

DSCP Partnership Briefing

March-April 2020



As you will be aware we are planning for significant changes to the way we currently deliver our services and carry out our statutory safeguarding duties and responsibilities across the partnership. The situation is evolving all the time and we are reassessing this on a daily basis.

The guidance in this briefing note is based on the current circumstances and our knowledge of demand and capacity but will inevitably be subject to change, sometimes quickly.

As you would expect, we are cancelling all non urgent meetings and we are looking to move as many multi agency meetings on line and on to virtual platforms as we can where it is safe to do so. I have attached some more detailed information for colleagues about how we will use Microsoft Teams to set up virtual meetings which is done via invites to your email addresses.

Managers across agencies are reviewing children's circumstances and looking to determine which children are our collective priority in the event that we need to reduce our service offer.

We have agreed as a partnership to use existing team around the family arrangements/core groups and care teams to share information about visits to children and families to minimise the need for several agencies to all need to visit the same families in a short time period. Where we can be confident that a child has been seen and spoken to and the family has been visited by a professional within the multi agency team, for some families this will be an appropriate level of contact under these emergency planning scenarios and will enable us to rationalise our staffing resources to prioritise those most in need or most at risk. We are asking that these arrangements are managed locally within exiting multi agency arrangements and lead practitioners coordinate this work with agreement about which professional is best placed to visit. All professionals can then record this visit and the outcome on the child's record within their own agency to provide some assurance that the child has been seen/family visited.

We currently intend to continue to carry out multi agency ICPC and RCPC as well as Looked After Reviews for children as usual but using virtual platforms. I have attached a detailed note from the IRO service about the plans for how this will work.

We would also ask that colleagues within multi agency teams around families proactively share information about families who they know are self isolating so that we can keep our systems up to date and avoid unnecessary home visits and contact.

As we need to continually reassess risk and re prioritise our work we are committed as a partnership to develop integrated ways of working within localities to ensure that we can continue to provide a safeguarding service to those children who are most at risk. We will continue to plan across the partnership for what this service offer will look like in the coming weeks and keep you updated about this work.

If there is a need to close a building then we will work to ensure that we get this information to colleagues as quickly and efficiently as possible to avoid wasted time but would ask that there is a recognition that the situation is changing quickly and sometimes with little notice.

We are aware that there will be some children at risk of significant harm living in families who are self isolating and we will manage this on a case by case basis as this arises to determine how we can keep children safe as well as protecting our staff from unnecessary exposure to the virus.

As a partnership we will meet weekly to review our respective business continuity plans and staffing capacity. We will provide a briefing note to all staff after these meetings.

Thank you all for your work in supporting vulnerable children and families during this very challenging time.

Best Wishes

Helen Fergusson

Chair of the DSCP Embedded Learning Sub group on behalf of the Partnership