



PRACTITIONER BRIEFING

Audit: Quality of Referrals to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

The audit formed part of the IOWSCP's multi-agency audit plan for 2023/24 and examined 12 referrals to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub between 1st July 2023 – 1st September 2023.

The audits are used as a window into current practice, identifying best practice and emerging themes across the cases examined where further practice development is needed.

Quality of referrals is an important area for the IOW Safeguarding Children Partnership to consider. The multi-agency inter-agency referral form (IARF) and the Public Protection Notice (PPN) used by HIOW Constabulary are structured to make sure that MASH fully understands concerns for a child and can make appropriate decisions to safeguard and support the child.

It is very important that referrers complete the referral form as much as possible by completing the form as fully as they are able to. This ensures MASH can make proportionate decisions.

Key messages for practitioners when making referrals to MASH:

Remember: the voice of the child: this includes the child's presentation/demeanour, observations of the child, what they say and how, when and where they say it. Share what is known of the child's lived experience.

Health, Home And Happiness are three key headings that may help you when thinking about how to record the voice of the child.

Be Specific: Where known be sure to include dates and times of significant incidents, be clear about family relationships and connected adults, in particular names (where nicknames are used) and detail your concerns.

Acronyms: Don't use them. The use of acronyms, particularly those from your own agency is unhelpful and should be avoided.

Use And Reference: local tools and resources within the referral process and the Inter Agency Referral Forms (IARFS) – see supporting resources section of this document.

Repeat Referrals: Repeat referrals that were sharing no new information were noted in the audit. If you require an update about the referral you have submitted, and have not received referrer feedback, please email mash@iow.gov.uk

Physical Abuse: Revisit the definition of physical abuse in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

If You Do One Thing:

Use and reference the [Hampshire and Isle of Wight Threshold Chart](#) when making a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

STRENGTHS FROM THE IOWSCP CASE FILE AUDIT

- ✓ Family details were generally completed and there was evidence of open, honest and transparent discussion with parents regarding the need to refer, where appropriate.
- ✓ The level of detail regarding the concern the referrer was worried about was considered sufficient in the majority of referrals.
- ✓ There was evidence within some of the referrals of use of tools and resources, these included the HIPS Unborn/Newborn Baby Protocol, the HIPS Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF), Hampshire and Isle of Wight Thresholds Chart and the Brook Traffic Light tool.
- ✓ The audit identified good examples of timely referrals, recording of the voice of the child and sharing of a detailed family history, including the identification of risk.
- ✓ In two referrals there were excellent examples of professionals responding carefully and thoughtfully to children and their initial disclosures. There was clear evidence of practitioners thinking about the environment the child would be most comfortable in and what play activity may be helpful and the presence of an adult they are known to be familiar and happy with.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- The audit considered three referrals that included concerns regarding physical abuse of children.
- The definition of physical abuse in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) is “a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.”
- **In all circumstances where it is considered that the physical punishment of a child may be unreasonable/abusive, practitioners must ensure they call the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and discuss their concerns, and following this, complete and submit an Inter-Agency Referral Form (IARF).**

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- * [Hampshire and Isle of Wight Thresholds Chart](#)
- * [IOWSCP workforce development](#) offer – including training regarding the role of MASH and how to use the Brook Traffic Light tool, Safeguarding Infants eLearning.
- * [Child Exploitation](#) toolkit including the [Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework](#) (CERAF)
- * [HIPS Unborn/Newborn Baby Safeguarding Protocol](#)
- * [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- * [Hampshire and Isle of Wight Neglect toolkit](#) and the [Guide to Recognising Neglect in Children](#)
- * [IOWSCP website, including guidance and toolkits and links to HIPS Safeguarding Procedures](#)

January 2024 *Updated May 2025