

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

The Pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group met on 17 July 2023. This briefing provides updates on changes to the policies.

### Survey on usability of the [Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#)

58 of you responded to the Pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group's survey on how accessible the procedures website is. Whilst 90% of you said you could access all features; only half said you were easily able to locate policies and procedures.

We are working with the website provider to improve the search function and to discuss ways to improve navigation across the site.

Following your feedback we have added more information on dental neglect, we have also made clearer that [7.2 Resolving Professional Differences](#) relates to **professional** differences within the Child Protection Conference arena, and [7.14 Disagreement by Children, Young People and their families/carers/advocates](#) refers to disagreement by **family and advocates**. A 'Was not brought to appointments/meeting policy' is also in development following your feedback, and we are exploring developing a flow chart to accompany [15.5 Non Recent Abuse Allegations](#).

### **NEW** [Children/Young People Under 18 Who Become Parents](#)

Where a parent are themselves a child, in the absence of support from family or a professional network for their needs and responsibilities, their baby is likely to be at risk of significant harm.

This new policy supports practitioners to consider the welfare of both the pregnant child/young person and their baby. The policy covers children under 16 and under 18. It gives consideration as to whether or not the young person is looked after, or not, if they are in existing foster placement, and also where there are care proceedings related to the young expectant parent.

### [Safeguarding children who are absent from education](#)

To reflect changes to terminology, references to children *missing* education has been updated to read *absent* from education, across the procedures.

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

## [Forced Marriage of a child](#)

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 raised the age of marriage and civil partnership to 18 in England and Wales in February 2023. The new law expands the criminal offence of forced marriage to automatically recognise children, on account of their age, as victims of forced marriage. Children will no longer be required to prove they were coerced or pressured to marry.

The offence captures all child marriages, including those that are not religious and/or not legally recognised. This means that 16 to 17-year-olds will no longer be able to marry or enter a civil partnership under any circumstances. Previously, forced marriage was only an offence if the person used a type of coercion to cause someone to marry, or if the person lacked capacity to consent to marry under the Mental Capacity Act. The forced marriage offence will continue to include ceremonies of marriage which are not legally binding, for example in community or traditional settings.

## [Guidance on Children who present with Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)

A clearer definition of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) has been added to this policy, and the features of HSB behaviour have been updated, with signposting to [Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour \(nspcc.org.uk\)](#) for more guidance.

## [Children Living Away from Home](#)

This policy deals with the safeguarding issues that arise when a child lives away from home - whether in a Local Authority foster placement, a private fostering setting, a children's home, armed forces bases, hospital, boarding schools (including residential special schools) or custodial settings.

This policy has been updated to make clear that where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child living away from home has suffered Significant Harm, the Local Authority for the area in which the child is living has the responsibility to convene a Strategy Discussion, which should include representatives from both the placing Local Authority and the Local Authority where the child is living. There should always be a health representative in a Strategy Discussion, in most cases of a Child in Care this will be the child's named specialist nurse who will have access to the child's medical records.

Other policies which have undergone minor revisions include: [Children and Young People Susceptible to Violent Extremism](#), [Information Sharing](#), [Recognition of Abuse and Neglect](#), [Dangerous Dogs](#), [Children who Harm Other Children](#).

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