**West Sussex – Practice Guidance**

IROs are qualified social workers with at least five years’ experience, and who have acquired the right skills to carry out this role.

**Child Protection Advisors (CPA) Guidance**

**Preparation**

Read Social Work Report and Mapping:

The “Social Workers Report to ICPC/RCPC” episode should be completed by the Social Worker and signed off by the Practice Manager 3 working days ahead of an ICPC and 5 working days ahead of an RCPC. At a time that is convenient to the CPA they must read the “Social Workers Report to RCPC report and Signs of Safety Mapping Document, which includes the Child and Family / Child Protection Plan. It may be helpful to write some notes to refer to in the Conference, e.g. date and time, genogram, summary of issues, questions for SW, thoughts about a plan etc.

We cannot cancel a Conference on the grounds of missing paperwork without the authorisation of a Service Lead, and the CPAs are keen to encourage these reports arriving on time for the benefit of families as well as making it easier for the CPA to prepare for the Conference.

When we become aware that reports haven’t been prepared in the statutory timeframe we will call or e-mail the Service Lead directly (and cc the SW) to request their support in having the report completed as soon as possible.

Read professional reports:

The professionals invited who are unable to attend are asked to submit a report: these can arrive in advance or on the day (and sometimes after!). The CPA will read all reports submitted to Conference, checking the name, DOB and address are correct. You may see these on MOSAIC in advance or they may be emailed to you, in which case forward them to CPU for uploading to MOSAIC. The safeguarding administrator will print reports so you have hard copies to refer to in the Conference.

Check for genogram

The Social Worker should complete a Genogram, either using the function on MOSAIC or by creating on a Word document or a handwritten version added to the children’s file under Documents.

Check for chronology workflow

Every child should have a “CYP Chronology” workflow with a Word document attached with a chronology of the child’s life. This should be updated prior to each Conference.

Check for core groups (if RCPC)

Every child subject to a Child Protection Plan should have a minimum of two core group meetings between Conference and these are recorded on “Core Group Meeting” workflow. This workflow must have attached a mapping document which has been reviewed during the meeting with parents/carers and professionals: the progress of the Child Protection Plan should be recorded and the Danger Statements and Safety Goals amended if appropriate. The workflow must be signed off by the practice manager. The Social Worker should then send these out to the core group members. At each subsequent core group the progress is added to the previous record so there is a running flow of progress recorded for the CPA to read for the RCPC. The dates should not be changed, but any changes added and reasons why so the CPA can see what has not been achieved and why.

Check for CP visits (if RCPC)

Every child subject to a Child Protection Plan should be seen at least every 10 working days. These visits are recorded on a “Child Protection Visit” workflow.

Prior to ICPC, you may like to check when the child was last seen, to be sure the Social Worker has an up to date view of the situation.

If the CP visits are not being completed within timescales, this needs to be discussed in the Conference and recorded in the minutes.

Check for NHS numbers are recorded

The CPA will check for the NHS number and if not recorded as the health professionals to provide it and record it.

Split / advocate / interpreter / professional slot / bail conditions / security issues / observers?

The Social Worker should advise of any special circumstances that need to be considered and you should agree with the Social Worker and family how these will be addressed. For example if father is on bail for assault against the mother, the Conference should be ‘split’ by inviting parents in separately and sharing information twice. The Social Worker should consider arranging an interpreter when English is not the first language and arrange for reports to be translated if required.

Transfer-In Conferences

If the CPA believes a transfer-in Conference should not have been accepted prior to the ICPC taking place, they should email the CA&I and FSP Service Leads.

Raise immediate concerns with SW and PM

In preparing for the Conference, the CPA should alert the Social Worker and Practice Manager immediately if there are concerns about anything, e.g. no invites have been sent, missing reports, poor mapping, poor plans.

Decision to cancel Conference.

Only a Service Leader can cancel an ICPC (or RCPC if it cannot be rescheduled within timescales).

If the CPA believes the Conference cannot go ahead due to lack of SW report, this must be discussed in advance with the CPA’s Service Lead.

