

Child Protection
Committees
Scotland



**CPCScotland
Communications Strategy
2022-25**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this document Child Protection Committees Scotland (CPCScotland) sets out its ambitions to continue to improve public awareness and increase understanding of child protection issues across Scotland in ways which are appropriate for the increasingly digitised age and commensurate with CPCScotland's limited resources.

This three year strategy develops the communications foundations laid in the first CPCScotland communications strategy document of 2017, consolidating and building on the success already achieved, continuing to build CPCScotland's profile with external audiences, and with partners and stakeholders. Within the strategy CPCScotland recognises the ever-increasing need to provide agile, flexible communications according to changing communications consumption patterns, socio-political priorities and major events.

2. AIMS

CPCScotland will adopt a proactive role in joining dialogue about children's rights and welfare, and through its communications efforts play a role in influencing both public understanding and policy development around child protection.

CPCScotland will continue to develop and review key messages that avoid both the use of jargon and language that is florid, blaming or stigmatising. This messaging will be frank, honest and transparent about the complexities of child protection, communicating clearly about what child abuse, neglect and harm are, outlining causes and consequences and what people can do to help prevent harm.

CPCScotland messages will be used to communicate to all members of Scotland's diverse communities, including children themselves. Where possible, messaging, campaigns and supporting imagery will be co-designed in conjunction with community advisory groups, including groups of children and young people.

CPCScotland will further develop the use of media, social media and digital communications to promote child protection messages across a range of platforms and channels. This includes an ongoing commitment to relationship-building with the mainstream media and maximisation of opportunities to talk about child protection in the media as a means to build understanding.

CPCScotland will seek to deliver these aims within realistic and achievable parameters in line with current capacity and resourcing.

The following strands of activity support the delivery of these aims

1. Specialist Support
2. Collaborative Working
3. Key Messages
4. Campaigns
5. Target Audiences, Platforms & Channels
6. Creative Content
7. Governance Review and Evaluation

3. SPECIALIST SUPPORT

To maintain progress and to maximise CPCScotland's "reach" to existing and new audiences, CPCScotland will continue to require the support of specialist communications/marketing/PR support, plus freelance creative and digital expertise.

The lead communications specialist will continue to have responsibility for:-

- co-ordination and management of CPCScotland's communications and media work plan
- building relationships and liaison with the media to promote CPCScotland
- acting as adviser and main point of contact for CPCScotland's media spokespersons and the wider group
- liaison with other Child Protection agencies e.g. local authorities, third sector
- liaison with other communications professionals working in the sector e.g. Police Scotland media & PR team, local authority and NHS press officers, Scottish Government communications team
- management of any further communications development e.g. liaison with focus groups, planning of campaign co-design
- developing and/or sub-contracting national child protection marketing and publicity template materials for amendment and distribution in local Child Protection Committee areas
- sub contracting and managing support from those with specialist social media and creative expertise

4. COLLABORATIVE WORKING

CPCScotland will work collaboratively with community groups (including groups of young people) to develop key messages, language and imagery, and to co-design campaigns and promotional materials. We will also continue to develop collaborative working, information-sharing and good practice with CPCScotland members, partners and other external agencies involved in child protection work e.g. NHS, Police Scotland, local authorities, third sector. This will include providing guidance to local child protection committees for the sharing of material.

CPCScotland will work collaboratively with local partners to provide guidance and prepare responses in the event of "bad" news or important Learning Review findings (previously known as Significant Case Reviews).

5. KEY MESSAGES

Through a series of collectively agreed and regularly updated generic and themed key messages*, CPCScotland will continue to deliver consistent and confident communications about generic and themed child protection issues in the media, on social media, other digital platforms, in public and in person. CPCScotland's key messages have been carefully designed to avoid jargon and remote language in order to maximise a greater understanding of child protection issues. CPCScotland will develop new messages in response to emerging issues.

*Current messaging is included in Appendix 1.

6. CAMPAIGNS

CPCScotland will consolidate the success of its programme of child protection campaigns by designing and promoting a series of new generic and subject-specific campaigns over the coming 3 years.

Capacity and budget permitting, and where feasible, CPCScotland aims to co-design its campaigns in partnership with community and family support groups, children and young people themselves, and with other organisations.

CPCScotland will continue to use digital channels for its campaigns, but other platforms and channels will be explored including TV and radio, billboards and public transport.

7. TARGET AUDIENCES, PLATFORMS & CHANNELS

CPCScotland will continue to consolidate its considerable progress to raise awareness of child protection issues across all members of Scotland's diverse communities, using a broad range of platforms and channels.

Target audiences

Unusually, the target audience identified by CPC Scotland is "everyone", on the basis that awareness of child protection issues should be raised across the whole community and to people of all ages and backgrounds.

The strategy seeks to communicate its key messages to:

- parents, carers and members of wider family groups
- children and young people
- friends and neighbours
- individuals and members of the wider community
- professionals who work with children and families
- collaborative partners e.g. local CPCs, other agencies

Platforms & channels

As the mainstream media changes and loses some of its influence, CPCScotland will continue to adapt its communications accordingly but will also maximise opportunities presented through the press, radio and TV. The organisation also remains committed to developing its digital presence and to exploring alternative/developing channels such as billboard and public transport advertising to communicate its key messages.

