

Health Professionals should follow the Unborn Babies Protocol issued by NHS Tayside.

The information will then be considered by the Multi-Agency Screening Group and decisions taken about how to proceed.

Who decides if a concurrent plan is required?

Ultimately, the decision about whether or not to proceed with a concurrent care plan should be made by professionals in a multi-agency forum such as a Child Protection Case Conference following initial assessment and legal advice.

It is likely that the Children's Hearing will be involved in the decision-making process.

The usual LAAC procedures should be followed after a concurrent placement is made. It is crucial to note that the child is placed on a fostering basis and that the placement is temporary pending the recommendation of a completed parenting capacity assessment.

Who to contact for further information about concurrent planning?

Services for Children, Young People & Families
Education & Children's Services
Perth & Kinross Council
Almondbank House
Lewis Place
PERTH
PH1 3BD

Tel **01738 472260**
www.pkc.gov.uk



Concurrent Planning in Perth and Kinross

Information for Professional Workers

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

What is concurrent planning?

Perth & Kinross Council has introduced concurrent planning as an additional way of providing Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC) with a positive care experience from as early an age as possible.

A child who cannot safely stay with birth parents is fostered by concurrent carers while the birth parents participate in a parenting capacity assessment to determine whether or not reunification is possible.

If the recommendation is that the child should return to the birth parents' care then services will support the birth family and concurrent carers to manage the transition process in a way that meets the child's needs. The birth family will receive support from services after the return of the child to ensure that positive change is sustained and built upon.

If the recommendation is that the child cannot return to the birth parents, then the concurrent carers will be supported to adopt the child.

Supports will be available to the birth family to help them make a positive contribution to the adoption plan.

Benefits of concurrent planning

This type of care planning for children originated in the USA during the 1980's and has been used successfully in England since the late 1990's.

Concurrent planning can reduce the amount of times a child in care has to move and speeds up the decision making process so that children in care can be with their permanent family (either birth or adoptive) at the earliest opportunity.

Birth parents are given the best opportunity to make positive changes to enable return of the child to their care.

Carers have the opportunity to provide vulnerable babies with secure, stable and loving homes during the assessment period, and ultimately throughout their childhood if return to birth parents is not possible.

Essentially, concurrent planning moves risk from the child to the adults and helps the child have the best possible start in life.

Who are the children that would be suited to concurrent planning?

In Perth and Kinross concurrent care is an option that can be considered for new born babies identified pre-birth as unlikely to be safe in their parents care and who are highly likely to be placed for adoption if reunification does not succeed.

The following circumstances might apply:

- *Older children have previously been permanently removed from the birth parents.*
- *No significant change in parents' circumstances that would suggest they will be able to meet the unborn child's needs.*
- *Parental substance/alcohol misuse; domestic violence; mental health; learning disability and other factors may be present that impact on parenting capacity.*
- *No viable kinship care options present.*
- *Possible that with intensive support the birth parents will be able to actively participate in a parenting capacity assessment.*

Concurrent care is an option that should be considered for all babies who may be entering the care system at birth.

However, concurrent planning is not suitable for all babies, eg where there is a viable kinship care placement; if there are no concurrent carers available.

What is the referral process?

Professionals should notify Social Work Services at the earliest possible time if they are concerned about an unborn baby.

Child Protection Duty Team

Education & Children's Services
Perth & Kinross Council
Almondbank House
Lewis Place
PERTH
PH1 3BD

Tel **01738 476768**

Email **childprotection@pkc.gov.uk**
www.pkc.gov.uk/childprotection

Where possible the following information should be included:

- *name and contact details of referrer;*
- *the full name, date of birth, address of the mother, and if possible, the father;*
- *the expected due date of the unborn baby;*
- *the nature of the concerns;*
- *details of other siblings;*
- *whether or not other agencies are involved already;*
- *whether or not the parents have been informed of the intention to refer to social work.*