If a Social Worker requests a Conference is moved, e.g. for Court, family can’t attend:

* If there is capacity to move within timescales, the CPA can agree
* If there is no capacity to move within timescales, the Service Lead for children’s Services must approve

If the CPA wants to move a Conference, e.g. for training, leave, appointments:

* If there is capacity to move within timescales, the CPA can arrange directly with CPU
* If there is no capacity to move within timescales, ask the CPA Service Leader for approval

Cancelled Conferences:

* Book a date for as soon as you can, in consultation with CPU (to check availability etc.), remaining within timescales (CPU can provide you with that information).
* Review the safety plan, and record that you have done this. (to be agreed where/how)
* Notify CPU, so they can update the C20 spreadsheet (RCPC timeliness).
* Complete this template and send to CPA Team Manager:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MOSAIC no (eldest child) | Family Name of eldest child | ICPC or RCPC | Date of Conference | SW team | Concern |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Pre-Meet**

Introductions / names

The parents are invited to attend 20 minutes prior to the Conference start time. This gives them time to settle, read the report again, talk to the Social Worker and talk to the CPA. The CPA introduces themselves to young people/ parents/ carers/ family.

Purpose of Conference

The CPA explains their role and the purpose of the Conference: Sharing info / multi-agency, creating a care plan, making a decision as to whether it is Child Protection Plan or not, choosing a category of risk.

Timeframe

The CPA will check how much time they have available to them, check they have child care arrangements, explain how long the Conference could take, try and agree an approximate finish time, agree how they will be updated if they need to leave before the Conference has finished. The CPA must explain that if they need to take a break they only have to ask. If the family have any learning difficulties it may be appropriate to plan a break.

Have they read the report – timing, factual amendments

The CPA will check that they have read the report/mapping written by the Social Worker. The CPA will confirm when this was shared with them: it should be available 3 days ahead of an ICPC and 5 days ahead of an RCPC. The CPA will ask for their views on the report and check for any factual errors. The CPA will explain that these need to be shared in the Conference so their views can be recorded in the record of the Conference.

Any issues: hearing / reading / language / advocacy?

The CPA will check whether they have any issues with hearing, reading, language etc. and check they have use of interpreter or advocate if appropriate.

Child/YP attending

The CPA will meet with the child/young person on their own, unless they decline to do so, to discuss their views about the Conference and what they want to say during the Conference. This needs to take into consideration age and understanding, issues for discussion, timing. If a baby /young child are bought along, consideration needs to be given to who will care for the baby/young child and take out of the Conference room if appropriate.

All young people over 12 years old should be referred to Advocacy Service prior to the Conference. The purpose of advocacy is to enable the child to participate in the Conference as they choose. The advocate:

• works for the child

• is child led

• has a duty to share all information they hear with the child

• The advocate will not offer an opinion, side with professionals or parents, or take on tasks in a child protection plan.

• The advocate will not provide other on-going advocacy between Conferences.

* The Young Person can decline an Advocate

Extended family/friends support – role in Conference / distribution of records

The CPA needs to establish the role of other people who have come along; what is their connection to the child, do the parents agree to their attendance, do they wish to participate and contribute, are they there simply for support.

Legal support or Advocate

Parents/carers are entitled to bring a solicitor or Advocate to a Conference if they wish. The solicitor/Advocate will not contribute to the Conference, other than to advocate for their client. They do not get given reports or sent copies of minutes by the Local Authority.

**Chairing Conference**

Roles and responsibilities

Chair the meeting

Before participants enter the room, the CPA with support of the safeguarding administrator will check the physical environment, e.g. room temperature, where to seat anyone who may need to exit the meeting early, use of telephone Conference equipment on occasion.

The CPA will open the meeting with an explanation of their role as separate from Children’s Services and the other agencies, and welcome participants acknowledging that family members may be dealing with difficult emotions, and offer a break if needed.

The CPA will refer to health and safety arrangements as needed e.g. bail conditions, fire exits, toilets, child care issues.

The CPA will introduce any special considerations e.g. whether involvement of young person is appropriate throughout the meeting, advocate, working with an interpreter, if any family members have a hearing, reading, learning difficulty, and ask members to avoid use of abbreviations or jargon.

