

Agency Roles and Responsibilities

This briefing has been developed following the findings of a [Child Safeguarding Practice Review](#) to inform practitioners of the roles and responsibilities of some agencies working with children and young people in the Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) area.

All organisations and agencies that work with children share an obligation to safeguard and promote their welfare. For many organisations, this commitment is underpinned by specific statutory duties. Further information on roles and responsibilities can be found [Agency Roles and Responsibilities](#)

Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership



Dorset Police

Police officers and police staff are well placed to identify welfare needs, safeguarding concerns and when a child may need protection from harm. This may be through involvement within a crime or a non-crime related incident (such as being a missing person) or it may be when attending a crime or incident involving others, but when there is a child present or in the household. Children who are encountered as offenders, or alleged offenders, are entitled to the same safeguards and protection as any other child and due regard should be given to the welfare at all times. For example, children who are apprehended in possession of Class A drugs may be victims of exploitation through county lines drug dealing. All police forces should have officers trained in child abuse investigation in order to thoroughly investigate crimes of abuse/sexual abuse against children.

The police will often hold important information about children who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm as well as those individuals who cause such harm. This information will also likely include risk factors associated with child exploitation and child sexual exploitation. The police should always share this information with other organisations where this is necessary to protect children, with information mainly being shared through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or through Information Requests, Strategy Discussions, Initial Child Protection Conferences and Repeat Child Protection Conferences. Similarly, the police expect that other organisations will share information to enable the police to carry out their duties and when necessary to protect children.

In certain circumstances the police have a power to remove a child to suitable accommodation under Section 46 of the Children Act 1989, if they have reasonable cause to believe that the child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm. Section 46 gives police the power to enter a premises if there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Powers under Section 46 can only be used in emergency situations and should only be used, when necessary, wherever possible, the decision to remove a child from a parent or carer should be made by a court.

Youth Justice Service (YJS)

Previously known as Youth Offending Teams, YJS's are multi-agency teams responsible for the supervision of children subject to Out of Court Disposals and statutory court disposals.

They are a multi-disciplinary team which includes youth justice officers, restorative justice specialists, parenting workers, education and employment workers, police officers, a probation officer, nurses, speech and language therapists and a psychologist.

The team works with children who have committed criminal offences to help them make positive changes and to reduce the risks to them and to other people. They also work with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

They contact all victims of crimes committed by the children they work with. They offer those victims the chance to take part in restorative justice processes so we can help to repair the harm they have experienced.

The organisations in the YJS partnership also work together to prevent children entering the youth justice system, to improve the quality of our local youth justice system and to ensure that young people who work with the YJS can access the specialist support they need for their care, health, and education.

NHS roles

NHS England is responsible for ensuring that the health commissioning system as a whole is working effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are responsible for the provision of effective clinical, professional, and strategic leadership to child safeguarding, including the quality assurance of safeguarding through their contractual arrangements with all provider organisations and agencies.

ICBs should or have in place the expertise of designated professionals such as, designated doctors and nurses for safeguarding children and for looked after children (and designated paediatricians for unexpected deaths in childhood).

All providers of NHS funded health services should identify a dedicated named doctor and a named nurse/midwife or professional to lead on safeguarding children.

ICBs should employ a named GP to advise and support GP safeguarding practice leads. GPs should have a lead and deputy lead for safeguarding, who should work closely with the named GP in the ICB.

BCP Children's Social Care (CSC)

Under the Children's Act 1989, CSC has a duty to give children the support and care they need, with a range of services for children, young people and their families. They also provide information on a variety of services for children and young people, including voluntary organisations. They carry out assessments, so children and families get the right support they need for their child's health and development. They help children and young people who are in need because:

- their family is in crisis.
- their parent has a disability.
- they are abused or at risk of abuse or neglect.
- they lack family support or are homeless.
- they are emotionally and behaviourally disturbed or in trouble with the law.
- they are disabled or have a serious illness.
- they are cared for away from their family.
- they need support after leaving the care of the local authority.

They work with children and families and other organisations to give the best support for families locally.

BCP Independent Reviewing Service

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service is part of the Quality Assurance Service in BCP CSC. IROs and Child Protection Chairs carry out statutory reviews for children who are in care and those who are subject of a child protection plan. The service is responsible for promoting and developing high standards in the review process through quality assurance and monitoring of children's services and partner agencies.

IROs and child protection chairs are very experienced social workers whose role is to oversee care and child protection plans for children and young people ensuring that all plans for children are progressed in a timely way without undue drift and delay and that the child/young person's voice is heard throughout the process. IROs/child protection chairs act as strong advocates and support for all children in care so that their voices are at the centre of the planning and review process. IROs and child protection chairs ensure that all children are made aware of the role of the independent advocate and their entitlements to one and can, if requested by a child or young person, make a referral to the advocacy service on their behalf.

NHS

Health professionals are in a strong position to identify welfare needs or safeguarding concerns regarding individual children and, where appropriate, provide support. This includes understanding risk factors, communicating and sharing information effectively with children and families, liaising with other organisations and agencies, assessing needs and capacity, responding to those needs and contributing to multi-agency assessments and reviews. A wide range of health professionals have a critical role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including: GPs, primary care practitioners, paediatricians, nurses, health visitors, midwives, school nurses, those working in maternity, Children and Young People's Mental Health Services, allied health practitioners youth custody establishments, sexual, alcohol and drug services for both adults and children unscheduled and emergency care settings highly specialised services and secondary and tertiary care.

All staff working in healthcare settings - including those who predominantly treat adults - receive training to ensure they attain the competencies appropriate to their role and follow the relevant professional guidance.

