



Consultation on the revised National Guidance for Child Protection

We are includem

Our mission: To provide the support young people need to make positive changes in their lives, and inspire a more hopeful future for young people, their families and communities.

Our vision: A world where every young person is respected, valued, and has the opportunity to actively participate in all aspects of life and society.

We are a Scottish charity working closely with children, young people, and their families, who are facing difficult challenges in their lives. Our trust-based, inclusive model of support is centred on the needs of each young person. We help young people make positive life choices and empower them to transform their lives; creating better outcomes for young people and their communities.

Q1: Advice and Accessibility – This guidance seeks to provide advice to local partnerships and agencies to inform the development of local guidance, and has been structured in sections that are intended to be standalone and accessible to practitioners seeking advice on particular aspects of practice. a) In your view, does the guidance fulfil these objectives? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) If you do not think the guidance fully fulfils these objectives, or if any sections are not sufficiently standalone please explain your view and suggest how improvements could be made.

To some extent. Includem welcomes that the structure of the 2014 guidance has been retained to assist with ease of understanding and feel that the introduction clearly details the purpose of the guidance and its underpinning principles – however, it could provide greater clarity on the intended audience, and how it is expected to be accessed.

For includem, it is essential that the Guidance is accessible both for practitioners and for young people and families and we would suggest consideration be given to developing a child and family friendly version of the Guidance. Some parents we support described not understanding the processes and being reliant on the professionals to understand them, which undermines the ability to build effective partnerships. *'I did not understand the process. I feel I was not given any help to understand this process and what it would mean for myself and my family.'* / *'I was told I could appeal child protection, which I have but don't really understand this process either.'*

In particular, we welcome the move away from a differentiation between familial and non-familial harm towards all considerations which harm children. We welcome this change – particularly as a significant proportion of the young people we work with have engaged in behaviours that put them at increased risk outwith the family home, even when parents or carers attempt to put appropriate boundaries in place. In some areas of Scotland,



such as Glasgow, we have had the additional benefit of The Young Persons Support & Protection (YPSP) Procedures – however, in Local Authorities who to date have not had this, it will offer a more aligned and co-ordinated response to these young people. It will also support a co-ordinated view across professionals that young people exposed to risky behaviours or non-familial challenges are in as much need of support and protection as young people who are exposed to familial risks.

Q2: Legislative and Policy Development – This revised guidance seeks to reflect legislative and policy developments since 2014 and include relevant learning from practice and research. a) Are you aware of any additional legislative or policy developments, research or practice that should be included? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) If so please provide further details.

No. Includem believes that the Guidance provides a comprehensive and thorough overview of overarching legislative and policy developments, such as the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, and Appendix C provides a helpful collation of other relevant legislation – including proposed legislation such as The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, which could influence this Guidance and its implementation in the future.

Q3: GIRFEC Practice Model – Our aim is to ensure that the guidance is fully integrated with the language and core components of the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) practice model. a) Do you think the revised National Guidance for child protection is integrated with the GIRFEC practice model? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) Please explain your answer.

To Some Extent. Includem welcomes that the revised National Guidance places a strong emphasis on partnership working with parents. From a United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) perspective, **includem believes that the Guidance would be strengthened by a stronger emphasis of partnership working with children and young people.** Children and young people appear in the guidance to be, at times, passive recipients of support rather than having a clear and valid view of their lives and what would make it better. As an example, this is evident in the language contained in Part 1, 61. of the Guidance:

*‘The reactions, perceptions, wishes and feelings of the child must also **be considered**, with account taken of their age and level of understanding. This will depend on effective communication, including with those children and young people who find communication difficult because of their age, impairment or particular psychological or social situation. [...] Steps should be taken to ensure that any accounts of adverse experiences given by children are as accurate and complete as possible, and that they are recorded fully.’*



While we are aware that there will be a practice note in preparing children and young people for participation in Child Protection Planning Meetings (CCPMs) we do not believe this goes far enough. For example, Part 1, 78. of the Guidance notes that *‘the chair ensures the CPPM supports engagement of parents and all relevant agencies in assessment of risks and strengths, and in planning next steps’*, yet contains no mention of children and young people.

