

Support for children and families post Scottish Child Interview Model JII

03/04/22

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Support for children in child protection and justice processes

When a child or young person has been a victim or witness of abuse or harm they usually receive a Joint Investigative Interview. Scotland has developed a new interview protocol called the Scottish Child Interview Model. Within North Strathclyde, Children 1st offers support to children, young people and their families, following interview. Often referred to as 'recovery', this covers a wide range of support in response to experiences including child sexual abuse, rape, witnessing domestic abuse and online harm.

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What happens when Children 1st gets a request for support?

Families involved in child protection and justice processes usually have little control over what happens next. To counter this, Children 1st takes a child's rights based, trauma sensitive approach aimed at maximising choice and control, starting with the basics of where, when and how it is best to make contact. This principle underpins all contact with young people and their families.

Most people ask for an initial phone call or text. We let them know we work alongside the interview team and start by asking how things are.

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Long term recovery focused support

Children 1st's long term recovery focused support includes:

- Flexible support at an intensity agreed with the young person and their family, to help young people to express, understand and manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- Support with different forms of self-harm and suicidal ideation
- Helping families to support their child and cope with the impact of the abuse on family life
- Support with anxiety and distress as a direct result of the delays to their case within the justice system
- Advocacy and support for the young person in preparation with attending court.



Seven minute briefing

Registered Scottish Charity No. SC016092

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Taking time to understand the support needed

After our initial connection, we listen to parents or carers and consider with them what could help. Families tell us this is a confusing and stressful time. They talk about how things have been since the interview and share specific issues or worries. Some have ongoing contact with social work or another key supporter and have questions about how our support would work alongside this or whether they will need additional support.

We take time to explore support options and explain what happens next in a process which can seem particularly daunting. We are explicit that children's safety and rights are at the heart of decision making and planning of support.

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Advice, guidance and information

In first year of post investigative interview support for young people and their families in North Strathclyde:

- 12% of families received support lasting less than 12 weeks. Most received information and advice. Some told us they did not need more support, others were happy with existing support e.g. social work, pastoral care at school
- 32% received support lasting 3 to 6 months
- 47% received support lasting 6 to 12 months
- 9% received support lasting more than a year – all had reported rape, sexual assault/abuse (non-familial and familial).

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Support in school is really important

When young people report sexual assault by another young person in the community, it is common for friendship groups/associates to take sides and rumours emerge about what has been reported. This can make it really difficult for the 'victim' to return to school, especially where the 'accused' is in the same year group. Sometimes they are expected to sit in class together.

Children 1st regularly supports young people and their families with school-based issues post investigation and liaises with schools to support a return to school.

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Support that meets their needs

The reason for the investigation can cause many associated issues. The priority for many young people and/or their families is their existing relationships with family members or peers, depending on the nature of reported harm. Examples of support they ask for includes:

- Information being shared on social media
- Support for the young person in relation to school
- The young person showing signs of stress and anxiety

Children 1st supports a young person and their family to manage these issues, as well as to liaise with school, social work, health, police, SCRA or COPFS as required.