



## **Leeds District Safeguarding Arrangements Police Attendance at Child Protection Conferences**

Date of this document – 01.08.12

Date Reviewed – 16.10.13

Document review date – 16.10.15

## **1. Background.**

---

- 1.1. There are well established and clearly documented interagency procedures that detail the framework around which agencies deliver and co-ordinate the initial operational response in cases of suspected child abuse. This protocol does not seek to change those arrangements.
- 1.2. Where, following the initial safeguarding response, agencies judge that a child may continue to, or be likely to, suffer significant harm local authority children's social care should convene a child protection case conference.
- 1.3. The aim of the conference is to enable those professionals most involved with the child and family, and the family themselves, to assess all relevant information and plan how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
- 1.4. From 6/5/2011 the three Leeds Divisional Safeguarding Units were co-located at Milgarth police station and integrate their children's safeguarding processes more closely with the Child and Public Protection Unit at Weetwood police station.
- 1.5. Currently there are in excess of 150 child protection case Conferences (Initial and Review) each month and this represents a significant increase on levels experienced over the course of the past 5 years.

## **2. Purpose of this Protocol**

---

- 2.1. The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that the police contribution to Child Protection Conferences fulfils our statutory safeguarding responsibilities thereby meets the needs of individual cases whilst maintaining sufficient resilience to deliver the wider operational safeguarding responsibilities required of the integrated Leeds District Safeguarding Unit.
- 2.2. This protocol will be monitored as part of the LSCB audit programme

## **3. The Initial Child Protection Conference**

---

- 3.1. The initial child protection case conference brings together family members, and those professionals most involved with the child and family following enquiries completed under section 47 of the Children's Act 1989.
- 3.2. Its purpose is:
  - to bring together and analyse in an inter agency setting, the information which has been obtained about the child's development needs or the parents' or carers' capacity to respond to these needs to ensure that the child's safety promote the child's health and development.
  - to consider the evidence presented to the conference and taking into account the child's present situation and information about his or her family history, make judgements about the likelihood of the child suffering significant harm in the future and decide whether the child is continuing to, or is likely to suffer significant harm: and

- to decide what future action is required in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, including the child becoming the subject of a child protection plan, what the planned development outcomes are for the child and how best to intervene to achieve these.

#### **4. The police role and attendance at Child Protection Conferences**

---

- 4.1. The police often hold a wealth of information concerning conviction history, non conviction information and incident based intelligence. Such information is often directly relevant to the assessment of risk within the child safeguarding arena.
- 4.2. All such relevant information will be shared at conferences except that information which is operationally sensitive or where disclosure may potentially compromise a criminal investigation.
- 4.3. Any such issues will be brought to the attention of the conference Chair by way of a confidential addendum to the police report.
- 4.4. All those in attendance at conferences should be there because they have a significant contribution to make arising from professional expertise, knowledge of the child, or both.
- 4.5. The police may potentially have contributions to make in one or both of these areas; however, in other cases police involvement/knowledge of the child or family may be negligible.

***Professional agencies who are invited to attend should make every effort to do so, but if unable to, they should submit a written record and, wherever possible, a well briefed agency representative should attend to speak to the report (Working together to Safeguard Children 2010).***

- 4.6. A representative (police or support staff) of West Yorkshire Police **will attend** initial child protection conferences in the following circumstances:
  1. the child(ren) are the **subject to current investigation** by the police concerning physical or sexual abuse within the family.
  2. the children have previously been the subject of police investigation concerning sexual or physical abuse within the family and there is clear evidence of evidence of an escalation in risk of significant harm.
  3. cases involving an active police investigation of suspected **wilful** neglect.
  4. cases where the reason for conference arises out of child(ren) being placed in police protection (i.e. the police initiate the safeguarding process as a result of a critical event).
  5. complex/serious domestic violence where DV co-ordinator's have **current** direct involvement with the family in order to manage risk.
  6. conferences arising from the presence or association of a registered sexual offender within the household.

7. other cases subject to direct negotiation between the Chair and CPPU/Safeguarding DI where there is a clear and evidenced need for the police to attend.
- 4.7. As a minimum, West Yorkshire Police will provide a comprehensive written report in respect of invitations received to all initial child protection conferences and all review child protection conferences.
- 4.8. West Yorkshire Police will not routinely attend review conferences unless designated as part of the core group and child protection plan and there continues to be active involvement.

## **5. Administrative requirements**

---

- 5.1. Under these arrangements the CPPU at Weetwood will fulfil a SPOC function for all case conference invitations for West Yorkshire Police.
- 5.2. Under the integrated safeguarding arrangements in Leeds the allocation of research, report writing and attendance will be co-ordinated via a safeguarding tasking process to ensure a co-ordinated response between Integrated Safeguarding Unit and CPPU resources.
- 5.3. In order to properly inform the management decision on police attendance at conferences it is important that invitations are sent to the police by secure e-mail at the earliest opportunity by the Integrated Safeguarding Unit.
- 5.4. To facilitate preparation of the Police report at least 5 working days notification would be required before an Initial Child Protection Conference and 10 working days notification for Review Child Protection Conferences. Any exceptions to this to be discussed in advance between the CPPU duty sergeant and the Conference Chair as to how the information will be shared.
- 5.5. The invitation will include sufficient information on the reason for the conference being held and the full details of all child and family members to whom the conference relates.
- 5.6. This information is essential in ensuring the accurate application of the attendance criteria.
- 5.7. A written report to conference will be forwarded to the Integrated Safeguarding Unit no later than 24 hours prior to a scheduled conference.