Brenda Walker, the National Adult Support and Protection Co-ordinator, brings together all the learning by making the links to Adult Support and Protection:

- Agencies coming into contact with survivors should consider whether an ASP referral is required.
- [Marac meetings](#) should consider whether ASP legislation might apply and have someone on the group who has expertise in this area.
- Case Conferences should consider if there are any VAWG issues for the adult and have someone with VAWG expertise in the Conference.

# World Suicide Prevention Day 2025

On 10<sup>th</sup> September, World Suicide Prevention Day, Samaritans is sharing one important message: If you think someone might be suicidal, take action, interrupt their thoughts and show them you care. There are supports locally in [East Lothian](#) and [Midlothian](#) and nationally through [Samaritans](#).

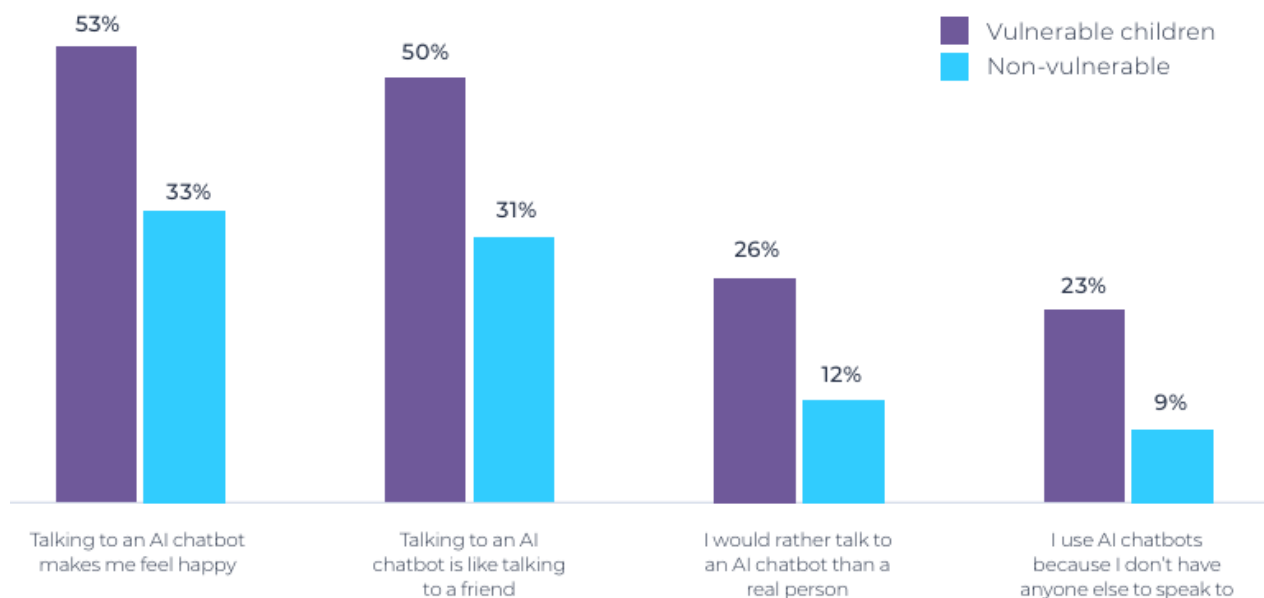
# Child Protection



This new report reveals how 'AI Chatbots' are the new 'go to' for millions of children in the UK. Reporting findings from a survey of 1000 children and 2000 children, it reported that 64% of children are using AI chatbots for help with everything from housework to emotional advice and companionship. The report says "These interactions are not risk-free. Children may receive inaccurate information, leading to misunderstandings about important topics and contributing to the spread of misinformation. Emotional relationships

with AI chatbots can blur the line between real and artificial relationships for children, with concerning real-world consequences already emerging. Our research also shows AI chatbots can give inappropriate responses to sensitive questions, potentially exposing children to unsafe or distressing material. Without effective safeguards, such exposure may critically endanger children's wellbeing..... Vulnerable children are not only more likely to use AI chatbots that are fine tuned to mimic human connection, but they are also more likely to use AI chatbots in emotionally-driven ways such as for escapism, friendship and therapy."