- **The mainstream media**

CPCScotland will continue with its pragmatic, relationship-building approach with the mainstream media, and will seek to establish CPCScotland as a go-to organisation for commentary about child protection issues. CPCScotland continues to acknowledge that there is an element of risk involved with media coverage when it comes to potentially controversial subject matters like child protection, and that the media do not necessarily

'play fair'. This strategy recommends that all media contributions will require careful response briefing and preparation.

CPCScotland will:

- provide reaction to breaking and topical news stories
- seek opportunities to proactively promote child protection campaigns and themes
- provide spokespeople and commentary on child protection issues where appropriate
- use media opportunities to develop a broader and evidence informed understanding of child protection issues
- continue to identify, recruit and train media spokespersons from within the group's membership
- update and circulate a CPCScotland media briefing pack
continue to develop and update the existing media database

- **Social media**

Since 2020, CPCScotland has used social media to great effect under its @childprotectscotland handle on both Facebook and Twitter, and to a lesser extent on Instagram. Each of the @childprotectscotland channels continues to raise awareness of child protection issues and to direct traffic to the [Child Protection Scotland](#) website.

During the 3 years of this strategy CPCScotland will seek to consolidate the success already achieved by continuing to develop the organisation's presence on social media via generic, themed, paid-for and campaign specific posts, maximising the Child Protection Scotland "brand" with extensive use of creative visuals developed since 2020 (see below).

Other digital channels such as TikTok, Snapchat and YouTube will be explored to maximise the reach of CPCScotland's key messages to specific audiences including children and young people. Further, CPCScotland will seek to investigate scope for further paid-for advertising across digital channels.

To fulfil its digital development ambitions CPCScotland will require ongoing support from a social media manager to create and schedule posts and to provide analytics, and adequate resourcing will be needed to fund this role.

- **Child Protection Scotland website**

Plans to develop a CPCScotland website were brought forward when the Covid-19 pandemic forced lockdown and concerns about child welfare increased. Since its launch in April 2020, the [Child Protection Scotland](#) website has been tremendously successful, with more than 30K visitors in under 2 years.

Spikes in traffic to the website are seen during each child protection campaign, and the site has successfully utilised campaign specific webpages with appropriate imagery and information for each new campaign.

CPCScotland will continue to update the website regularly, and use it as the organisation's main source for signposting the public to sources of further information and support.

8. CREATIVE CONTENT

CPCScotland's communications efforts have been greatly enhanced with the development of a range of creative content since early 2020. Thanks to the support of a working group of freelance creative collaborators, the Child Protection Scotland "brand" has already become well-established, featuring simple but memorable illustration, graphics, animation and audio.

Over the 3 years of this strategy CPCScotland will continue to build up a "bank" of creative content to be used across all channels. New creative treatments for use on digital and traditional platforms and channels will be developed, as directed by co-design partners.

New material will be designed to complement specific themes, campaigns and audiences and may include video, audio or other creative approaches. This ongoing development will require the ongoing support of the established creative team plus other creative specialists as required.

9. GOVERNANCE REVIEW & EVALUATION

The 3 year timescale for implementation of this updated CPCScotland communications strategy, is subject to the provision of adequate resourcing, and the recruitment of specialist and administrative support to facilitate and manage that implementation.

CPCScotland has delegated co-ordination and oversight of the delivery of the strategy to its Communications Subgroup chair and members with support from the CPCScotland Co-ordination Team. The sub group reports quarterly to CPCScotland.

While there is an element of experimentation with communications development, the success of the strategy (and the specific themes within it) are subject to a range of review and evaluation methods, methods by which success may be measured. This methodology will include an action plan with task completion dates, numbers of media appearances, digital analytics, and an increase in digital dialogue.

For more information about this strategy contact CPCScotland Co-ordination Team at cpcscotland-liaison@strath.ac.uk

Thanks to Mairi Damer of Word Up Communications, CPCScotland's Communications Specialist for support in developing this strategy

Appendix 1

Current CPCScotland Messaging

With its current messaging CPCScotland aims to:

- protect children and young people who are or might be at risk of harm
- encourage both children and adults to have the confidence to speak up and out about child abuse or neglect, and to take action if required
- increase understanding that individuals and communities themselves can play an active and proactive role to help keep children safe
- communicate consistently about how it's EVERYONE'S responsibility to protect children
- explain in accessible language what child protection actually means and is
- explain the different kinds of abuse or neglect children can experience
- increase understanding that children from all backgrounds and communities can be at risk of harm or neglect, not just those living in poverty and disadvantage
- raise awareness that some children can experience harm or neglect because of a range of circumstances including parental stress or struggle
- seek to avoid blame or stigmatisation where appropriate i.e. when parents are under pressure
- encourage parents and carers to seek support to prevent escalation of problems
- offer reminders that while extreme cases of child abuse are rare, abuse and neglect are criminal offences
- increase an understanding that taking action if you're concerned about a child does not mean "grassing someone up", it can actually help protect a child from harm
- outline the kinds of services already working with families to ensure that their children are safe
- communicate positively about the excellent work already being done to support families and protect children, and promote the workforce
- encourage everyone, including professionals, individuals and communities, to listen carefully, take concerns seriously, and take action if required
- outline its ambitions to set a consistently high standard for the delivery of child protection services right across Scotland
- talk about child protection issues in a way which emphasises children's perspectives, and avoids jargon-heavy discussion about systems and processes
- provide support and advice about consistent communications and key messages to Child Protection Committees across Scotland