



West Sussex Children Young People and Learning Need to Know Protocol



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1. Introduction

The Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning (DCS) holds overall accountability for the Directorate's performance and must be informed of all major incidents, situations or controversies involving services, staff, children and buildings.

This protocol sets out what the DCS needs to know in the format for the 'Need to Know' briefing. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure effective, timely and standardised reporting of serious and significant incidents relating to children and young people.

The DCS, working with the Departmental Leadership Team (DLT) and members of corporate communications team, will ensure that the Chief Executive, other corporate colleagues and elected members are informed as necessary and appropriate.

A Need-to-Know Notification must be completed as soon as possible and no later than one working day of any incident. The document must be completed by the Head of Service who forwards this via email to their Assistant Director with a summary paragraph of the reporting incident in the email.

The Assistant Director considers if the information is still required to be shared as a Need to Know and will forward on to the DCS and any other Assistant Director/Human Resources Business Partner / Communication & Engagement Team with interest in the matter and copy in the Need to Know inbox (NeedToKnow@westsussex.gov.uk). Updates to the original document will be provided as required. The 'Need to Know' is in addition to and will inform any statutory notifications that may be required. The Head of Service responsible for the 'Need to Know' must ensure that any details for any statutory notifications that may be required are included.

2. Circumstances requiring a Need to Know

2.1 Children & Young People

This is not an explicit list and there is the requirement for professional judgement to be used;

- Death of a child where the death is unexpected and unexplained and either open to Children's Services or meets threshold for investigation
- Any critical incident involving children – eg – Serious Youth Violence incident / road traffic accident

- Missing children, where the child is either in care, subject to a child protection plan or otherwise vulnerable as per Missing from Home & Care Procedures.
- Incidents that may be reported in the media, including social media platforms.

2.3 Staff (including foster carer/s)

- Unexpected death or serious injury
- Significant accidents or injuries at work. (This in addition to the corporate Health and Safety procedures which should be followed in all cases of accidents at work)
- Involvement in violent incidents
- Allegations, arrests or convictions for serious criminal offences
- Media coverage relating to members of staff where the publicity may impact on the council

2.4 Service Premises or Schools

- Death, serious accident, or injuries on local authority premises
- Cases of serious communicable diseases in schools, residential or day care premises, and including foster homes Serious or significant damage caused by floods, accidental fire etc.
- Significant vandalism or burglary
- Any incident of arson

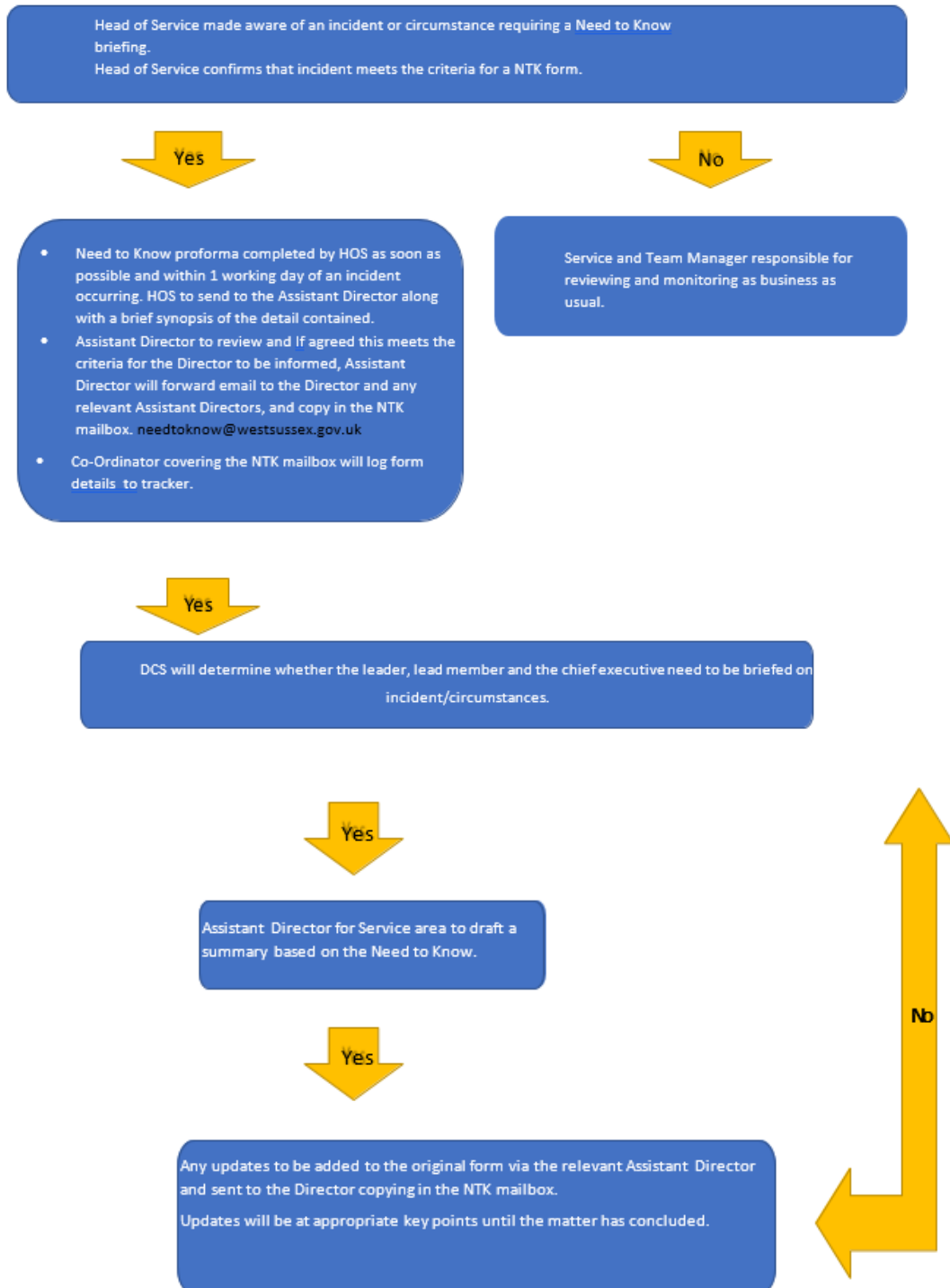
2.5 Controversies

- Major complaints implicating Children's Services
- Matters likely to attract local or national interest
- Any matter which has or is likely to attract the attention of the media, elected members or Members of Parliament
- Ofsted inspection reports of schools or services where poor performance has been identified

2.6 Significant Legal Proceedings

- Proceedings likely to attract public or media interest
- Trials relating to fraud or other serious offences committed by staff
- Proceedings with potentially high financial or policy implications; for example, threat of judicial review, civil litigations for damages, employment tribunal claims etc.
- Inquests

3. Need to Know Flow Chart and Documents



need-to-know-pro-forma

[All Need-to-Know Documents Can Be Found Here](#)

Review / Contacts / References	
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