There are some strong recommendations about action needed from industry, schools, parents and carers and researchers. This includes a need to embed media literacy in the curriculum at all stages, and support children's responsible use of AI chatbots. Check out more [here](#) on how to help children use AI safely.



# Child Protection

## What is Contextual Safeguarding?



Contextual Safeguarding was developed by Dr. Carlene Firmin, Professor of Social Work at Durham University, who leads the [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#). It recognises that as young people grow and develop, they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family (for example, in school or college, in the local community, peer groups or online). Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual Safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe.

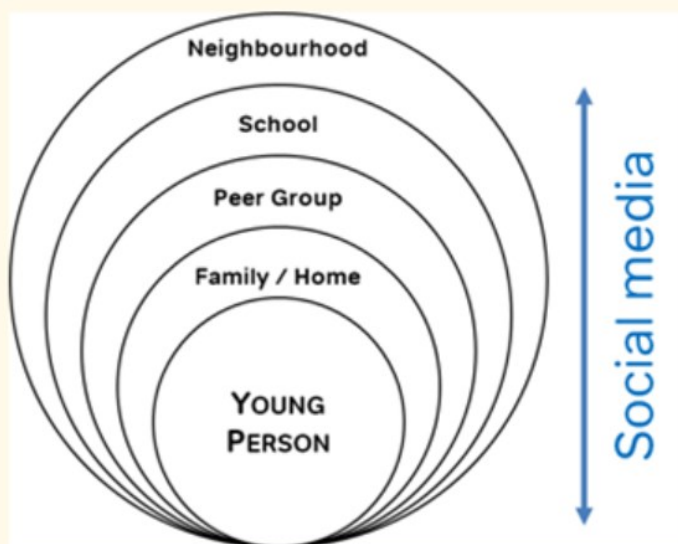
Listen to a [podcast where Carlene Firmin talks](#) with a Director at the Youth Endowment Fund, a charity which funds, researches and promotes ways of preventing violence amongst children and young people. She talks about Contextual Safeguarding as 'common sense', sharing how shop workers can be community guardians and why we are all responsible for keeping young people safe in our communities.

Watch these two short videos to learn more:

[What is Contextual Safeguarding?](#)

[The Principles of Contextual Safeguarding](#)

## Contextual safeguarding



<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

# Child Protection



NSPCC Learning has published a [guidance](#) on **responding to low-level concerns about staff or volunteers**. It covers the steps organisations should take when dealing with concerns about the behaviour of an adult in the organisation.

Responding to low-level concerns gives a clear message that any form of inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. A concern can still be significant even if it does not meet the threshold of harm. Left unaddressed, low-level concerns can escalate into more significant rule-breaking or even abuse. Low-level concerns may also highlight a need for further training or improved staff induction within your organisation.

The article outlines what low-level concerns are, the importance of developing effective organisational policies and procedures, and how to report, record and review low-level concerns.

Everyone should be familiar with their staff Code of Conduct policy and model high standards of behaviour. Locally we advise you keep accurate records of any incidents of concern and raise these through your line management structures, follow [Child Protection Procedures](#) and be aware of your organisation's whistleblowing policy.



Listen to NSPCC Learning's latest podcast on [Protecting babies from the effects of domestic abuse](#).

The podcast features a discussion with a panel of experts from the NSPCC Helpline and the For Baby's Sake Trust on research into domestic abuse. The discussion covers the difficulties in working out exactly how many babies are impacted by domestic abuse, identifying concerns and providing support, taking a trauma-informed approach and what blocks parents from seeking support. They also talk about how it is important to use language that reduces shame and stigma about domestic abuse, and mainstreaming conversations about what healthy relationships look like.