Within Part 1, 79., 81. & 82. we believe the wording **should be strengthened with a recommendation that plans should be co-produced with the child** whenever possible and appropriate.

Part 1, 97. of the Guidance notes that *‘Every child who can form a view on matters affecting them has the right to express those views if they so wish’* and we welcome that the Guidance notes that *‘those views should be given due weight in accordance with a child’s age and maturity’* – aligning with Article 12 of the UNCRC. **However, we again view that co-production should be encouraged here, going beyond the child simply being heard to instead being an active participant and agent in how they are supported.** Indeed, the rest of this section focusses only the child expressing their views without the obligation to involve them.

We welcome the section on ‘A Learning Culture in Child Protection’ with messages from parents about what works for them in building partnerships. We would welcome a similar focus on what works for children and young people to ensure they are part of the plan and have a meaningful say in its development. A young person we support told us they did not feel involved in the process: *‘I felt it was their plan with me and my brother having no say in the plan. I know my mum spoke at meetings, but I think they had a set plan anyways.’*

A mother supported by includem also stressed that both her and her daughter did not feel that they were listened to and noted they also did not feel involved in their plan:

‘At the beginning it felt like nobody was listening to a damn word. Not only from what I was saying but my daughter too [...] It was their plan, not mine. The way they put things across, saying “You do this, you do that” made me and my daughter feel like we were in trouble.’

We would like to see this Guidance help ensure that young people, and parents and carers, are always meaningfully involved in the development of their plans moving forward.

We welcome that there is a section focussed on ‘Involving Children and Families in Child Protection Processes’ (Part 3, 101.–112.), however we think this would be more appropriately placed earlier in the Guidance to ensure partnership with children and young people is emphasised as early as possible. This section’s current placing within the document, situated after explanations of various processes, suggests that it is an after-thought or of lesser importance.

The current content within this section we believe is too focussed on involvement in the process and decisions rather than partnership in the development and implementation of the plan. This is particularly important for older young people and is in line with the principles of the Contextual Safeguarding approach. **Part 3, 107. could be reconsidered to**



include older children and young people as contributors to safety planning, not just parents and carers. The Guidance, or an accompanying practice note, should include how children and young people are involved in devising and delivering the plan, including who they would like to be involved.

Part 3, 113.–116. ('Learning from Adapted Practice during the COVID-19 pandemic') could further consider how meetings are convened to increase the likelihood of children and young people's engagement in the process. We need to learn from the COVID pandemic about how to engage families and children and young people. Young people have told us that they felt more able and willing to participate in meetings, hearings, and other forums through digital means. They felt that they had more power and safety by doing that in their home or a venue of their choosing. For parents and carers, however, they have faced difficulties engaging digitally. It is important that meetings are delivered and structured in the way that best suits the young person, parent/carer, or family.

Q4: Practices and Processes – Part 3 seeks to accurately and proportionately describe the practice and processes critical in the protection of children. a) Are there any practices or processes that are not fully or clearly described in the guidance? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) If so, please state which processes/practices are not fully or clearly described and suggest how the description could be improved.

Yes. Includem welcomes the content of the practice and procedures described, however we would welcome changes to the order in Part 3 so that it is structured in a way that mirrors how processes would be carried out: starting with statutory services with a direct role in Child Protection, moving to commissioned third sector services, and then expanding wider to other relevant stakeholders within health, social work, and the third sector, as well as corporate parents.

Q5: Assessment Section – A new section of this National Guidance (Assessment part 2b) provides advice about child protection assessment practice. a) Is this section sufficiently clear and does it cover all of the aspects you would expect? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) If No or To Some Extent, please suggest how this section could be improved.

Yes. Includem welcomes the new section on assessments in child protection practice. It provides a comprehensive overview and information about good practice, including new approaches. As per our answer to question 3, the insertion of Contextualised Safeguarding and Family Group Decision Making are good examples of how children and young people can be involved in the planning, decision-making and implementation of the supports that they consider will improve their safety.



