**Protocol for historic child abuse allegations involving West Sussex County Council staff and establishments**

**Definition of historical abuse**

*An allegation of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse, made by or on behalf of someone who is now 18 years or over, relating to an incident that took place when the alleged victim was under 18 years of age.*

**Context**

The West Sussex County Council (WSCC) response to allegations of historic child abuse is informed by the Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures (section 8.17 and Section 8.21). This protocol works in conjunction with these procedures and provides a clear pathway for early decision making regarding child abuse allegations involving West Sussex County Council staff and establishments.

**On receipt of historic allegations**

All referrals regarding historical child abuse should be referred to the LADO (Allegations Management Team).

It is recognised that some referrals may not go directly to the LADO and may come in via the complaints department or the Children’s Access Point (CAP).

Regardless of the point of referral, the LADO will need to be informed as soon as possible.

In line with the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures any communication which contains allegations of child abuse should receive immediate consideration as to whether the allegations warrant an immediate referral to the Children’s Access Point (CAP) for appropriate action. *If in doubt, a referral should be made.*

A decision will be made within the CAP as to what, if any, action is needed, taking into consideration any current known or possible risk to children.

If, within a complaint about poor service, there are aspects that suggest there may be underlying allegations of abuse this should be discussed with an appropriate manager (in the Customer Relations Team this would be the Social Care Complaints Manager or the Customer Relations Team Manager) who may decide to contact the complainant in an attempt to ascertain whether there is abuse being alleged.

Whatever is decided, a clear message should be given to the complainant/alleged victim that WSCC will look into their concerns; what they are reporting will not be ignored and that the council will support them as far as possible whilst a resolution is worked on together.

**Having identified allegations of abuse**

If the alleged victim appears to be still at risk and vulnerable, then consideration should be given to making a referral to Adult Services.

If there is any indication that the alleged perpetrator may still be a risk to children, then this should immediately be referred to the CAP.

If there is no current known or likely risk to others then the alleged victim should be encouraged to report the alleged abuse to the Police.

If the allegations are reported via CAP and refer to someone who was looked after by WSCC as a child, or to a current or ex-employee of WSCC the matter should be referred to the LADO whether or not there are current risks to children.

The LADO will alert the Principal Manager of Children’s Safeguarding and a multi-agency Scoping meeting will be convened.

**Multi-Agency Scoping Meeting**

A multi-agency scoping meeting will be convened within 10 working days if no current risks to children are identified.

If current risks are identified then Section 8.17 of the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures initially applies.

The LADO team will convene a multi-agency scoping meeting to include the Police, the Head of Children’s Social Care, the Social Care Complaints Manager, the HR Business Partner, the LADO and any other appropriate professionals. Where possible the LADO will also arrange for a chronology to be produced from records in time for the meeting. If this is likely to cause delay this will be completed after the initial meeting.

The meeting will determine which procedures should be followed, who will lead on this and what roles other professionals/agencies will take, who should meet the alleged victim to obtain further information, how the alleged victim should be supported and kept informed and whether an advocate is needed.

**Purpose of Multi-Agency Scoping Meeting**

* Share information, including chronology if available
* Ensure that proposed actions are clearly identified and understood by the person(s) required to undertake the actions, considering proportionate information sharing
* Agree timescales for completion of actions
* Where necessary, involve WSCC HR in making recommendations regarding possible actions under disciplinary procedures
* Coordinate support for the alleged victim, employee, foster carer or volunteer as appropriate
* Arrange any further meeting or a concluding meeting

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