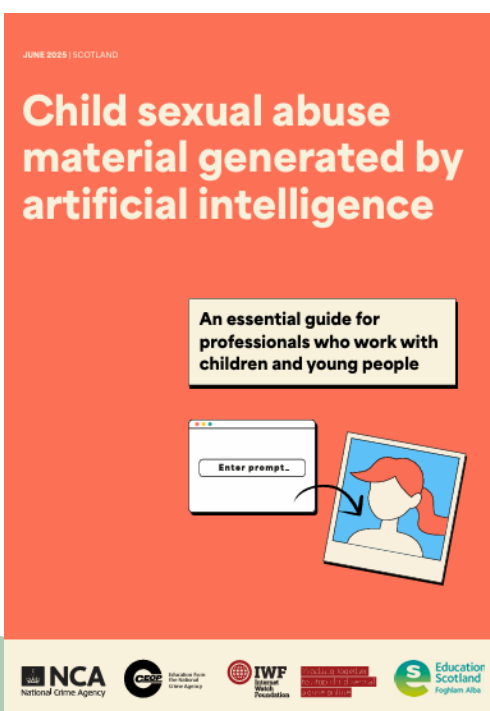
# Child Protection

## Artificially generated child sexual abuse images: Understanding and responding to concerns

Artificially generated child sexual abuse material describes images of child sexual abuse that are partially or entirely computer-generated. They are usually produced using software which converts a text description into an image. This technology is developing rapidly, the images created can now be very realistic, and recent examples are difficult to differentiate from unaltered photographs. It is illegal to create, view and share all sexual images of children under- 18 produced using Artificial Intelligence.

Centre of  
expertise  
on child  
sexual abuse

Read this [short article](#) from the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, to learn more about how professionals can use their existing skills to respond to this kind of abuse today. “Support for children and young people should always respond to their own individual situation and needs, which you can do regardless of the technology used to harm them. Remember – by identifying child sexual abuse early and providing a supportive response, you can play a role in reducing long-term impacts.”



This [short guide for professionals](#) working with children and young people to understand the risks of AI-generated child sexual abuse material has recently been developed. This resource addresses the urgent and growing threat of AI-generated child sexual abuse material (AI-CSAM). The guide offers clear, practical advice on identifying and responding to AI-CSAM, and reinforces that this material must be treated with the same seriousness and safeguarding response as any other form of child sexual abuse material.

# Child Protection

## Criminal exploitation of children

### Do you know enough to recognise the signs and to respond effectively?

Child criminal exploitation is a form of child abuse where a child or young person is forced or coerced to engage in criminal activity. Children who experience criminal exploitation can be exposed to many different types of harms.

The NSPCC has developed a series of insight films to help those working and volunteering with children and young people to understand what child criminal exploitation is, recognise the signs and respond effectively. Each video is just over three minutes long:

[What is child criminal exploitation?](#)

[What are the risks involved in child criminal exploitation?](#)

[What are some of the signs a child is experiencing child criminal exploitation?](#)

[How should professionals support children and families affected by child criminal exploitation?](#)

[How can we prevent child criminal exploitation before it becomes an issue?](#)



# Violence Against Women and Girls

## Equally Safe and Supported

Gender-Based Violence and Learning Disability Self-Assessment Toolkit



[Equally Safe and Supported](#)

**This is a great new resource!** **Equally Safe and Supported** is a practical set of resources designed to make support and justice accessible to women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence. It is designed to help staff and organisations who support women who have experienced gender-based violence but can be used by any organisation wanting to make their services accessible to victims or survivors with learning disabilities. By completing the toolkit, your organisation can identify practical ways to:

- Remove barriers to support for women with learning disabilities.
- Build staff confidence and awareness.
- Take forward an improvement plan based on real needs and actions.

**“A number of seemingly small steps can make a big impact toward helping people face tough challenges or make a fresh start.”**

***Professor Katherine Milkman, 2015***



# Violence Against Women and Girls



## Learning from the Safe & Together Institute

### [What Shapes a Child's Future? Naming the Perpetrator's Impact on Child Development](#)

We all know that a nurturing environment is essential for building the neuropathways of a child's developing brain. Read this short article from the Safe & Together Institute which talks about the impact of harmful environments on a child's development, from basic needs to brain architecture. Perpetrators of domestic abuse create harm through their coercion and control. The article importantly tells us that "We protect children not just by responding to incidents—but by changing the conditions around them, and that starts with naming the source: the perpetrating parent's behaviour".

