Cause for Concern Record Criteria

The list below gives an indicative guidance to the Health Visitor/Family Nurse to consider whether he/she should raise a Cause for Concern (CFC) record. The list is not exhaustive and does not replace robust assessment and professional judgment. When a Cause for Concern Record is opened a Multi Purpose Child Protection Form (MPCPF) must be completed and the guidance followed.

Records must be opened if:

- The child/unborn child is on the Child Protection Register or a Supervision Order
- A decision has been made to hold an Initial Child Protection Case Conference irrespective of the outcome
- A sibling is on the Child Protection Register or a Supervision Order and the sibling group reside in the same home
- Children with ongoing Child Protection concerns transferring into Lothian area.
- Where a child has been identified as at risk of significant harm

Where the following criteria have been identified through the process of assessment and analysis and there is concern that the child is, or could be at risk of harm then a Cause for Concern Record should be opened:

Child Factors:

- Injury due to abuse or lack of supervision
- Evidence of child neglect
- Historical concerns
- Explicit sexualised behaviour which may indicate abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Trafficking
- Exhibiting signs of emotional abuse
- Children who are unseen as per NHS Lothian procedures ,and where concerns have previously been identified
- Missing Children/Families
- Concerns about faltering growth without an identified organic cause

Parental Factors:

- Problematic drug and/or alcohol use
- Non-engaging parent/carer/ difficult to reach/transient or mobile families
- Evidence of parental delay in seeking help, care or medical services for a child when in need, and lack of compliance by parents
- Parental adverse life events which impact on parenting
- Parents who have learning difficulties which impacts on the ability of parents to meet the needs of the child.

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- Domestic abuse and historical domestic abuse
- Parental mental health which impacts on the parenting capacity to meet the needs of the child.
- Parental criminality
- Families who refuse or withdraw from NHS health services, and where a concern has previously been identified

**Environmental Factors:**

- Contact with Registered Sex Offender, Violent Offender, or person convicted of a Schedule 1 Offence
- Home conditions which impact on the wellbeing of the child
- Unknown members of the household and unknown care providers

This list is not exhaustive. If practitioners require advice regarding the opening of a CFC record, they should contact the Child Protection Advisor.

**Guidance for Completing the Multi Purpose Child Protection Form**

The updated Multi Purpose Child Protection Form (MPCPF) replaces all existing forms and should be used following the guidelines below.

The form has been updated to ensure all essential information for all children who meet the remit for Cause for Concern (CFC) records are documented and maintained. It is also intended reduce the administrative process involved.

**The projected benefits are:**

- To provide clear, specific information with a clear plan
- Streamlined processes
- Reduced duplication (especially of demographics)
- Transfer via secure email transmission
- Speedier transfer
- Reduction of reliance on internal mail – promotion of security
- Time saving

**The updated MPCPF should be used for:**

- Referrals/Opening of Cause for Concern (CFC) records
- Transfer of CFC records
- Recording a Supervision Session
- Updates when the situation has changed between supervision sessions (not changes in demographics)

The subject line in each email should be clear e.g., New Referral, Transfer, Update or Supervision.
Referrals and Opening a Cause for Concern Record

Once the Multi Purpose Child Protection Form has been completed in full it should be sent as an attachment via email to the Vega mailbox. The email address can be found in the global address book by entering Protection, Vega. The email address is Vega.Protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk. Any new referral must be clearly marked at the top of the MPCPF.

Please copy (cc) in the designated Child Protection Advisor for your area on all correspondence. The designated areas of responsibility for CPAs can be found on the intranet under the heading Child Protection.

Transfer of CFC Records

Multi Purpose Child Protection Forms should be completed in full and should be sent as an attachment by email to the receiving named Health Visitor/Family Nurse/School Nurse. You should discuss this with the receiving Health Visitor/Family Nurse/School Nurse and have given a verbal handover before sending this, and document this on your Plan. The email should be copied to both the Vega mailbox and the designated CPA. Any transfer must be clearly marked at the top of the MPCPF.

Once you have handed over verbally and sent/transferred the MPCPF; then the actual record is sent on in the usual way through Community Child Health as per NHS Lothian Transfer of Additional Record Policy (CFC).

Updated Information

Any updated information for the child/family should be documented on the MPCPF and submitted to the Vega mailbox Vega.Protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk, and copied to the designated Child Protection Advisor for your area. Please highlighted this updated information clearly on the form.

Any change in demographic information, change in child protection registration information, or information regarding a child or older sibling going to school does not require a fully updated form to be submitted. This information should be emailed to Vega.Protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk and copied to the designated Child Protection Advisor for your area. Please include the Child’s name and File Number in any correspondence.

Completing the Multi Purpose Child Protection Form

It will be expected that all relevant sections of the form are completed. The example copy should be used/referred to in conjunction with this guidance.

The headings sections with a grey background should not be used to input information. When cutting and pasting – please do not copy the entire document as a whole – copy section by section as otherwise this may affect the formatting of the form. You should be able to cut and paste information from your other paperwork/documents/TRAK. Whilst this system is not perfect and does not replace all other forms that practitioners have to use – if used appropriately, it will reduce the amount of work and duplication greatly.

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**Child Demographics** – Please state the address the child currently resides at. If this is foster care/kinship care then this address should be documented and highlighted.

**Other Adults in Household/Significant Adults** – This should include any other adults in the child(ren)’s life including carers, supportive family members etc who the child(ren) may have contact with or who are an area of concern/risk.

**Professionals Involved** – Please include all professionals/agencies known, including agencies working solely with the parent’s e.g. drug and alcohol services, CPN etc.

**Assessment** – Please clearly state the reason for the CFC record being open. Information from the Child Health Assessment Information can be copied to this section (or vice versa) to save duplication of work but should give a clear picture of the child(ren)’s situation. Please state clearly what the current protective factors and the current or future risk factors are. Documenting these in bullet points may make this clearer.

**Plan** – The plan should be clear and SMART, including specific tasks or responsibilities, timescales and contingencies. Please number or bullet point each part of the plan to make it clear.

**Closing a Cause for Concern Record**

The following may indicate consideration for closing a record:

- A child is in a long term foster placement and there are no concerns about the level of care they receive and consideration is not being given to rehabilitation
- A child has gone through the permanency process
- Practitioner’s critical assessment has determined that parental drug use is stable over a period of time, their parenting capacity is not impaired and the child attends nursery/child and family centre or is seen by another professional regularly. Due consideration should be given to the relapsing nature of substance addiction.
- When the person presenting a risk to the child/family is no longer present e.g. died, moved away or in prison
- When sufficient protective factors have been discussed and agreed at Child Protection Supervision with the designated CPA for your area.
- Cause for Concern Files can be closed at any time when they meet the criteria above, but this should be discussed and agreed with the designated Child Protection Advisor for your area. Practitioners do not need to wait for the next planned Child Protection Supervision Session to do this

**Re-opening Records**

The assessment process is dynamic and not a one-off event. Practitioners can re-open records at any time should their assessment analysis indicate this. Further advice can be sought from the designated Child Protection Advisor for your area at any time.

Please contact your designated Child Protection Advisor for any further information or support regarding these guidelines. If your designated Child Protection Advisor is not available please contact the Administrative Support Team on 0131 537 5300 who will be able to advise or direct your enquiry appropriately.

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