

CHILDREN AFFECTED BY PARENTAL SUBSTANCE MISUSE



An update from the Scottish Government – June 2011

The Scottish Government recently carried out a fundamental review of child protection in Scotland. This was followed by publication of revised [Child Protection Guidance](#) in December 2010. This review was set in the wider context of our **Getting it right for every child** approach, which focuses all services on improving outcomes for children.

The revised Child Protection guidance provides a best-practice framework to encourage collaborative working across agencies and includes a strengthened section on Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse (CAPSM).

Linked to this wider review of child protection procedures, we have also reviewed our overall CAPSM approach and – through a Short-life Ministerial Working Group – have been working with external experts and leading children's charities to consider the range of activity underway to support these children.

This update sets out the Government's response to the CAPSM Short-life Ministerial Working Group.

What's already happening?

Scottish Ministers have been leading significant activity specifically to support these vulnerable, and at-risk, children. The Short-life Ministerial Working Group was set up in January 2011 to engage with external experts and leading children's charities to consider and test this range of activity.

Together with early intervention activity, this includes strengthening work in three priority areas: **guidance**, **scrutiny** and **improving national child protection statistics** – all aimed at better identifying risk factors like parental substance misuse.

This work will fulfil two main functions:

- refresh the national CAPSM guidance framework for local partners, and;
- improve the inspection, self evaluation and the performance management regime for CAPSM locally to ensure that children and families get the best support possible.

The Short-life Working Group has shown there is broad consensus about CAPSM activity already under way – and has identified other work that will further strengthen the CAPSM programme.

Bill Atkinson, Chief Social Work Officer of Perth and Kinross Council and Chair of the Group said: *"I am pleased to be associated with the work of this Group and what it has achieved. Work here will provide a national guidance framework to help local partners to deliver better outcomes and improve circumstances for vulnerable children at risk from substance misuse issues"*.

[Read the full report](#)

Other work underway

Work is also now underway to update more detailed practice guidance, *Getting our priorities right*, for use by practitioners working specifically with children and families affected by substance misuse. Consultation on this is expected later this year.

What happens next?

Over the next 12 months, the Scottish Government will carry out priority work identified by the CAPSM Short-life Working Group. It will do this as part of its wider follow up to the Child Protection Review. There will be a specific focus on strengthening scrutiny, performance management and risk assessment where these relate to child protection and particularly for CAPSM.

Comments or feedback to:

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