

ANGUS CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE



INTERAGENCY PROTOCOL REGARDING FAMILIES WHO MOVE FREQUENTLY

1. INTRODUCTION

This protocol sets out arrangements within Angus Council Social Work and Health, Education Department, Housing Division, NHS Tayside and Angus Women's Aid: Respect & Equality (formerly known as Angus Women's Aid) to ensure when a child moves home frequently with his/her parents within or outwith the Angus area, an assessment is concluded and if appropriate a care plan is agreed.

For the purposes of this protocol a child refers to an unborn baby or a child aged 16 years or under.

2. EXISTING INTERAGENCY ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING FAMILIES WHO MOVE

To enable all Education, Social Work and NHS Tayside staff to gain information on families who move frequently, contact can be made with the Assessment Team of the Housing Division. Consent to share this information is clearly outlined and recorded in the family's housing application form and housing assessment.

3. DEFINITION OF FREQUENT MOVES

The following definition of frequent moves has been agreed:

- Families who move on an unplanned basis on three or more occasions within the previous six-month period and there are concerns about a child.

4. ACTION TO TAKE BY EACH AGENCY

4.1 Angus Council Housing Division

The Housing Division will identify families who move on a frequent basis and decide on the need for communication, dependent on the Housing Division's assessment of need, with other agencies regarding the family's circumstances.

On receipt of a housing application, if a family presents as homeless, the Angus Council Housing Division Assessment Team will conclude an assessment of housing needs, which takes account of the family's wider circumstances. This assessment will take account of the needs of children or any vulnerable adult in the household.

Following completion of the assessment by the Housing Division and allocation of accommodation, ongoing support will be provided to the family by an appropriate housing support provider. The Housing Division normally completes assessments within a 28-day timescale; however concerns may be highlighted to other agencies at any point during the assessment and allocation process.

As the Housing Division operates a common housing register, which is a list of everyone who wants to be considered for housing provided by Angus Council, Hillcrest Housing Association (HHA) and Angus Housing Association this protocol would also apply to those families applying for housing by these associations.

4.2 NHS Tayside

Each child is allocated a health visitor at birth or following a move into or within Angus if the details of the child are notified to NHS Tayside. On starting school responsibility for the child is passed to the school nurse.

In most circumstances a family health needs assessment will be undertaken in respect of each child and services will be offered to the child and their family dependent on the need. Notification of concern, including frequent moves, will trigger a review of the family health needs assessment and a service will be offered to the child and family depending on the identified need.

Upon receipt of information to suggest a family has moved the health visitor / school nurse will notify the health visitor / school nurse in the new area and request contact. The child's records will be transferred to the health visitor / school nurse in the new area.

In cases where families are causing serious concern and moving very frequently every effort should be made to maintain continuity of practitioner working with the family to maintain contact and provision of care. This will be co-ordinated by the Advanced Nurse Practitioner for Children and Families in line with the NHS Tayside Transfer in and out Families Protocol.

4.3 Angus Council Social Work and Health

Social Work and Health personnel, within the Intake Service or Children's Services, upon receipt of a referral about a child and their family who are in the category of frequent movers (see Section 3 of the Angus Council Social Work and Health Child Protection Operational Instructions for social work staff "Protecting children from abuse and neglect") will retain responsibility for completion of the Child Needs Assessment (CO2) and if appropriate agreement of a care plan prior to transferring the child to another team within the department should this be required. Within the Intake Service an initial assessment will be completed and should this indicate the need for an ongoing service the case will be transferred to the appropriate team in line with Angus Council Social Work and Health Operational Instructions. Case transfer from the Intake Service to Children's Services fieldwork or Support to Families Teams will normally take place within six weeks of the case being referred to the Intake Service.

Whenever a family is in the frequent mover category and there is a need for an ongoing service and they move outwith Angus, contact should be made with the receiving authority to share the relevant information verbally and in writing and to request arrangements for the child and family to be visited by the receiving authority.

If the child's name is on the child protection register the advice contained within Angus Council Social Work and Health Child Protection Operational Instructions for social work staff "Protecting children from abuse and neglect", Section 7 should be followed, i.e., immediate telephone contact with staff in the new area, sharing written

information about the family with staff in the new area within 24 hours and asking the service manager to arrange for a child protection case conference to be convened.

When informed that the family of a registered child has moved without leaving indication of their new address, ensure that the designated service manager has been notified using the appropriate form CP18 (appendix 21 within the Social Work and Health Child Protection Operational Instructions) to ensure that a search is instituted as necessary.

4.4 Angus Council Education Department

The Education Department has an established process for the management of cases where children are missing from education within or outwith Angus, and where children are absent from school without explanation. Guidance on these procedures is contained within Appendix 12 of the Education Department's Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. National processes are in place to track children who move from school to school (S2S), and for Children who are Missing from Education (CME). An interagency protocol between Health and Education "Sharing Information in relation to children missing from education in Pre-School provision in Angus" has also been established. The School and Family Support Service takes a lead role for the Education Department in relation to these matters. When a child is referred to the Service, whether from a local or national source, local multi-agency checks are carried out. Depending on the circumstances, joint work is undertaken which focuses on improving school attendance. Should an Angus child remain Missing from Education, the case is referred to the Scottish Government's CME service who at once initiate a nation-wide check.

4.5 Angus Women's Aid: Respect & Equality (AWARE)

Angus Women's Aid has a thorough and robust process which includes a detailed risk assessment. As part of this assessment Angus Women's Aid will contact all relevant professionals with whom the family have had contact with, allowing a detailed background history to be taken. If a family was identified as frequent movers (see section 2) Angus Women's Aid check to verify that the Local Authority Social Work Department, with which the family are currently engaged, contact Angus Social Work and Health for assessment prior to admission into Refuge Accommodation.

If the family were not currently receiving a social work service but were identified as frequent movers, Angus Women's Aid would seek permission to make a referral to Angus Social Work and Health for assessment prior to admission into Refuge Accommodation.

Angus Women's Aid would notify Angus Social Work and Health of any family identified as being frequent movers of any changes in their living circumstances which give cause for concern.