Q6: Description of child protection processes and procedure – This National Guidance covers the consideration, assessment, planning and actions that are required, when there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. It also provides direction where child protection procedures are initiated. This is when Police, Social Work or Health determine that a child may have been abused or may be at risk of significant harm and an Inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD) will take place. a) Are the processes and procedures that lead to and follow IRD clearly described within the Guidance? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) Please provide additional comments.

To some extent. The processes and procedures that lead to and follow Interagency Referral Discussions (IRDs) are, generally, clearly described within the Guidance. However, includem wishes to see the Guidance emphasise the importance of third sector involvement in the planning and assessment stages for IRDs, not just at the stage of implementation. Further, there is no mention of Child Protection Case Discussions contained within the Guidance – this is an established practice that appears to have been omitted and we would welcome its inclusion, particularly as this is an area in which third sector involvement in the planning and delivery of the Child's Plan can be strengthened.

Q8: Neglect – The draft National Guidance defines 'neglect' as child abuse, where it: "Consists in persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty and is an indicator of support needs." a) Do you agree with this definition? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) Please provide additional comments.

Yes. Includem agrees with this definition.

Q9: Neglect – Recognising that it is a complex area we also include some discussion about whether neglect should be defined as abuse where it is "a consequence of systemic stresses such as poverty." a) Do you agree with this approach? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) Please provide additional comments.

Yes. Includem agrees with this approach – and the introduction of a discourse on the structural impact of poverty in particular is helpful in this context.

Q10: Pre-birth assessment and support – Part 4 of the National Guidance sets out the context in which action is required to keep an unborn baby safe. Part 3 sets out the processes for this. a) Do these parts of the guidance clearly and fully set out the context and processes? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) If answering To Some Extent or No, please detail why.



To some extent. Broadly, the context and processes are clearly set out. However, we believe the Guidance could provide further detail on keeping an unborn baby safe in the event the mother is a child – ensuring that the rights of the unborn child and the rights of a mother as a child are both considered. The risk to the mother, particularly where the mother is a child themselves or where there are indications that the mother has been sexually exploited could have greater emphasis – in the latter instance, it would be helpful to link to the section on CSE for practitioners here.

Q12: Implementation – The Scottish Government considers that Chief Officer Groups and local Child Protection Committees, supported by Child Protection Committees Scotland, the Scottish Government and a range of other partners, are the key fora for implementation of this Guidance. a) Do you agree or disagree? Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know b) Please explain your answer.

Agree. While we agree that the fora and partners cited are key for implementation, we consider that this would be strengthened further by a strategic consideration of working with Third Sector Interfaces to make sure that all third sector organisations are aware of the new Guidance, beyond those involved in Child Protection Committees. This is particularly essential for smaller community groups such as grassroots third sector family support organisations.

Q13: COVID-19 – During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been necessary to adapt practice to ensure continuity of child protection processes. Learning from the pandemic and examples of best practice will be incorporated into the National Guidance. a) Are there adapted processes that you would like to see continued? Yes, To Some Extent, No, Don't Know b) Please provide further information

Yes. Includem wishes to reiterate, as per our answer for Question 3, the importance of meetings being delivered and structured in the way that best suits the young person, parent/carer, or family. The COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in a raft of practice changes – particularly in relation to digital engagement, and young people have told us that alternative meeting modes can be beneficial for their engagement.

A young person we support told us: *'I participated in 2 meetings virtually. The virtual meetings were better as [I was] less anxious.'*

We would like to see adapted practice – in the form of virtual meetings, for example – maintained as options for those who would benefit, while recognising that virtual or telephone meetings do not work well for everyone. While one mother told us that she preferred meetings over the phone, other parents faced difficulties engaging in telephone meetings during the pandemic:

- A mother supported by includem told us: *'I wished the CP procedures had still been face-to-face or video form during the pandemic as the call conferences were hard to follow'*



and I struggled to know when to speak. I needed the support of my partner or mum for the conference calls. [...] I struggled to keep up with what was being said by who. I would have preferred if these meetings could have been face-to-face or video calls. The video calls couldn't happen due to the social work department not having the technology for this. I felt I didn't know when I should speak during these meetings and was asked to not speak over people. However, I was only trying to say what I wanted to add.'