Take a few minutes to read about [what happens when play disappears](#). "For governments to uphold the UNCRC and to hold perpetrators accountable, we must understand the full scope of what they disrupt. That includes seeing how their behaviour alters the ecology of childhood—traumatizing the child directly, disrupting the protective parent's capacity, manipulating children's freedom, and breaking down the web of conditions needed for joy and creativity. At the same time, we must identify and celebrate the resilience and creativity of adult and child survivors to create, imagine, and play in environments that are physically and emotionally unsafe."

### [Season 6 Episode 13: Your Pet Is Not Safe When You're Not Safe: Understanding Animal Abuse in Coercive Control](#)

Listen to the latest episode in the Partnered with a Survivor series with David Mandel and Ruth Reymundo Mandel.



# Violence Against Women and Girls



[Fearless.org](https://fearless.org) is the dedicated youth service from the independent charity Crimestoppers. Developed through consultation with young people, Fearless aims to break down any barriers that might prevent young people from reporting crime.

Young people can pass information about crime to Fearless 100% anonymously via an online form on the Fearless.org website or by calling 0800 555 111, 24/7, 365 days a year.

The Fearless Sextortion campaign was co-produced with young people and delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government and Police Scotland. You can read the campaign report [here](#).

There is now a dedicated website page on sextortion. Sextortion is a type of online blackmail. Adult criminals, often from overseas organised crime groups, will threaten to share nude or semi-nude images and/or videos of a young person, unless they pay them or carry out some other demand. Children and young people of all ages, genders and sexualities are being targeted worldwide, including in Scotland. Watch this [8-minute video](#) from Fearless Scotland to learn more about sextortion.

If you work with young people, check out the [resources](#) on the fearless website – about how to talk to young people regularly about sextortion and help prevent sextortion, signs to look out for and how to respond when someone has been a victim.

# Violence Against Women and Girls



Zero Tolerance and White Ribbon Scotland partnered to find the best way to talk to men about men's violence against women and girls and engage them in work to prevent it. Zero Tolerance are Scotland's primary prevention experts on ending men's violence against women and girls. White Ribbon Scotland encourage and support men to stand up to violence against women. They commissioned research on how to influence men's attitudes on gender.

The [research and the findings in this report](#) focus on a 'movable' group of men who have a conflicted mindset when it comes to women's equality.

Drawing on all the resources and evidence there is a series of recommendations about approaches to try out, and problematic approaches to avoid. The report says "Start by engaging people's compassionate values, particularly respect and fairness, to help frame gender equality as something that benefits everyone, with effective messaging that includes examples from family life, community life, and friendship..... Instead of talking about 'protecting women', talk about partnership, mutual care, and respect. By focusing on creating communities where everyone has equal access to safety and power, we can build genuine mutual care and respect through collective action that addresses the structural causes of men's violence against women and girls and gives everyone real agency over their own wellbeing.....We must remind people of the better world we're striving for, and be clear that this really is achievable. It helps to recognise where progress on gender equality has already been made and how that happened – show the difference men can make when they support action and change."

## What is record keeping in Public Protection?

Broadly, case recording is any written material in the case files of people who are supported by services such as Social Work, NHS, Social Care or the Third Sector. It covers a range of content, such as assessments, reports, minutes of meetings, chronologies, case notes, records of visits.

Record keeping in Public Protection involves:

- Recording what the concerns are.
- Noting how these concerns are being dealt with.
- Reflecting the views of the child or adult who is potentially at risk of harm.
- Analysis and assessment of the risk of harm.
- Noting the work that is being done to help keep the child or adult safe.
- Recording the life history of the child or adult at risk of harm and how this may be impacting on their life now.

## Why is record keeping important?

Recording in Public Protection is important, both to provide an overview of decision-making, and why a particular course of action was taken (or not). It should provide the rationale behind professional judgement. By keeping accurate and detailed documentation, professionals ensure that their work remains accountable, effective and evidence-based.

Record keeping is important to show evidence that policy, process and practice have been followed appropriately, demonstrating professionalism and competency.

Record keeping is important as a means of communicating a person's story and supporting their understanding of their current or past situation.

Without comprehensive documentation, professionals risk missing critical details or failing to track progress and patterns over time, which can impact on their ability to make informed decisions.

