

To: All CSC Staff

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Our Ref: GH/dh

Date 14 December 2021

Dear Colleagues

Re: Refreshed Dispute Resolution Policy: responding to good practice & concerns

I hope this finds you well, and that you're finding chances to at least pause and draw breath to look after yourself and those around you. This unprecedented time of hybrid working, being in the office, undertaking visits and working remotely, calls for us all to find different ways to build and maintain key relationships. I appreciate it's not always very easy, but I appreciate all the effort that everyone is making.

I am writing today about the refreshed Dispute Resolution Process, or DRP as it is often called, and the refreshed guidance which is attached. It is important that everyone who plays a role in protecting and caring for vulnerable children and young people is familiar with the DRP. The refreshed guidance has been developed following consultation with a broad range of people from across the department, so thank you to everyone who has played a part.

When professionals encounter differences in joint working, whether it is to do with the assessment, support, planning or reviewing process, resolving the timeliness, progress and decision making for/with children, young people and their parents/carers is a key consideration. It is vitally important that we attempt to manage and resolve these differences in a respectful and constructive manner with the focus always on keeping the best interests of children and young people at the heart of the resolution process.

There are a couple of significant changes in the refreshed DRP guidance which I would like to bring to your attention. These include the detail of the informal stage of the DRP and the importance of highlighting and celebrating the many examples of good practice that we see. These changes have been informed by the consultation process and learning from our practice.

The changes in DRP guidance will come into effect from **1st January 2022** with a need for shared responsibility being taken by across the service in respect of information sharing and resolving issues impacting on children in need of protection and children in care.

To support the launch and implementation of the refreshed DRP guidance we will be facilitating joint sessions whereby Child Protection Conference Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers will attend Team Meetings across the service starting in early January 2022. This will provide an

opportunity to review the DRP guidance together and address any questions or queries you may have. The Reviewing Service Managers will consult and liaise with their fellow Service Manager colleagues across Children's Social Care to organise and co-facilitate these discussions.

Thank you for your continued hard work and commitment.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Hancock', written in a cursive style.

Gail Hancock

Interim Director for Children's Safeguarding and Care