- A father supported by includem from an asylum-seeking background stated: *'I attended telephone meetings which I found confusing, it was difficult to understand people at times as the connection was not great, I feel I missed parts of the conversation and got confused at who was talking.'*
- Another father supported by includem told us he *'would have preferred face-to-face instead of on the phone.'*

Feedback from our families demonstrates the need for further practical support to engage – while some Local Authorities may have used a 'traffic light' system to determine the level of face-to-face contact with families, if any, there did not appear to be sufficient involvement of young people and families in determining the ways in which they preferred to receive support. Indeed, some parents and young people told us that they felt abandoned by some agencies during lockdown and had no way to influence the support they were receiving.

A young person we support told us, *'they stayed in regular contact throughout lockdown to make sure I was ok while other agencies used Lockdown as an excuse to not communicate with me when I needed the support the most then.'* One mother we support said, *'the other services used the pandemic as a reason to lose communication. I also struggled to get support for my alcohol issues due to the pandemic and feel that if I had not taken charge of this myself it could have been a lot worse.'*

Another mother supported by includem told us they the felt that their views were not listened to in relation to support for her daughter during lockdown: *'[...] my youngest daughter has been offered a place in school during lockdown however, my anxiety around COVID I am worried to send her therefore I declined the offer and in the meeting I felt judged for this even though I explained my reason.'*

If we are to embrace partnership working as outlined in Guidance then meaningful engagement with young people, parents and carers, and families in how they want to be supported must be integral throughout the full process.

Q14: Do you have any further comments on the National Guidance?

Includem believes the role of the father could be given greater attention within the Guidance. A father we spoke to regarding Child Protection processes told us he felt he wasn't meaningfully included. When asked if he felt like a partner in the process, he told us:

'Most definitely not. The only time I knew something was wrong is when agencies were coming into the house in the evenings [...] I didn't feel I had any support [under Child Protection procedures]. If I'm being honest I didn't know about the children going through the child



protection as my ex-partner didn't tell me. [...] As the Dad I felt excluded and things were hidden from me as I worked all day. It wasn't until my children were taken away I realised things were bad.'

This feedback has led us to further consider how the Guidance discusses and frames the role of the father. While the majority of the references within the Guidance to the parent/carer causing harm are gender neutral (through using the term 'parent' or 'carer') where the term mother is specifically discussed, they are predominantly referenced as the victim and where the term father is specifically discussed, they are the one causing harm. For example, the main input on engaging with fathers is contained under the heading of 'When services find it hard to engage' and the 'Safe and Together' text box only mentions fathers in the context of perpetrating the abuse. Children and families affected by alcohol and drug use (Part 4, 113.) states: *'parenting and fatherhood focused interventions should be considered within the substance abuse treatment programme.'*

In terms of child protection concerns, NSPCC research indicates that there are no significant gender differences regarding risks posed to children, except for contact sexual abuse and severe physical assault, which are more likely to be perpetrated by male carers.¹

We believe the guidance could be strengthened with an analysis of the content where there are specific gendered references to parents. This would be enhanced by greater discussion of the positive role of fathers, how professionals can seek to promote their involvement, and the recognition of the benefits of the involvement of fathers for children and young people.

Appendix 1 – Questions asked to young people and families supported by includem

Includem engaged with young people and families we support to understand their experiences of Child Protection procedures to shape our response to this Guidance. Please find below a list of Questions asked to families. Appendix 2 contains a summary of views from some of the young people and families supported by includem.

Question 1. What did you find helpful about the support you received under Child Protection Procedures?

Question 2. What got in the way of helping?

Question 3. Did you feel like a partner in the process? In what ways did this or didn't this happen?

Question 4. Did you feel like it was your plan or the agencies' plan? In what way was it or wasn't it?

Question 5. Did you feel listened to by the various agencies? Did some agencies do it better than others? What made it better?

¹ Radford, L. et al. (2011) Child abuse and neglect in the UK today. London: NSPCC



Question 6. Is there anything you would like us to know about your experience of Child Protection processes and procedures?

Question 7. Did you participate in meetings virtually during lockdown? What did you think/feel about this?