The CPA reminds supporters and observers of their roles, and clarifies who will be given a record of the meeting.

The CPA will introduce the agenda, purpose of the Conference, confidentiality, anti-discriminatory practise and complaints. The CPA will read out the Confidentiality Statement and make sure they understand it.

There is an Agenda which is put out for all to read. There is a CPA version which includes some notes/prompts to assist.



Check addresses

The CPA asks family and professionals if there are errors to spelling of names and addresses and asks Social Worker to check professional addresses are correct on Mosaic.

The CPA asks family members if there are any changes to the children’s household composition, or changes in parents’ relationships. If not known, check on parental responsibility.

NB If this is not explicit by the Social Worker, the CPA will highlight if the child has been subject of a CPP previously, when, and for what reasons.

Quoracy decision

The CPA will check if the key people with the right information are present (eg if required, that a mental health professional, or relevant report, is present). Sometimes there are agency representatives but none of these individuals have direct knowledge of the children. Additional information may sometimes be available from a recent core group or report.

If the Conference is deemed inquorate:

* Book a date for as soon as you can, in consultation with CPU (to check availability etc.), preferably within 4 weeks (as per Pan-Sussex Procedures).
* Review the safety plan, and record that you have done this by creating a case note.
* Notify CPU, so they can update the C20 spreadsheet (RCPC timeliness).
* Complete the relevant MOSAIC tasks
* Complete QA monitoring form in Part 2. Then at the reconvened Conference complete QA monitoring form b in Part 2 by clicking ‘create’.

It was agreed an inquorate Conference is classified as a meeting postponed due to lack of attendees, 24 hours before or on the day of the meeting. The process if a Conference goes inquorate is the Safeguarding Administrator allocated to the meeting will send the CPA a draft letter, which you then check and confirm before they send out the letter/invite with the most up to date safety plan and place the letter in ICPC/RCPC Part 1 workflow. ICPC/RCPC Part 2 workflow is left for the reconvened Conference.

If a meeting is postponed due to lack of paperwork or sickness this is classified as a cancelled meeting and will be rescheduled by CPU admin.

Ensuring everyone present contributes

Invite comments at the end of each stage of the Conference, and ask specifically if an agency representative has not offered information.

Care planning

Actions : what the family will do

The CPA will make it explicit that this is about the family’s safety plan - what family members will do towards meeting the safety goals. Invite plans from both parents and acknowledge the importance of the changes they offer /do not offer to make. Who else in the family/friends can help? When will these actions be done realistically? Add names and dates to actions.

Actions: what professionals will do

The actions should be relevant to the safety goals. If something else is seen as important for the child’s safety, this may indicate the danger statements and safety goals need to be updated by the core group. Add names and dates.

For ongoing actions, it can be useful to use a phrase such as “ to be monitored regularly starting at the core group on x/y/z”

The CPA will invite professionals to consider the bottom line - if x happens/does not happen then y will be done. There may be several behaviours or actions that are critical to the child’s safety, and these will be identified e.g. if there is another incident of domestic abuse, the local authority will consider seeking legal advice.

The CPA and note-taker will ensure tasks are given to the allocated Social Worker; if a new worker has not been identified then tasks will be allocated to the respective Group Manager.

Escalation/ 3-way

The Service Lead for Family Support and Protection has asked that all children who come onto a CPP for a second or subsequent time are discussed at a 3-way meeting between SW, PM and GM. In order to support with this, it is agreed that CPA will add an action to the CPP at all ICPCs on repeat cases, that this 3-way meeting should take place. The CPA will also email the Group Manager to advise them of this action. This includes when the risks are different on the second occasion to the first and includes if previously had CPP in another Local Authority (although not at transfer as this counts as one period).

The CPA will also email to PM/GM when they hold a third review to prompt a three-way meeting.

Permanency

The Permanency Planning Co-Ordinator asks that all CPAs (and IROs) are mindful of the need for permanency and could bear this in mind and direct practitioners to having a Permanency Planning Meeting on such cases.  The aim is to have a PPM prior to issuing proceedings for the children who are subject to CP plans and the PLO process and a Service Lead decision has been made to issue.

