



GUIDANCE ON RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS ON AN OPEN CASE

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Introduction

The allocated social worker and supervisor are in the best position to undertake informed decisions with regard to the progression of a case. Where there is an escalating concern supervision is the most appropriate forum for this to be discussed and actions taken forward to address the need. Where there is a CP incident/allegation on an open case it is more likely that a child or young person will disclose their concerns to a social worker who knows them well.

Process for responding to child protection concerns identified on an open case

Where child protection concerns are identified by a case holding Team in Children's Social Services; i.e. Children & Families Teams; Disabled Children's Teams; Sensory Team and Asylum Teams (UASC), this procedure should be followed:

1. Where the case holding Social Worker is alerted to a child protection concern, they need to create a Contact in Liberi immediately and discuss with their supervisor or in their absence the duty manager for the day. They should select Duty Manager assessment and link to existing referral.
2. If the case holding Social Worker is unsure whether new information constitutes a child protection concern they must consult with their Supervisor in the first instance. If there is still some uncertainty then a consultation should be sought from the Central Duty Team, who will record the consultation on the child's Liberi record.
3. The Contact should clearly and concisely set out the concern, including: who the information has come from, if the concerns relate to an incident (including the date of the incident if applicable) or whether it relates to continuing or increasing concerns.
4. If the concerns have been highlighted by an additional worker (i.e.SWA), the details of the worker should be provided, including contact details
5. The Team Manager will assess the information and make a decision whether a Strategy Discussion needs to be convened. This decision must be entered in the Duty Senior Assessment Form. The reason for the decision must be recorded clearly on the Reasons for Decision Box (including the reasons for any action not taken)

Process for Responding to Child Protection Concerns Identified by workers in Catch 22.

Where child protection concerns are identified by professionals working in Catch 22, the following procedure should be followed;

1. Where the case holding Social Worker/Key Worker is alerted to a child protection concern, they need to complete a Contact Form in Liberi immediately, selecting duty Senior Assessment and Link with existing referral. The Team Manager must, in consultation with the relevant Assessment and Intervention Team(AIT), agree the onward activity and select appropriately, making clear the reasons for the decision and those involved in the decision making. The Manager within the AIT will then manually start the Strategy discussion. .
2. If the case holding Social Worker/Key Worker is unsure whether new information constitutes a child protection concern they must consult with their Supervisor in the first instance. If there is still some uncertainty then a consultation should be sought from the Central Duty Team, who will record the consultation on the child's record.
3. The Contact form should clearly and concisely set out the concern, including: who the information has come from, if the concerns relate to an incident (including the date of the incident if applicable) or whether it relates to continuing or increasing concerns.
4. If the concerns have been highlighted by an additional worker, the details of the worker should be provided, including contact details

Child Protection concerns identified by Additional Workers

Additional workers within Adolescent Resource Centre Teams or the Family Group Conference Service, who identify concerns on an open case, should share the information with their supervisor/line manager in the first instance. The concerns should be recorded on a case note, including an account of decision making. If concerns remain, they should be shared with the case holding social worker, or in their absence, their line manager. The case holding Social Worker is responsible for discussing this information with their supervisor, and deciding whether the threshold is met to complete a Contact on Liberi and following the process as outlined above.

If there is any disagreement during the course of identifying concerns as to whether a case meets the threshold for considering under the child protection procedures, the matter should be escalated initially to the Team Manager, and after this, if there is still no resolution, to the Service Manager.

Process for Responding to concerns raised by Occupational Therapists.

Should a CP Concern be raised by an Occupational Therapist in respect of a child open to them, the worker should inform their manager immediately of their concern and this should then be discussed with the relevant SCS Manager. If the child is severely disabled and meets the criteria for a Social Work service within Disabled Children's Team then the OT referral will be closed and the child will be referred to Central Duty by the Disabled Children's Team to be allocated to Disabled Children's Team for a Social Worker and the CP referral will be progressed by the Disabled Children's Team. The OT will be entered on Liberi as an involvement and will continue to work with the family.

If the child is not severely disabled and does not meet the criteria for a Social Work Service from the Disabled Children's Team then the OT referral will be closed by Disabled Children's Team and the child will be referred to Central Duty and then on to the appropriate AIT for the CP referral to be progressed. The OT will be entered onto Liberi as an involvement and will continue to work with the family.

Where there are concerns about a disabled child who has non disabled siblings then Disabled Children's Team will take the lead in the Strategy discussion and consider the non disabled children. AIT will be invited to the Strategy and if the non disabled children are in need of safeguarding they will then be referred to Central Duty and a referral will be open to AIT.

Process for Responding to concerns raised by external agencies on open cases

Systems and processes in respect of the notifying of the identification of concerns on open cases by partner agencies will not change. That is the professional will consult with their manager and speak with the social worker to consider the most appropriate approach. Where the concerns are of a child protection nature and the threshold to consider a Section 47 have been met, the process will be managed by the allocated team, who will where appropriate complete the child protection concern on open case exemplar and convene a strategy discussion to consider and plan a Section 47 Enquiry

If the CP concern is raised by a member of the public or another agency then Central Duty should contact Disabled Children Team to discuss the case and agree which team the child should be referred to. At that point the Disabled Children Team will close the OT referral, Central Duty will open a new referral and then allocate to the appropriate Team.