

SOUTH WALES CHILD PROTECTION FORUM



DELIVERING PROTOCOLS GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Context / Purpose

The development of protocols to supplement child protection procedures is a requirement of “*Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*”. Nationally, we have developed All Wales Child Protection Procedures. Protocols are being developed to ensure a consistent approach to practice when there are child protection issues in specific circumstances. Some protocols will address local issues or working practices. Others will be unworkable unless agreed on an All Wales basis. There are also four active multi – agency forums in Wales that are co-terminus with police authority areas. They too will have members from other relevant organisations. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure consistency in Wales in:-

- Standardisation of practice in relation to the development of protocols
- That all organisations working with children actively work to same / similar principles
- All LSCB Partner organisations jointly own protocols and
- Become signatories

1. Ownership

1.1 Originator

Protocols can be suggested / proposed by any individual member / agencies and / or LSCB and can originate from a local need; for example recommendations from Serious Case Reviews, Inquiries or any government guidance. In the first instance the matter will be discussed as an agenda item of the regional forum who will recommend if the matter should be addressed as an All Wales Protocol or a regional one. The Chair of the Forum will make the final recommendation, which will be recorded in the minutes.

If the recommendation is for the matter to be proposed as an All Wales document, the Chair of the Policy and Procedures Subgroup will be responsible for ensuring it is put on the agenda for the next All Wales Meeting. Following a discussion at that meeting, the Chair of the All Wales Group will:

- Set up a small task group
- Appoint a Lead Officer
- Co-opt members as necessary
- Agree a timescale for completion of draft

The matter will remain the responsibility of the All Wales group until the final version is agreed by all the stakeholders.

If it is decided at the regional Child Protection Forum that it will remain a regional protocol, the matter will pass to the Chair of the Policy and Procedures subgroup to agenda for the next meeting. It is the responsibility of the Chair of that meeting to -

- Set up a small task group
- Appoint a Lead Officer
- Co-opt members as necessary
- Set a timescale for completion of draft

1.2. Named Lead Officer

The named lead officer will be responsible for liaising with other agencies as necessary, circulation of consultation and delivering the draft protocol. Ideally it should be a member of the task group.

2. Consultation

2.1 Circulation

It is essential to circulate the documentation for consultation to all relevant agencies. Please note that there are different departments within health for example that may have a more specific involvement than others. Lead officers should ensure all relevant professional groupings are consulted. Comments and amendments should be forwarded to the lead officer only who will discuss proposed changes with the task group.

2.2. Timescales

It is important that the timescale agreed is realistic and reflects the approximate time taken to complete the task. Therefore it will need to be flexible but not allow drift. This may be influenced to a certain degree by consultation and approval of other agencies. However the Lead Officer will need to be proactive in ensuring that progress is made. If for any reason this process is frustrated then the matter should return to task group for discussion on the way forward. This could include feeding back to subgroup and ultimately the forum.

3. Signatories

3.1 Status

From the outset it should be clear which organisations will need to be consulted and who will give approval. Therefore the task group should agree which protocols need signatories and which would just be ratified for approval through Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Each protocol should have a signatory sheet attached, listing name, agency and signature. The named signatory should be of status that can approve the protocol on behalf of the organisation

Once the final draft has been agreed the protocol should be circulated to all signatories, who will sign and return to lead officer. Once agreed the document should be signed off by the originating forum (eg. All Wales or regional CP Forum) to be commended to each individual LSCB. The date commended will be placed on the “footer” along with the review date. Protocols should be reviewed within the first year and subsequently every three years. The review must be undertaken by the originator forum group. The review may be very brief. It must be recorded in the minutes.

3.2 LSCB Ratification

It is the responsibility of each LSCB to approve and ratify all protocols. The child Protection Co-ordinator should ensure that LSCB has sight of all protocols, some of which will be for information only. Members of LSCB should have the opportunity to read the protocol prior to ratification. Once adopted the date of ratification should be added to the “footers”, under the commended date, but above the review date.

4 Presentation

It is important that all protocols are uniform in presentation that reflects whether it is a regional (forum) or an all Wales document. The presentation of forum protocols should be decided locally but should all be edged in the same agreed colour (red in south Wales). Some forums may have their own logo to add.

The all Wales protocols are all edged in blue and have been to date formatted by the chair of that group. Most local LSCB protocols will reflect their own logo on the front cover of the document.

5 Retention and Storage

Although individual LSCB’s will retain copies of all protocols that have been approved, there should be a central “library” of all protocols that are agreed on an all Wales or regional forum basis. These should be the responsibility of the chair of either group. It will be the responsibility of the chair to ensure that protocols are reviewed and updated.