

## Bristol City Council Children and Families Services Practice Direction.

**Practice Direction regarding:** S.20 arrangements for children following removal from a person with Parental Responsibility (PR) under police powers of protection.

**Date of implementation:** 01<sup>st</sup> March 2020

**Practice Change required:** To ensure that care arrangements for children removed from a person with PR under police powers of protection are legally compliant.

This practice direction is written to provide clarity on the expectation for legal advice to be sought when a child is removed from a person with PR (usually a parent) and not returned to the care of a person with PR by the point at which the police powers of protection expire and where S.20 paperwork has not been signed by the person with PR from whom child was removed.

1. Legal advice should be sought within 24 hours for children removed under police powers of protection who have not returned to the care of a person with PR within 72 hours of the child being placed under police powers of protection and a person with PR has not signed S.20 paperwork.

The purpose of the legal advice will be to establish whether the arrangements made for the child are lawful, to establish whether or not the child's care arrangement fall under S.20 of CA 1989 and to agree whether any immediate legal action is required.

This legal advice should be sought via phone or email and a record of the advice recorded on the child's LCS record within 24 hours. This should be recorded as a case direction by the Team Manager/Consultant SW/Practice Lead.

2. For any child not returned to the care of a person with PR within 24 hours after the police powers expire, and where legal advice has confirmed the child is in the care of the local authority under S.20; 'Looked After Child' processes should be initiated on LCS. An Independent Reviewing Officer should be allocated to the child and an initial Child in Care review meeting should take place within 20 days.
3. Any child who has not returned to the care of a person with PR and for whom no person with PR has signed S.20 paperwork **must** be reviewed at Legal Panel within 14 days of the date the police instigated their police powers.

**Quality Assurance of practice change:** Compliance with the Practice Direction will be monitored by the quality assurance framework as well as within deep dive audits and monitoring of requests to legal panel.

**Service Areas / roles applicable:** The Practice Direction is applicable to all social work teams within Children's Services.

**Date of Change:** 01/03/2020 **PSW:** James McFeat

**Objective:** Practice Directions are intended to provide clarity of any change of expectations in practice OR clarity on elements of practice where there is confusion. Practice Directions are intended for practitioners and managers. Practice Directions enable an audit trail of change in practice expectations to be maintained.

**Process:** Children's Management Team will consider and approve PD's. The PSW will issue and ensure that Practice Directions are entered onto Tri-x as appropriate.