## Spotlight on Good Practice in Record Keeping in Public Protection



A Significant Case Review carried out by Angus Adult Support and Protection Committee in 2021 in relation to a 50-year-old man found that “Record keeping within the District Nursing service was of poor quality with no reference of self-neglect or poor living accommodation mentioned in any case records. When (*the adult*) changed address there was a failure to record this information accurately in ehealth systems which resulted in some professionals visiting an address that (*he*) no longer lived at and (*him*) missing appointments and being identified as ‘disengaging’.”

### How might records be used?

You might be asked to provide case notes to help inform Child Protection investigations or Adult Support and Protection inquiries, and decisions about risk and protection plans. These records might be used to feed into chronologies, or to help multi-agency professionals have a discussion at a Planning Meeting or Case Conference.

Other professionals may ask you to share information held in your records with them. Professionals should ask for what is proportionate and relevant for them to know.

Records may be used as evidence in court, in criminal or civil proceedings, including for example, in Children’s Hearings proceedings to establish grounds for referral or in permanence proceedings.

Records may be used to inform Learning Reviews or other types of Reviews or Inquiries.

Case records of core agencies (including Police, Social Work, Health, Education) are reviewed during external inspections to assess the quality of practice, process and partnership working.

An individual may seek to access their records later in life, to help them understand what happened to them and why. Many care experienced adults turn to case records created about them by professionals to reconstruct and understand their personal history. Bear this in mind when creating any record and think about tone, language and detail.

## Key tips for good practice in record keeping

- Avoid jargon and if using acronyms, provide explanations of what they mean so that others reading your records after you understanding what you are referring to.
- Distinguish between facts and opinions. Good records contain both facts and opinion, but it must be clear which is which.
- Be sure to include to wishes, feelings and views of the person who you are writing about.
- Ensure you have got basic details right, for example, the correct spelling of a person's name, the right address, next of kin.
- Be sure to include any reasons for taking a particular course of action, and just as importantly, any reasons for not taking any further action.
- Record any referrals made or received and the reasons for them, including any follow-up action.
- When a case is closed to your service record how you came to work with the person, what action has been taken and when and why you are closing the case.
- Recording should be accountable, but not defensive as this can make the writing less centred on the person and more oriented to the organisation.
- Recording should be timely – essential for accuracy and supporting information sharing, assessment and decision-making.
- Write for the person who you are writing about and for the next person who may read your record. Would your narrative make sense to them?
- Ensure you are familiar with your organisation's policy and procedure on record keeping. Ensure you are up to date with your learning on GDPR, which provides the basis for you to share information when required to identify children or adults at risk of harm.
- As a manager, ensure that you regularly review a worker's case records to assess compliance with your organisational policy and procedure on record keeping. Make time in supervision to feedback, highlight strengths and areas for improvement in recording.
- As a worker, seek feedback from your manager about the quality of your case records.

# Spotlight on Good Practice in Record Keeping in Public Protection

## Resources

### Resources to support good case recording:

[Recording Practice in Social Work - Iriss](#)

[Recording practice and accessing records - Iriss](#)

[Case recording and record keeping – Community Care](#)

[Defensible decision-making in children’s social care - Dartington Trust](#)

[Social Work recording – SCIE](#)

[What helps to support effective multi-agency working and information sharing? – NSPCC Learning](#)

### Hear the voice of people who have accessed their records:

[Reflections on accessing care records and supporting good recording](#)

[What I’ve learnt from reading my social services file](#)

[An experience of accessing care records](#)

[Accessing Records in Scotland: what people with care experience tell us](#)



# Contact us

Our Lead Officers support the work of EMPPC and you can contact them for more information about anything in this newsletter, or about their role:

Alan Laughland, Adult Support and Protection Lead Officer

[alaughland@elothianmail.net](mailto:alaughland@elothianmail.net)

Eileen Marnoch, Child Protection Lead Officer

[emarnoch@elothianmail.net](mailto:emarnoch@elothianmail.net)

Jenny Mair, Co-ordinator - Protecting Women and Girls Against Violence

[jmair@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:jmair@eastlothian.gov.uk)

What would you like to see in a future newsletter?

Please get in touch with us at

[emppo@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:emppo@eastlothian.gov.uk)



Find out more about us at

[emppc.gov.uk](http://emppc.gov.uk)