

## MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTIONS NOTE 27 - Booking of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC)

**CONTEXT:** ICPCs have to be held within 15 working days of the Strategy discussion which agreed the level of risk.

Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures give clear instructions regarding the timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs):

5.2.4 The Initial Child Protection Conference should take place within 15 working days of the Strategy Discussion or, where more than one Strategy Discussion took place, of the Strategy Discussion at which the Section 47 Enquiry was initiated.

5.2.7 Any delay must have written agreement from the authorised manager (including reasons for the delay) and Children's Social Care must ensure risks to the child are monitored and action taken to safeguard the child.

This is a very challenging timescale and in order for it to be met there needs to be very speedy action by a number of different people. This guidance is intended to make the process as clear and efficient as possible and to document any reasons for delay.

| Actions Agreed  | Manager responsible |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. The Social Worker attending a Strategy Discussion must contact the Children's Safeguarding Unit (CSU) <a href="mailto:cputeam@westsussex.gov.uk">cputeam@westsussex.gov.uk</a> on the day of the Strategy Discussion (or the next working day in exceptional circumstances) and ask for a provisional slot for an ICPC <b>if it seems likely that one will be required.</b>  | SW/TM               |
| 2. On or before the fifth working day after this contact, the Social Worker will contact the CSU again to either confirm or cancel the ICPC booking. If the Social Worker does not make contact, the CSU will contact the Social Worker to ascertain whether the booking is still required.   | SW<br>CSU           |
| 3. If the CSU offers the Social Worker a date for the ICPC which is within timescales, but the Social Worker believes the date is unsuitable, then they must discuss with and seek the view of the their team manager, or if they are not available the duty team manager, if re-arranging the date will take it out of timescales.   | SW/TM               |
| 4. ICPCs can only be agreed to be out of timescale when there is a suitable slot if it is believed that : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need for a family member to attend who cannot if the conference takes place within timescales</li> <li>• There is individual professional who is either essential to the conference process or to the making of an effective safety plan</li> </ul> Further information is considered essential to the decision making of the conference or the making of an effective safety plan. |                     |

| <b>Actions Agreed</b> |  | <b>Manager responsible</b>             |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 5.                    | <p>If the Team Manager agrees with the social worker's recommendation then they should email the relevant Service Manager (or an alternative if their direct manager is unavailable) stating the reason why the ICPC should go out of time and the details of the interim safety plan. They should copy the CPA team manager into this email.</p> <p>ICPCs should only be moved out of timescale with the approval of a Service Manager who will give this approval by replying to the above email, adding comments if necessary.<br/>A copy of this email should be retained on the child's file.</p>   | TM/SM                                  |
| 6.                    | If a delay is approved then the CPA Team Manager will notify the CSU of the decision, thereby allowing the CSU to make an alternative booking.   | CPA TM<br>CSU                          |
| 7.                    | If a delay looks likely for reasons other than a social work request then there are a number of agreed strategies to achieve the timescales wherever possible. These are set out below.  | CSU<br>IRO TM                          |
| 8.                    | <p>If the ICPC cannot be booked within timescales due to non-availability of Chairs (CPAs), including 'bank' staff, the CSU will contact the Team Manager(s) for the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to check their availability. If no CPAs or IROs are available, the CSU will alert the CPA Team Manager to the situation. The CPA Team Manager will identify alternative options such as moving RCPCs that will remain within timescales, or chairing the conference him/herself in urgent cases.</p> <p>If lack of CPA and IRO availability makes it impossible to schedule the ICPC within timescales, the CPA Team Manager will seek permission of the Principal Manager, Children's Safeguarding or Head of Safeguarding to take the ICPC out of timescales.</p> | CSU<br>CPA TM<br><br>CPA TM<br>PM (CS) |
| 9.                    | <p>If a CPA or IRO has been identified to chair the ICPC, but no suitable conference venue is available, the CSU will notify the CPA Team Manager who will escalate to the Corporate Accommodation Lead who may need to cancel another meeting to accommodate the ICPC.</p> <p><a href="mailto:ResourceTeamAllHubs@westsussex.gov.uk">ResourceTeamAllHubs@westsussex.gov.uk</a></p>  | CPA TM                                 |
| 10.                   | If this is unsuccessful the CPA Team Manager will seek permission of the Principal Manager, Children's Safeguarding or Head of Safeguarding to book the ICPC out of timescales.  | CPA TM<br>PM (CS)                      |
| 11.                   | When an ICPC is booked out of timescales using the above processes, CSU must complete all columns of the 'Out of Time' spread sheet, with the exception of column 'I' ('Reason') which is completed by the CPA Team Manager.   | CSU<br><br>CPA TM                      |

### **Kevin Peers**

Interim Director of Children's Services

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