

SECTION 8

MANAGEMENT OF AND SHARING OF INFORMATION ON CHILDREN SUBJECT TO CHILD PROTECTION PLANS

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SECTION 8

RECORD KEEPING OF CHILDREN SUBJECT TO CHILD PROTECTION PLANS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

A formal record that a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan will be recorded on the Local Authority's I.T. System (CareFirst) by the Independent Reviewing Service of the Safeguarding Business Unit following the decision-making at the Initial Child Protection or Review Conference.

8.2 THE RECORD

The purposes of maintaining records of children subject to a Child Protection Plan are:-

- a) To provide a record of all the children and young people resident in Warwickshire who are considered to be at continuing risk of significant harm and for whom there is a Child Protection Plan.
- b) To provide a record of all the children and young people placed in Warwickshire by other Local Authorities or Agencies who are subject to a Child Protection Plan outside the County.
- c) To provide a central point for speedy enquiry about children thought to be at risk of significant harm. The collation of such enquiries could lead to initiation of Child Protection procedures.
- d) To identify the need for an Inter-Agency Child Protection Plan which incorporates a review and monitoring process.
- e) To provide a central point for speedy enquiry regarding children thought to be exposed to abuse or at risk of abuse. The collation of such enquiries could, when thought to be a sequence of repeated injuries or events, lead to initiation of the Child Protection procedures.

8.3 MANAGING AND PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT A CHILD WHO MAY BE SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

The record provides a central point of speedy enquiry for professional staff who are worried about a child. Enquiries must be concern-led rather than a general checking activity, as the enquiries about particular children are also recorded.

The records can be accessed between 9am and 5.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9am and 5pm on Friday, by contacting the Independent Reviewing Service **(01926 410410)**. Outside normal office hours, and at weekends and Bank Holidays, access is through the Emergency Duty Team **(01926 886922)**.

The recipient of the enquiry will not provide an immediate response, but will ask for the phone number and will ring back with the information when the recipient has been able to check the phone number as a bona-fide source of an enquiry to the records.

The records can be accessed by professional staff from agencies who are represented member agencies of the WSCB. Individuals making enquiries should be acting in accordance with their own agency guidelines. They will need to identify themselves and provide the reason for making the enquiry, which should be in keeping with 8.1 above. The records will be maintained in accordance with the current Data Protection legislation. Information or enquiries made concerning children not subject to a Child Protection Plan will be retained under the Safeguarding Business Unit guidelines.

If an enquiry is made about a child and the child's case is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the enquirer should be given the name of the child's Social Worker and they will be informed of this enquiry so that they can follow it up. If an enquiry is made about a child at the same address as a child who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan, this information should be sent to the lead Social Worker of the child known to a Children's Team. This enquiry will be recorded together with the advice given to the enquirer. In the event of there being a second enquiry about a child who is not known to a Children's Team, not only should the fact of the earlier enquiry be notified to the later enquirer, but the Designated Manager in the Safeguarding Business Unit will ensure that the Operations Manager for the locality will consider whether this is or may be a child in need.

8.4 MANAGING THE RECORD OF CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

The Warwickshire Child Protection Record is maintained by the Independent Reviewing Service. This service has responsibility for keeping the records accurate and confidential and to ensure that responses are made only to legitimate enquiries.

Access during office hours is through this team on:

01926 410410

Evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays, access to the Child Protection Records can be made through the Local Authority Emergency Duty Team on:

01926 886922

8.5 CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

A child will only be subject to a Child Protection Plan on the decision of a Child Protection Conference. Conferences should consider the following question when determining whether a child should be subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Is the child at continuing risk of significant harm?

The test should be that either:

- the child can be shown to have suffered ill-treatment or impairment of health or development as a result of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect, and professional judgement is that further ill-treatment or impairment is likely; or
- professional judgement, substantiated by the findings of enquiries in this individual case or by research evidence, is that the child is likely to suffer ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development as a result of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect.

The Conference will also give the same consideration to siblings and other children in the household and will consider if they need to be subject to a Child Protection Plan. The legal definition of harm can be found in Appendix 4.

8.6 RECORDING CATEGORIES

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve actual or likely physical harm to a child or failure to prevent harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely persistent emotional ill treatment of a child as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it might occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual abuse of a child or adolescent. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, abusive images or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

The 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 and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

8.7 CHILDREN MOVING BETWEEN AUTHORITIES WHO ARE SUBJECT TO CHILD PROTECTION PLANS

On receipt of information from another Local Authority that a child subject to a Child Protection Plan has moved into Warwickshire, the designated manager will, on the same working day:

- a) photocopy correspondence and send to the relevant Children's Operations Manager;
- b) record details of the child on the Local Authority I.T. Systems, temporarily;
- c) pass details of child/children to the Duty Officer in the Independent Reviewing Service in order for Receiving-in Conference to be considered on the same working day.

