



Pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group - Briefing for staff

The Pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group met on 4 April 2022. This briefing provides updates on changes to the policies and procedures reviewed by the group.

Professional Difference Statement

Professional challenge is an integral and critical feature of safeguarding. Having different professional perspectives within safeguarding practice is a sign of a healthy and well functioning partnership and effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between professionals. The Pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group recommend that the following statement is read out in Strategy Meetings, ICPCs and RCPCs, and any other relevant meetings:

It is acknowledged that when working in the arena of safeguarding, it is inevitable that from time to time there will be professional differences. This is a positive activity and a sign of good professional practice and effective multi-agency working. During this meeting practitioners, irrespective of their seniority are encouraged to say if they feel that decisions, practice or actions do not effectively ensure the safety or well-being of the child/children.

Cultural competency & the pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group's anti-racist statement

The Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnerships condemns racism in all its forms. The partnerships recognise the importance of their multi-agency safeguarding system being fundamentally anti-racist. Only through the eradication of systemic racism, discrimination and injustice will we be able to effectively safeguard Black children and those from other marginalised ethnic groups.

Culturally competent practice acknowledges and aims to understand the meaning of cultural identity within each individual's and family's lives. Cultural competence is being responsive to the beliefs, practices and cultural and linguistic needs of children and families. It places children's wellbeing and protection within their cultural context and, by being culturally competent, practitioners can better identify which aspects of the family's difficulties are 'cultural', which are neglectful, and which are a combination of factors.

The Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnerships have adopted a ['Cultural competency framework'](#) developed by Newcastle's Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards. It is recommend to apply these competencies to any case where there are concerns that a child or adult at risk is in need of additional support, or of protection from harm, and the child and/or their family are from a minority ethnic culture, faith group or community.

[Learning disabled parents/ carers](#)

[Valuing People](#) says that a learning disability includes the presence of:

- A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with;
- A reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning);
- which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.

Where a learning disabled parent appears not to be able to meet their child's needs, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care under the [Making a Referral Procedure](#).

The assessment should address the needs of the parent/carer to enable them to parent effectively and resources to achieve this should be provided in a format that is understood. The assessment process should be adequately reasonably adjusted, and professionals should seek support from specialist learning disability teams. Specialist cognitive /functional/other assessments may be needed to inform and assess a parent's ability to parent.

You can read more about helping parents with learning disabilities in their role as parents here - [SCIE Research briefing 14: Helping parents with learning disabilities in their role as parents](#)

[Sussex Police Protocol Allegations of Child Abuse against a Police Officer or Police Staff Member](#)

This new protocol sets out the procedure to be followed where an allegation of abuse against a child involving Sussex Police employees namely Police Officers, Specials, Police Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, or where there are concerns about that individual's suitability to work with children.

Gender Identity and Safeguarding

Gender identity is a way to describe whether someone feels most aligned with girl, boy, neither, both or without gender at all. Some children and young people are very clear on what their gender identity is and for others it may change over time through a period of exploration. These children may be trans, non-binary or gender exploring.

When children experience discomfort or uncertainty about their gender identity this can have a detrimental impact on their physical and emotional health and wellbeing as can the prejudice, discrimination and misunderstanding they may be subject to by both children and adults.

Safeguarding the mental & physical health of children and young people is paramount. Some trans, non-binary and gender exploring children and young people may be particularly vulnerable and require additional support. Whilst being trans, non-binary or gender exploring would not generally, in isolation, necessitate safeguarding intervention, neither should it be a barrier to such intervention.

[Allegations Against People who Work with, Care for or Volunteer with Children](#)

This policy has been updated to reflect new guidance for schools and colleges on dealing with 'low-level concerns'.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school or college to refer to the local authority.

Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this briefing, please contact:

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