Question 8. Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Appendix 2– Views from young people and families supported by includem

Views of a young person (16) supported by includem

Question: What did you find helpful about the support you received under Child Protection Procedures?

Answer: The support from includem was a life saver while other services weren't working. If it wasn't for me being on CP I don't think me and my brother would have been referred to includem. If it wasn't for includem's continued support we would also still be on CP.

Question: What got in the way of helping?

Answer: My mum not facing up to her drinking problems and social work not supporting her to get help for this. Social work weren't seeing the whole issue.

Question: Did you feel like a partner in the process? In what ways did this or didn't this happen?

Answer: I felt social work didn't always listen to me or my needs. Sometimes they listened and tried to put services to help but social work was not in contact much.

Question: Did you feel like it was your plan or the agencies' plan? In what way was it or wasn't it?

Answer: I felt it was their plan with me and my brother having no say in the plan. I know my mum spoke at meetings but I think they had a set plan anyways.

Question: Did you feel listened to by the various agencies? Did some agencies do it better than others? What made it better?

Answer: I had 3 different agencies Intandem, includem and CAMHS. I felt it was only includem that helped and gained my views. They stayed in regular contact throughout lockdown to make sure I was ok while other agencies used Lockdown as an excuse to not communicate with me when I needed the support the most then.

Question: Is there anything you would like us to know about your experience of Child Protection processes and procedures?

Answer: I am glad to now be off CP procedures.

Question: Did you participate in meetings virtually during lockdown? What did you think/feel about this?



Answer: I participated in 2 meetings virtually, but I don't like the meetings as I feel they are negative. The virtual meetings were better as [I was] less anxious.

Question: Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Answer: I liked the calls and wellbeing packs sent to me by includem, they helped with my mental health and I feel more organisations should have done things like that to let me know they were thinking about me and my brother during lockdown. I enjoy my face-to-face contacts again. Video calls I didn't like them and prefer calls, texts or letters (packs) sent to me.

Views of a father from an asylum-seeking background supported by includem

Question: What did you find helpful about the support you received under Child Protection Procedures?

Answer: I do not want child protection, I do not find it helpful and feel it was put upon myself and family without discussing it with me.

Question: What got in the way of helping?

Answer: I did not understand the process. I feel I was not given any help to understand this process and what it would mean for myself and my family. I feel they had already decided this was what was to happen and that my views about how I keep my children safe was not listened to. I also feel they did not consider cultural and religious difficulties, they did not give enough time or support to help me understand this process in more detail.

Question: Did you feel like a partner in the process? In what ways did this or didn't this happen?

Answer: Some workers tried hard to help me understand this process but due to me not being able to understand much English I found it a bit of a struggle.

Question: Did you feel like it was your plan or the agencies' plan? In what way was it or wasn't it?

Answer: I feel someone from my own culture who understands this process would have been able to explain it in a language I could fully understand.

Question: Did you feel listened to by the various agencies? Did some agencies do it better than others? What made it better?

Answer: I was told I could appeal child protection, which I have but don't really understand this process either.

Question: Is there anything you would like us to know about your experience of Child Protection processes and procedures?

Answer: This process has been very stressful for myself, my children and my wife.

Question: Did you participate in meetings virtually during lockdown? What did you think/feel about this?

Answer: I attended telephone meetings which I found confusing, it was difficult to



understand people at times as the connection was not great I feel I missed parts of the conversation and got confused at who was talking.

Question: Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Answer: Services were helpful during lock down, includem would come and take the children out, they provided a laptop for children to do their school work and an xbox to stop the children becoming bored and they could play games on it. Includem helped me when I was stressed about COVID they saw that we had masks and hand sanitizer and helped us to understand the guidelines. Social work provided lots of clothes for the children to keep clean and warm.

Views of a mother supported by includem

Question: What did you find helpful about the support you received under Child Protection Procedures?

Answer: The services put in place for my kids. I feel it was taken more seriously and we were offered more support under the CP procedures and for this I am grateful.

Question: What got in the way of helping?

