

**REGIONAL CORE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES – WHAT ARE THE MAIN DIFFERENCES?**

**The Core Policy and Procedures have been developed using the ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures and the DoH policy document Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People 2016. The Policy and Procedures are contained on an electronic platform.**

**The Core Policy and Procedures include the following:**

Responding to Abuse and Neglect

Referrals

Child Protection Investigation

Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI)

Child Protection Case Conferences

Child Protection Register

Appeal Process in relation to a Child Protection Case Conference

Management and Use of Information about Persons of Concern

**What are the main differences?**

**General amendments to the Core Policy and Procedures:**

* Children and young people at the centre of interventions**.**
* Include links to relevant documents, protocols and guidance.
* Reflect changes in practice, take cognizance of legislative changes, regional protocols and guidance.
* Takes account of issues relating to section 75 equality groups.
* Highlights the importance of consent and details principles of information sharing.
* Reflect current practice and terminology.

**Specific Amendments to the Core Policy and Procedures:**

**Responding to Abuse and Neglect**

* The categories/type of abuse includes Exploitation and changes in relation to Neglect in accordance with Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People 2016.

**Referrals**

* Additional information in regard to the making, receiving and outcomes of child protection referrals.

**Child Protection Investigation**

* Separate Policy and Procedure in relation the management of child protection investigations.

**Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI)**

* Identifies UNOCINI Referral and Assessment Framework as the Regional platform to consider the needs of children and young people in need of protection.

**Child Protection Case Conferences**

* Prior to discharge of the child/young person a multi-disciplinary meeting/discussion should take place to share information which includes both hospital and community professional staff. A clear discharge plan with arrangements in place to protect the child/young person’s welfare on return to the community should be agreed by the multi-disciplinary team.
* Includes links to the Regional Pre-birth Risk Assessment and Expectant Mother UNOCINI Referral.
* The responsibility for convening a Child Protection Case Conference lies with the Health and Social Care Trusts and removes this responsibility from the NSPCC to reflect practice in Northern Ireland.
* Education representative for Initial Child Protection Case Conferences has been revised.
* The need to invite Independent Guardian for Separated Unaccompanied Child/Young Person, child victim or potential child victim of Human Trafficking or Modern Slavery once these are established.
* Professionals should inform the case co-ordinator if they have ceased involvement with the family/associated adult.
* Sharing Case Conference Reports increased to two working days.
* If a Child Protection Case Conference cannot proceed, those present must agree interim safeguarding arrangements to ensure that the child/young person is protected.
* The minutes of Child Protection Case Conferences will be distributed within 15 working days.
* Specific guidance around the sharing of information from the Case Conference with parents.
* Clearer guidance in relation to chairing Core Groups.
* Following deregistration any Child in Need family support plan agreed should be reviewed within 3 months.

**Child Protection Register**

* More detailed guidance regarding circumstances when children on the Child Protection Register move between Trusts and Jurisdictions.
* Reflect the changes brought about by the Electronic Care Record and access to the Register.
* Reflect the new process in relation to missing persons.

**Appeal Process in relation to a Child Protection Case Conference**

* A new improved Child Protection Case Conference appeals process. Any request to appeal the decision of a Child Protection Case Conference should be forwarded in writing to the Child Protection Case Conference Chairperson within 15 working days of the Child Protection Case Conference.

**Management and Use of Information about Persons of Concern**

* Information regarding Persons of Concern. This chapter ensures continuity with the arrangements and approaches in the PPANI manual of practice. Key elements of Sharing to Safeguard are included as well as judicial guidance in JR 57 on relevant considerations to be taken into account regarding the sharing of information. It also links with the child protection disclosure scheme which post-dates previous guidance. Note: there will be further reference to this section in the revision of DoH Guidance on information sharing.