

Public Protection Policy



Title:

Public Protection Policy

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Version Control

Date	Author	Version/Page	Reason for change
Feb 2019	Director of Public Protection	v0.1	Draft development
Dec 2019	Director of Public Protection	v0.2	Update following consultation
Jan 2020	Director of Public Protection	v1.0	Approved by the Policy Approval Group
Dec 2022 - Nov 2023	Director of Public Protection	v1.1-4	Under review
Dec 2023	Director of Public Protection	v2.0	Approved by the Policy Approval Group

Executive Summary

Public Protection is about preventing harm to vulnerable groups within society. It is an issue of fundamental importance to NHS Lothian. It remains a top priority and one of our most challenging areas of work.

There are clear links to be made across a range of service areas that relate to public protection:

- Child Protection
- Adult Support & Protection
- MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements for the management of sexual and/or violent offenders)
- Violence against Women and Girls
- Alcohol, Drugs, and other Substance Use

As the provider of universal health services, any member of staff may be the first to become aware of risk of harm. All children, young people and adults at risk have a fundamental right to be protected and safe. It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to circumstances which might place them at risk of abuse or neglect and know what action they need to take if they have a concern.

NHS Lothian has an essential role in preventing and reducing the risk of abuse or neglect. There is a commitment to ensuring that all staff are confident and competent to undertake their role in identifying and responding appropriately to concerns.

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1.0 Purpose

This policy aims to clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of all staff working across NHS Lothian, in playing their part to meet the organisation's duties to support and protect children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

2.0 Policy statement

To assist NHS Lothian fulfil its responsibilities and duties for keeping children, young people, and adults at risk safe from harm and abuse, and to comply with relevant procedures and the law.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff in NHS Lothian regardless of whether they come into contact or work directly with vulnerable groups. Specific operational procedures and guidelines are in place for child protection and for adult support and protection.

4.0 Definitions

Public Protection - involves agencies working together at all levels to raise awareness and understanding and co-ordinate an effective response to ensure the protection of individuals identified as being at risk of harm.

Child Protection – Protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. For the purpose of this policy a child is aged less than eighteen years.

Adult at Risk is a person aged sixteen years or over who:

- (a) Is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights, or other interest.
- (b) is at risk of harm, and
- (c) Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, is more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected

MAPPA - Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements for the management of sexual and/or violent offenders

Abuse and Neglect – Are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult.

Significant Harm – can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time.

5.0 Implementation roles and responsibilities

The Scottish Government requires Chief Executives of Health Boards to have a responsibility for the delivery of high-quality services to support Public Protection. This includes the overall strategic direction for public protection and strategic management of all adult and child protection health services delivered by the Health Board.

The provision of services for all aspects of public protection is managed by the Director of Public Protection, who reports to the Executive Nurse Director.

The Public Protection Action Group (PPAG), chaired by the Executive Nurse Director, provides the governance structure, and reports to the NHS Lothian Board via the Healthcare Governance Committee and the Risk Management Committee. A Public Protection Improvement Plan is in place, which sets out the priorities for the coming year.

All operational managers will implement the policy by ensuring each member of their team:

- Is made aware of the document.
- Knows the key procedures /guidance/to be followed in the event they may be concerned a child or adult is at risk of abuse and neglect.
- Is up-to-date with mandatory public protection training and other education and training appropriate to role and level of responsibility as per the NHS Lothian Public Protection Training Strategy.

It is the duty and responsibility of NHS Lothian staff to cooperate with the Local Authority and Police Scotland in relation to inquiries and investigations for child protection and adults at risk.

6.0 Associated materials

All NHS Lothian produced materials associated with Public Protection will be signed off at the NHS Lothian Public Protection Action Group (PPAG) or the relevant Child/Adult/Public Protection Committee for Interagency Policies/Procedures and Guidelines.

[Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency Child Protection Procedures](#), approved by ELBEG (available on the NHS Lothian intranet)

[NHS Lothian Child Protection Procedures 2016](#), approved by the Public Protection Action Group

[NHS Lothian Adult Support and Protection Procedures](#), approved by the Public Protection Action Group, March 2023

[Child Protection Protocol for the management of unexplained bruising in pre-mobile babies](#), approved by NHS Lothian Public Protection Action Group, May 2020

[Skeletal Survey information leaflet for parents/carers](#), NHS Lothian/NHS Borders/NHS Fife

[NSPCC Need-to-Know Guide: Handle with care How to keep your baby safe](#), NSPCC, 2015

[Bruising in Young Babies: Information for Parents and Carers](#), NHS Lothian, 2019

[Gender Based Violence, Domestic abuse: What health workers need to know about gender-based violence guidance](#), NHS Health Scotland, March 2019

7.0 Evidence base

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 \(updated 2023\)](#), Scottish Government

[Children's \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

[Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)

[Multiagency Public Protection Arrangements \(MAPPA\) National Guidance](#)

[Revised Prevent duty guidance: for Scotland \(2015\)](#), UK Government Home Office, updated 31 December 2023

8.0 Stakeholder consultation

Public Protection Action Group (PPAG)

The Public Protection Action Group membership consists of representative from:

- Executive Nurse Director (chair)
- Director of Public Protection
- Integrated Joint Board Chief Nurses/Integrated Joint Board Head of Health/Director
- Nurse Director Acute
- Public Health Representative
- Children's services - Clinical Director/ or Associate Nurse Director
- Midwifery/Neonate Services Clinical Director or Director of Midwifery
- Lead Paediatrician for Child Protection
- Lead Consultants for MAPPA
- Lead Consultant for Adult Support and Protection
- Child Health Commissioner
- Lead CAMHs/Adult or Mental Health/Substance Misuse/Learning Disability
- Clinical Nurse Manager Public Protection and Care Experience Children and Young People
- Partnership Representative
- Human Resources

9.0 Monitoring and review

The policy will be reviewed biannually or as required to reflect material changes in other related policy, procedures, or guidance and/or changes in legislation.