If a Guardian asks the CPA their opinion regarding a case in proceedings, they should be redirected to the IRO team.

Cases for monitoring

* N164 - children on CPP for over 2 years ( monitor from 15 months)
* N165 - Children on repeated CPP within 2 years
* Off CPP at first RCPC (3 months)
* Any other cases of concern e.g., drift in plan, lack of progress, high risk

Decision making

The CPA asks parents and professionals their views on scaling and professionals about whether a child meets or does not meet the criteria for a child protection plan (CPP). The professionals, in giving their views, will usually identify what the area of harm they consider the child is suffering.

In identifying a category, the CPA will make it clear what the abuse is, by commission or omission. More than 1 category can be selected, or a secondary area of abuse may be highlighted in the CPA’s decision.

If the CPP criteria are not met, the parents may be offered an alternative plan and may decline that offer of support. A child in need (child and family plan) will follow the same safety goals and planning model as a CPP.

If an Early Help plan is considered most suitable, a key professional will need to volunteer to make the referral.

Feedback questionnaire

Feedback forms/questionnaires have been created for family and professionals and are distributed and collated by the Safeguarding administrators. CPU then gathers this data to inform the Team Manager.

Family will receive the forms after every Conference and professionals will receive a feedback form after Conferences at four points in the year over a one week period, i.e. first week of March, June, September and December.



**After the Conference**

Decision Document

* Where possible, notify CPU of Conference outcomes by e-mail rather than phone. This enables them to keep a record; Please entitle the e-mail ‘Conference outcome’. CPU are still happy to take these outcomes by phone if necessary. Information that is required: quorate, CP or not, category and date of RCPC
* Add a case note advising the child is now on a CP plan, ticking ‘significant information’, if for any reason the Decision Document cannot be completed same day.
* Complete Decision Document (aim for same day, but at least within 24hrs) and mapping (within 48 hours)
* The safeguarding administrator will send you a MOSAIC request asking you to check the Decision Document. They will have filled in all the details (but do double check) but the CPA must fill in the box with ‘reason for decision/threshold for significant harm and impact for each individual child ’ and check the category of the CPP. You then send request back to confirm it is done. They will then generate letters and print Decision Document for circulation to all those that attended and on invite list.
* They will type up the amendments you have made in the Conference to the child protection plan and then email to you to check. If you have made written notes on the care plan the safeguarding administrator will photocopy your notes and take away for typing up. You will need to check this and make any necessary changes and the CPA then uploads the mapping to Part 2. Then you let the safeguarding administrator know it’s done (IM or email) and they will print the care plan and send with the Decision Document.

Chairs Record (within 10 working days)

* The safeguarding administrator will email the CPA the draft Chairs Record and send a MOSAIC request asking the CPA to review the record. The CPA then reads and amends accordingly before confirming this is done at the bottom. The CPA then uploads to Part 2 and send MOSAIC request to CPU to send out the Chairs Record – the CPA needs to add to the task exactly who it should be sent to and which attachments.
* General rule of thumb is to send Chairs Record to those that attended and those who sent apologies. NEVER send Police report to family, only send to Professionals.
* You will find the standard of note-taking varies greatly – some will need little change, some may need a lot and this is an on-going challenge!
* If you have had a split Conference, you will need to check if the Chairs Record also needs to be split, i.e. a second version with some confidential information taken out. In which case make sure both reports (labelled differently) are uploaded and be clear with CPU which Chairs Record is going to which parent.

QA Form

* + This form is completed after every Conference, including inquorate. This can be completed at any time but must be completed by the time Chairs Record is sent out so Part 2 can be closed.

1. If an ICPC does not lead to CP Plan, inform relevant Service Lead and copy Team Manager with reasons why.



**Reference Points;**

Pan Sussex Child Protection Procedures - <http://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/>

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board - <http://www.westsussexscb.org.uk/>

WSCC Children’s Social Care Policy and Guidance - <https://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/cpd/content_detail.asp?contentid=826#sthash.cCq7X4f6.9Grs8h2E.dpbs>

Signs of Safety - <http://www.signsofsafety.net/>