Answer: I tend to bury my head in the sand when things get too much and I was pushing social work away. With the CP procedures services that were more down-to-earth and understanding were brought on for my kids and they were able to voice their opinions. I wished the CP procedures had still been face-to-face or video form during the pandemic as the call conferences were hard to follow and I struggled to know when to speak. I needed the support of my partner or mum for the conference calls.

Question: Did you feel like a partner in the process? In what ways did this or didn't this happen?

Answer: I felt I had a say in the plan but that social work had an agreed plan anyway. I asked for the kids to be removed from CP as my mum, partner and I could see the changes we had made for the better but social work kept us on longer than needed. However I was thankful for the services it opened us up to as [my daughter] loves her includem support.

Question: Did you feel like it was your plan or the agencies' plan? In what way was it or wasn't it?

Answer: As above I had my say but they had an overall say in what happened.

Question: Did you feel listened to by the various agencies? Did some agencies do it better than others? What made it better?

Answer: I felt that Intandem for my son and includem for my daughter were amazing. The other services used the pandemic as a reason to lose communication. I also struggled to get support for my alcohol issues due to the pandemic and feel that if I had not taken charge of this myself it could have been a lot worse. The support of my partner also helped me as he was getting a lot of support from Men Matters which had a positive impact on him. Social work weren't in contact a lot and when they did visit it lasted about 5 minutes.



Question: Is there anything you would like us to know about your experience of Child Protection processes and procedures?

Answer: I am thankful for the procedures to ensure things did change for the better for my family however I feel it was the other agencies that the CP procedures involved that got us through, not social work or the procedures as such.

Question: Did you participate in meetings virtually during lockdown? What did you think/feel about this?

Answer: Yes but I struggled to keep up with what was being said by who. I would have preferred if these meetings could have been face-to-face or video calls. The video calls couldn't happen due to the social work department not having the technology for this. I felt I didn't know when I should speak during these meetings and was asked to not speak over people. However I was only trying to say what I wanted to add.

Question: Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Answer: Packs from Includem and the school to keep the kids engaging with services. My daughter loved the wellbeing packs from includem and these lifted her mood. More calls to check in with my kids during the difficult times, I know they enjoyed these calls. My daughter and myself also benefit from text communication from services as well which happened more during lockdown. I am glad as a family we are no longer on the CP register and I am proud of us for managing to do this during difficult times. I am thankful for the services that kept in regular contact like includem, Intandem and my son's school.

Views of a mother supported by includem (2)

Question: What did you find helpful about the support you received under Child Protection Procedures?

Answer: At the beginning, f**k all. It made me and my daughter feel like c**p. My daughter felt like trying her best wasn't good enough and that annoyed me. Still to this day, my daughter feels like that. To me, being neglected is being locked in a room somewhere, not getting fed, or being abused. Neglect is not caring what happens to your child. Now I just agree at the meetings to shut them up to get it over and done with. The only good thing that came from the meetings was my daughter getting introduced to services that got her out of the house.

Question: What got in the way of helping?

Answer: At the beginning it felt like nobody was listening to a damn word. Not only from what I was saying but my daughter too. They were trying to send me to places that I had no way of getting back from. It p****d me off when people kept saying I was neglecting my daughter.

Question: Did you feel like a partner in the process? In what ways did this or didn't this happen?

Answer: No, because I wasn't listened to.



Question: Did you feel like it was your plan or the agencies' plan? In what way was it or wasn't it?

Answer: It was their plan, not mine. The way they put things across, saying "You do this, you do that" made me and my daughter feel like we were in trouble. It made my daughter feel like c**p.

Question: Did you feel listened to by the various agencies? Did some agencies do it better than others? What made it better?

Answer: Did I f**k. Some services are better at listening to me and my daughter and that makes a difference. It also helps when people are serious when they need to be but can be more laid back at times too. Sometimes it can feel like you're being attacked so if people are more sensitive that can help.

Question: Is there anything you would like us to know about your experience of Child Protection processes and procedures?

Answer: It could be a hell of a lot better. You feel like your best isn't good enough and you can always do better. Also, I know my daughter has autism but she's not stupid. I don't need her being on the spectrum being shoved in my face all the time. It's always brought up and it feels like it's always used as an excuse.

