

# Police/Children's Service Joint Protocol: Specialist Police Units and Children's Social Work Teams

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Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires every Children's Service authority and partner agencies to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children' and that named agencies have a 'duty to co-operate' in the discharge of those functions. Police authorities and the chief officer of police for the relevant police area are named partners of the Children's Service under the terms of the Act.

This Haringey joint protocol is in line with the requirements of the pan-London Child Protection Procedures.

## **Terms of Reference & Thresholds for Investigation**

The police services responsible for investigating child-related incidents in Haringey fall under two different police commands. The main command is the Borough Operational Command Unit (BOCU) led by a Chief Superintendent who has overall responsibility for all policing in the borough. The police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) is part of a pan-London police command – the Specialist Crime Directorate – and is commonly referred to within the police as SCD5.

### **1. POLICE CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATION TEAM (CAIT)**

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of CAITs to record and investigate all suspicions and allegations of crime that come within the scope of the term 'child abuse', in co-operation with Local Authorities and other appropriate agencies and in the following settings or circumstances:
- 1.1.1 Suspicions or allegations of abuse occurring within the family, including:
    - Any family or extended family member (eg. parents, siblings, cousins etc)
    - Any person living in the same household
    - Any person visiting the house regularly (eg. neighbours or family friends)
    - Any person having care responsibility at the time of the alleged offence (eg. teacher, health or youth worker, babysitter etc)
  - 1.1.2 Suspicions or allegations of abuse committed by a carer, where the victim is under 18 years old.
  - 1.1.3 Suspicions or allegations of abuse concerning a child in care, where the abuser is alleged to be the carer or an employee of the care organisation (eg. foster carer, children's home employee)
  - 1.1.4 Suspicions or allegations of abuse where the victim is an adult and the abuse occurred when he or she was a child in any of the above circumstances

- 1.1.5 Where similar offences committed against unrelated children come to notice in the course of an investigation
- 1.1.6 Allegations categorised as parental abduction, as outlined in the Child Abduction Act 1984
- 1.2 The term 'investigation' in this context includes all investigations into allegations or suspicions of crime in the above circumstances **whether or not they attract social work interest** under the Children Act 1989, and not to investigations or assessments carried out solely by social services under S.47 Children Act 1989.
- 1.3 The CAIT will not actively investigate all allegations of crime. A decision will be made by the Referrals Desk Sergeant in consultation with a social work Team Manager as to whether an investigation will proceed jointly or as a single agency investigation.
- 1.4 Crimes that are always investigated jointly are:
- ◆ All sex offences
  - ◆ Assault Grievous Bodily Harm
  - ◆ Assault Actual Bodily Harm
  - ◆ Serious neglect/cruelty
  - ◆ Fabricated/induced illness
  - ◆ Parental abductions
  - ◆ Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)
  - ◆ Assault with no visible injury but suspect is a professional, eg. Teacher, childminder, foster carer, medical staff, police officer etc.

The following "minor" crime with aggravating factors/risks will also be investigated jointly:

- ◆ Minor assault with aggravating factors such as weapon or implement used; non-mobile baby; victim has disability; injury suspicious and victim non-verbal; repeat victimisation
  - ◆ Minor or non-visible injury, but the following serious factors that may have a bearing on the welfare of a child exist;
  - ◆ Drug or alcohol abuse which could jeopardise safety of child
  - ◆ Domestic violence which could jeopardise safety of a child; injury during domestic violence incident
  - ◆ Mental health makes suspect or victim a danger to self or others
  - ◆ History of neglect
  - ◆ Relevant previous convictions or cautions exist
  - ◆ Child has Child Protection Plan
  - ◆ Child involved in prostitution
  - ◆ Element of racial crime
  - ◆ Emotional abuse backed up by psychiatric report or other evidence
  - ◆ Any other crime where it is identified that police investigation is required to protect a child
- 1.5 Any minor crime that is not listed in 1.4 will be referred to the Children's Service and conducted as a single agency investigation.

## **2. POLICE SAPPHIRE UNIT**

- 2.1 Sapphire officers investigate all allegations of non-familial abuse or assault regardless of the age or gender of the victim. This includes allegations of rape, sexual assault, indecent exposure and any other offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Allegations involving assault in a family or carer setting fall under the remit of the Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT).
- 2.2 There are times when the remit is not immediately clear. Allegations may seem to be within the CAIT remit, but are in fact the responsibility of Sapphire – for example, where a child is exposed to risk from a known sex offender while in the company of a carer. If in doubt, a referral should be made to CAIT, who will have a dialogue with the other borough teams.
- 2.3 When a police investigation is commenced by the Police Sapphire Unit involving a child victim and/or suspect under 18 (including children who are under 10 and cannot receive a criminal charge), a formal referral will be made to the Children's Service via the MERLIN CTN system. The Officer-in-Charge will also conduct a strategy discussion and/or attend a strategy meeting chaired by a social work manager in relation to that child, in line with the London Child Protection Procedures.