The agenda for the Receiving-in Conference will consider:

- Background to the original decision to formulate the Child Protection Plan.
- Original protection plan;
- Changed circumstances.

If a child subject to a Child Protection Plan from Warwickshire moves out of the County, the Children's Team will ensure that:

- a) contact is made with the Independent Reviewing Service who will telephone the relevant Designated Manager elsewhere with information about the child's move, immediately following this with written confirmation;

- b) following this initial contact by the Independent Reviewing Service, liaise with operational staff in the new area about the interim arrangements for the implementation of the Child Protection Plan takes place, pass on all information so a risk assessment can be made; and
- c) clear agreements are made with Core Group members about appropriate liaison with their respective counterparts in the other area.

The Independent Reviewing Service will

- a) telephone the relevant designated manager with information of the child and the proposed move;
- b) confirm the move to the designated manager in writing.

On receipt of information that a Receiving-in Conference has been held in the new authority, the Independent Reviewing Service will:

- a) Discontinue the Child Protection Plan on the child on the Local Authority I.T. system on the same working day;
- b) confirm this decision in writing to all original Conference members.

8.8 CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN WHO GO MISSING

When a child subject to a Child Protection Plan goes missing, the lead Social Worker or the Independent Reviewing Service must be informed immediately:

- The lead Social Worker for the child should notify the Independent Reviewing Service;
- The Independent Reviewing Service, in consultation with the lead Social Worker, will organise an urgent Conference to make recommendations about alerting systems;
- Consideration should be given to contacting the Inland Revenue who can lawfully provide limited information through the Child Benefit Office where all immediate sources of information have been exhausted. (LA SS letter LASSL (2005) 3;)
- Following the Conference, the Independent Reviewing Service will notify all designated managers of the details of the missing child;
- On notification of a child from another area who is missing, the Independent Reviewing Service will ensure the details are included on the Local Authority I.T. system (CareFirst).

8.9 SHARING OF INFORMATION WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Monitoring the safety and well-being of children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan when they move to another area or placements, especially outside Warwickshire, involves careful exercise of judgement as to what information needs to be passed on to agencies in other areas, by whom this should be forwarded, and at what speed. It is therefore essential that there is effective communication between WSCB agencies involved with the family. This will enable joint decisions to be made and will keep agencies informed of the current situation.

The local Children's Team will be informed of the presence of a child in their area who is subject to a Child Protection Plan in Warwickshire and where the arrangement involves any degree of risk, it is the responsibility of all agencies concerned to identify what information needs to be passed on to the other area. Where children accompany their family on brief holidays, perhaps in the company of relatives, and where there is no suspicion that the children are unlikely to return home, the agencies involved may decide that the level of risk is such that no information needs to be passed to their counterparts in the area where the break is taking place.

The Children's Operations Manager will ensure this information is communicated to the local Children's Services Department in the area in which the child is staying. When a child moves permanently to another area, or their parent(s) leave the area on an indeterminate basis, it is essential that immediate communication takes place between Warwickshire agencies and those in the area where the child is currently domiciled. Usually each team or agency will liaise with their opposite number, i.e. the local Children's Team will work with the corresponding team in the new area, and the Police, Health and Education representatives will inform their local counterparts. Particular vigilance should be taken with children of Travellers who move between Authorities.

Information about safety issues must be passed on explicitly and at the earliest available opportunity. This will include whether the parents or carers of the child(ren) concerned have ever physically injured, or threatened to harm the child(ren), or themselves, or professional staff. All agencies must be provided with specific details of any previous injuries, including as to whether any adult concerned was successfully prosecuted or cautioned for inflicting them. This will include details of domestic violence incidents, whether or not these were witnessed by children.

It is also essential to provide details of the family's pattern of contact and co-operation with professional agencies, including:

- whether appointments are kept, or whether contact is avoided;
- whether parents notify agencies of their whereabouts, or whether they disappear and then need to be traced;

- whether they receive support from their families and friends, or whether they are isolated;
- whether they are prepared to work with staff allocated to assist them or whether they are known to be dishonest in their communication.

The Children's Operations Manager will ensure that other information will be made available to the area where the child is currently domiciled in order to assist with the assessment of risk to be discussed at the Receiving-in Conference. This will include the minutes of all previous conferences, risk assessments, child protection plans and action plans arising from Strategy Discussion Meetings held under Child Protection Procedures. Domestic violence issues, Police involvement, substance and alcohol misuse, and any previous relevant psychiatric history or learning disabilities should also be notified. Where permission needs to be obtained to release relevant reports the Children's Operations Manager will ensure this is arranged as quickly as possible.

It is essential that information about the child's health, including any concerns about developmental delay, non-accidental injuries, failure to thrive, feeding difficulties and details about premature birth, must be recorded and collated swiftly and accurately, with information shared regularly by all concerned.