Question: Did you participate in meetings virtually during lockdown? What did you think/feel about this?

Answer: They were a bit better over the phone because I didn't have to be face-to-face with people and the people couldn't see our facial expressions.

Question: Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Answer: My daughter can still go out for walks with her workers and get exercise which is a good thing. I prefer the meetings over the phone. I just want the schools to go back to normal, so my daughter has a routine. I find it hard to keep a routine when there is no school.

Views of a father supported by includem

Question: What did you find helpful about the support you received under Child Protection Procedures?

Answer: I didn't feel I had any support. If I'm being honest I didn't know about the children going through the child protection as my ex-partner didn't tell me.

Question: What got in the way of helping?

Answer: I felt I wasn't included as I was working long hours at work and didn't get included, or so I thought as everything happened during the day. By the time I got home from work I thought everything was okay.



Question: Did you feel like a partner in the process? In what ways did this or didn't this happen?

Answer: Most definitely not. The only time I knew something was wrong is when agencies were coming into the house in the evenings.

Question: Did you feel like it was your plan or the agencies' plan? In what way was it or wasn't it?

Answer: I felt it was the agencies plan and not mine. Again I didn't know anything and didn't know there are processes in place for this.

Question: Did you feel listened to by the various agencies? Did some agencies do it better than others? What made it better?

Answer: Some agencies are much better and listened to me and that makes the difference.

Question: Is there anything you would like us to know about your experience of Child Protection processes and procedures?

Answer: As the Dad I felt excluded and things were hidden from me as I worked all day. It wasn't until my children were taken away I realised things were bad.

Question: Did you participate in meetings virtually during lockdown? What did you think/feel about this?

Answer: I did but would have preferred face-to-face instead of on the phone.

Question: Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Answer: I don't want to lose the includem support as they are an agency that have always been there for me and my children. They always help and I now have my son back.

Views of a mother supported by includem (3)

Question: What did you find helpful about the support you received under Child Protection Procedures?

Answer: The monthly core groups, the weekly social work visits as I can discuss any issues face to face. I feel there is more support offered when the kids are on child protection than there is when voluntary.

Question: What got in the way of helping?

Answer: N/A

Question: Did you feel like a partner in the process? In what ways did this or didn't this happen?

Answer: Yes and No - I was involved in the meetings, however I do not feel my views are always listened to. An example would be my youngest daughter has been offered a place in school during lockdown however, my anxiety around COVID I am worried to send her therefore I declined the offer and in the meeting I felt judged for this even though I explained my reason.



Question: Did you feel like it was your plan or the agencies' plan? In what way was it or wasn't it?

Answer: My three children were removed from my care, I felt I was listened to as I chose for them to live with my sister with daily contact with me, when I felt it was time to see the kids unsupervised it took some time however, it was done and my kids were returned to my care. At times I felt left out of the planning as services went through my sister as she had the kids.

Question: Did you feel listened to by the various agencies? Did some agencies do it better than others? What made it better?

Answer: I felt supported by includem, daily telephone support during the first lockdown. CAMHS worker was not contacting me for weeks at a time sometimes longer, Cordia pulled their support without telling me. Social work listened to me when I requested a new social worker due to the current relationship breaking down.

Question: Is there anything you would like us to know about your experience of Child Protection processes and procedures?

Answer: I feel that the process was a long wait as there is an investigation before you are placed on the register however, I thought this was 4 weeks mine was a lot longer than that and while this went on my kids were not in my care.

Question: Did you participate in meetings virtually during lockdown? What did you think/feel about this?

Answer: Yes I have taken part in telephone conference calls, I prefer face to face meetings as I feel people talk over each other and I also do not like talking when I can not see the others round the table its uncomfortable. I do understand this is due to the government restrictions.

Question: Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Answer: The school were great they were dropping off food parcels and checking in on my son as he is supported by the youth worker in the school.

Question: Was there anything that happened in the way services supported you during lockdown that you would like to see continue as we resume some level of normality?

Answer: During the first lockdown all the services that were involved just stopped, includem were calling myself and my son however, we missed that face-to-face support, I did use the helpline during crisis point and was fully supported.