

## Multi Agency Compliance and Engagement in Child Protection Processes.

### Summary of key learning for effective practice

Multi-agency audit of multi-agency compliance and quality of engagement in:

- Strategy discussions (incorporating MASH and area teams)
- Child and family assessments
- Child protection conferences, core groups and child protection plans

**The audit was undertaken in January 2025 by members of the Performance and Quality Assurance (PQA) subgroup of the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership (IOWSCP)**

#### Multi-Agency Collaboration, assessments and meetings

- **Ensure sufficient agency checks** for strategy discussions, including where relevant wider partners, where possible, such as midwifery, probation, adult mental health, inclusion, housing, and domestic abuse services.
- **Ensure information sharing and exchange within child protection conferences and core group meetings with relevant wider partners, as appropriate such as** probation, adult mental health, inclusion, housing, and domestic abuse services.
- **Ensure invites and minutes** of meetings such as strategy discussions, child protection meetings, core group meetings are shared with all relevant professionals in a timely manner.
- **Think beyond the generic term of “health”** to support the right health practitioners are engaged in safeguarding processes. Confirm which health provider and discipline the “health” attendees are representing for e.g. 0-19 service, sexual health, midwifery
- **Ensure all decisions, reasoning and analysis is formally recorded**, particularly when there are subsequent meetings. i.e. a second strategy discussion
- **Keep child focused when developing actions in plans.** Make sure you are hearing the voice of the child, which can sometimes be overshadowed by the voice of the parent/carer.

- **When out-of-hours strategy discussions take place**, and there is no health representative and often no further information from other agencies, it should be considered whether there needs to be a follow-up strategy discussion with the required representatives the next working day.

## Child-Centred Approach

- **Seek parents and children's views individually** during section 47 enquiries.
- **Keep the voice of the child** central to and reflected in your assessments. Child and Family assessments are written to the child and family.
- **Recognise and respond to children as victims of domestic abuse.** Ensure children access support services for domestic abuse. As professionals, we must respond, even when children appear to be doing well i.e. good attendance at school and achieving well.

## Professional Relationships and Continuity

- **There can be a very positive impact of established relationships** when there is continuity of the same social worker, teacher or health visitor, for example and other professionals.

## Professional Curiosity

- **Remain [professionally curious](#)** when parents appear to comply with plans. Always consider what is the child's lived experience, to ensure you remain focussed on the impact of the child. Be alive to [disguised compliance](#) and professional over-optimism.
- **Consider the impact on the child of [unidentified/connected adults](#)** such as stepparents and new partners of the parents and carers. What is their view of the child, what role do they play? What is the impact on the child?

## Further Considerations

- **Cultural Competence and Sensitivity** - Use relevant community resources/**support** such as local faith and community groups to help sustain change for the family.
- **Note and mitigate the challenge for children in repeating their story** on numerous occasions when there are multiple referrals to service and support, including mental health support.

## Areas of further interest identified

- **Non-Engagement:** Fully consider what are the reasons behind family non-engagement? Is the child not ready to engage? Are they being supported or discouraged to engage? Are they able to get to appointments? Are parents views and feelings taking precedent over children e.g. parents not wanting to have services involved due to past experiences. What is the child's view of their situation and needs?
- **Recognise and respond to parental factors and Structural issues** - including domestic abuse, mental ill health and poor quality or unstable housing situations should be considered and responded to as part of planning for children.
- **Community:** Ensure we collectively consider, promote and utilise community groups to help support and bring around sustained change for families?
- The importance of understanding, documenting and responding to the child's lived experience.
- Practitioners should be aware there where bail conditions may be coming to an end, this may increase risk to a child/young person due to increased belief from some family members and perhaps practitioners that the risk has decreased or that an alleged perpetrator is not guilty of the offence. **Bail conditions cannot be relied on as a mechanism to safeguard children.**

## Supporting Resources

- ➔ [Inter-Agency Referral Form \(IARF\)](#)
- ➔ The [Hampshire and IOW Threshold Chart](#) for assessing level of risk/concern.
- ➔ The IOWSCP provides a free, multi-agency, [training](#) programme for professionals who work with children and families on the Isle of Wight.
- ➔ Resources to support [working with children with additional needs \(including complex needs and disabilities\)](#)
- ➔ [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- ➔ [Day in my life tools](#): individual documents for - Unborn baby, Baby, Preschool child, Child, Child with disabilities, Adolescents - to support gaining an overview of a child's daily lived experience
- ➔ [HSCP and IOWSCP Practice Principles for Chronology Template](#)

## Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton ([HIPS](#)) Procedures

- ➔ [Injuries in Non-Mobile Infants](#)
- ➔ [Unborn/Newborn Baby Safeguarding Protocol](#)
- ➔ [Child protection Section 47 Enquiries Procedure and Strategy Discussions](#)
- ➔ [Safeguarding Children as Victims of Domestic Abuse](#)
- ➔ [Working Together to Resolve Professional Differences \(Escalation and resolution\)](#)

## Hampshire and IOW Toolkits

Wide range of [IOWSCP toolkits](#) developed to aid professionals to better understand and respond to safeguarding concerns, including:

- ➔ [Safeguarding Adolescents toolkit](#)
- ➔ [Safeguarding Infants toolkit](#)
- ➔ [Adopting a family approach toolkit](#)
- ➔ [Hampshire and Isle of Wight Neglect toolkit](#)
- ➔ [Child Exploitation toolkit](#)
- ➔ [Child Sexual Abuse toolkit](#)
- ➔ [Understanding Unidentified Adults toolkit](#)
- ➔ [Learning from reviews toolkit](#)