## **3. POLICE COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT**

- 3.1 The Police Community Safety Unit (CSU) offers support and protection to anyone targeted due to their race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or to anyone who has experienced domestic violence.
- 3.2 Domestic violence is: "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults aged 18 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality." (ACPO)
- 3.3 The CSU deals primarily with adults but often have cases referred to them where children are present. The attending officers submit a crime report that is picked up by the CSU, who will check that a CTN has been done properly and make sure that remedial action is taken if this is not the case.

## **4. MISSING PERSON'S UNIT**

- 4.1 The Missing Person's Unit investigates all reports of people that are missing from addresses in Haringey and from people that are found in Haringey. The unit also looks to find next of kin details where they are not known following sudden deaths.
- 4.2 The unit will investigate all missing children from care in accordance with the Haringey LSCB Missing Children Protocol, 'Missing from Care, Missing from Home'.

## **5. JIGSAW UNIT**

- 5.1 The Jigsaw Unit is responsible for managing registered sex offenders and potentially dangerous offenders. They will refer direct to the Children's Service in the event that

a person known to them goes to live in or frequently visit a household where there are children or vulnerable people. Their work takes place in the context of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements or MAPPAs.

## **6. SAFER SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP TEAM**

- 6.1 Safer School Partnerships are intended to *complement and enhance* existing locally based services such as Connexions, Youth Service, Youth Offending Service (YOS), Education Welfare, by developing a more robust partnership between families, police and schools. The Safer School Partnership differs from much existing and traditional practice within schools, where police officers undertake an essentially teaching role. Taking a more operational policing approach enables the police officer to become more pro-active in working with partners.
- 6.2 The unit has a police officer based in each of the secondary schools across the borough, with the exception of John Loughborough and Highgate Public School. There is, however, contact with these schools and they are included in any crime prevention initiatives.
- 6.3 In Child Protection cases, the SSP officer should inform the school's designated Child Protection officer to refer the matter to the Children's Service as soon as possible. This will ensure that the matter is dealt with as quickly as possible. The SSP officer will also ensure that a MERLIN CTN report is completed as soon as possible.

## **7. OTHER UNITS**

- 7.1 All other criminal investigation units (robberies, burglaries etc) will channel CTNs via the CAIT team when a child comes to notice that is considered to be at risk of significant harm.

## **8. POLICE BOCU REFERRALS MANAGER**

- 8.1 For quality assurance purposes, Borough CID have appointed a Referrals Manager. This officer is a Detective Sergeant and will provide a single point of contact for referring agencies for all BOCU-related investigations (2 – 6 above).
- 8.2 The Referrals Manager will also carry out regular checks to ensure that MERLIN CTNs are completed appropriately. The post does not carry direct responsibility for supervision of every investigation but can provide details of investigating officers and their supervisors.

## **9. LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICE – CHILDREN & FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK TEAMS**

- 9.1 Under the Children Act 2004, Local Authorities are required to exercise their social care responsibilities within an integrated Children's Service, bringing together education and social services under a single directorate.
- 9.2 Social workers have lead responsibility for S.47 investigations; the police lead criminal investigations.

- 9.3 Social workers have the following responsibilities to protect children from significant harm:
- Assess, plan and provide support to children in need, including those suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
  - Make enquiries under S.47 (Children Act 1989) wherever there is reason to suspect that a child in its area is at risk of significant harm
  - Convene and chair child protection conferences
  - Maintain the child protection register
  - Provide an allocated social worker for every child on the child protection register
  - Ensure that the agencies who are part of the Child Protection Plan co-ordinate their activities to protect the child;
  - Undertake a core assessment in relation to each child on the register, ensuring that other agencies contribute as necessary;
  - Convene regular reviews of the child's progress through both core group and child protection conference review meetings;
  - Instigate legal proceedings where required.
- 9.4 Investigations will be undertaken jointly with the police if they meet the criteria in 1.4 above. Single agency enquiries undertaken by social workers will usually be those involving the following:
- ◆ Purely emotional abuse without apparent physical indicators
  - ◆ Physical abuse resulting in minimal or no apparent injury, unless in pre-mobile babies
  - ◆ Minor or periodic neglect that is insufficient to justify prosecution
  - ◆ Indirect suspicions of sexual abuse
  - ◆ Over-sexualised behaviour of a child
  - ◆ Where an offender that poses a risk to children moves into a household but no allegations are made

If at any time it becomes apparent that any of the joint investigation criteria are met, contact should be made immediately with the police CAIT.

## **Referral Criteria**

### **10. REFERRAL TO THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE**

- 10.1 Whenever children come to the notice of the police in circumstances giving cause for concern – **whether victims, suspects or witnesses** - a referral must be made to the Children's Service. All referrals will be channelled through the borough CAIT via the Merlin CTN system. Referrals concerning non-child protection related offences will be handled by the Police BOCU Referrals Manager but will still be channelled through CAIT via a CTN.
- 10.2 Social workers have a responsibility to:
- Make enquiries where it is suspected that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from significant harm (Section 47, Children Act 1989)
  - Safeguard and promote the child's welfare (Section 17, Children Act 1989)

- 10.3 Referrals to the Children's Service will normally occur in one or more of the following circumstances:
- A child is the victim of abuse<sup>1</sup>, assault or neglect and/or related to a victim of abuse, assault or neglect;
  - A child is the victim of domestic violence and/or related to a victim of domestic violence;
  - A child is subject to an investigation and is known to the Children's Service or to CAIT – ie. Their name, or the name of a sibling, is on the Child Protection Register (CPR);
  - A child is the suspect for an offence.
- 10.4 Referrals are made to Children's Service Referral & Assessment Teams on the **Merlin CTN Form**<sup>2</sup>, which will be accompanied by the following documentation:
- A summary of any police checks undertaken;
  - A risk assessment category of high or low;
  - Any strategy discussion between the police and social services that has already taken place;
  - Notification of whether this is information exchange only or a formal notification.
- 10.5 If the Merlin report refers to a crime investigation, details of the officer in the case will be noted on the form with a contact number wherever possible. Social workers should contact the officer, **not the referral desk**, for information about the case.
- 10.6 Social work team managers will always hold a strategy discussion or call a strategy meeting where there are concerns, to enable the agencies involved to share the information they hold. For criminal investigations undertaken by borough police units, records of strategy discussions must be recorded on CRIS.

## 11. REFERRAL TO THE POLICE

- 11.1 Social workers have a duty to refer matters to the police that they believe amount to a crime or a suspicion of crime. There will be times when a social worker will ask for information to help make an assessment.
- 11.2 Cases that involve the police normally fall into the following categories:
- Referrals that are allegations or suspicions of crime and which require a police decision relating to criminal investigation;
  - Matters that are subject to information exchange only;
  - Taking out police protection.
- 11.3 A police referral must be made whenever there an allegation is made that may also constitute an allegation of crime, irrespective of whether the threshold is met for a S.47 investigation.
- 11.4 Referrals and exchanges of information between social workers and the police are recorded on a series of different forms:
- **Form 87A:** Used by social workers to make a referral to the police and to confirm telephone referrals;

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<sup>1</sup> Abuse can be sexual, physical or emotional or a combination of two or more of these

<sup>2</sup> The Merlin CTN Form used to be known as the Form 78

- **Form 87B:** Used by social workers to request information either for a S.17 assessment of need or an emergency placement away from home. Any request for information that is refused will be confirmed in writing, giving the reason for the refusal;
- **Form 87C:** Used by police as checklist for carrying out relevant checks;
- **Form 87D:** Used to fax to social workers with results of checking process.

11.5 The CAIT Referral Manager is responsible for determining whether or not the referral is a crime or a request for information. The Referral Manager will address the following three questions:

- Whether the information received amounts to a crime or suspicion of crime;
- Whether or not to investigate the crime. This decision will be informed by a strategy discussion/meeting with a Team Manager, Children's Service;
- Whether any emergency action is necessary to safeguard children and preserve and secure evidence.

11.6 No case that is simply a request for information from the Children's Service will be accepted unless it is made in writing on Form 87B.

## 7. CONTACT DETAILS

### Police BOCU

**BOCU Referrals Manager** 020 8345 0734

#### **Haringey Sapphire**

Office 020 8345 1954  
 Fax 020 8345 1991  
 Sapphire Officers 020 8345 1994  
 Head of Team 020 8345 1999

#### **Haringey CSU**

Office 020 8345 1939  
 Fax 020 8345 1991  
 Head of Team 020 8345 1999

#### **Haringey Missing Person's Unit**

Control Room (for reporting missing children) 020 8345 1212  
 Missing Persons' Unit (for updates) 020 8345 1809

**Haringey Jigsaw Team** 020 8345 1932

**Haringey Safer Schools Partnership** 020 8345 2145

### Police Specialist Crime Directorate

#### **Haringey CAIT**

Referral Manager 020 8345 2246  
 Fax 020 8345 2290  
 Head of Team 020 8345 2241

### Haringey Children's Service

**Referral & Assessment Team (Tottenham) 020 8489 5402/03**

Fax 020 8489 5447  
 Senior Team Manager 020 8489 5425

**Referral & Assessment Team (Hornsey) 020 8489 1856/1806**

Fax 020 8489 1751  
 Senior Team Manager 020 8489 1283

**Emergency Duty Social Work Team 020 8348 3148**

Child Protection Advisors (Tottenham) 020 8489 5426/5462  
 Child Protection Advisors (Hornsey) 020 8489 1061/1866/1192  
 Head of Child Protection 020 8489 1177