



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN ARRANGEMENTS DURING COVID-19

Position Statement

Dear Colleague

In these unprecedented times, it is more important than ever to ensure that we are in touch with our most vulnerable children to make sure they can be as safe and healthy as possible. Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership is working together to ensure that our safeguarding arrangements are as clear and effective as they can be during this challenging and ever-changing period.

It is essential that as practitioners we co-ordinate our work to keep children safe, keep in touch and offer support to each other while understanding that our roles may change and adapt as we respond to the demands from Covid-19. It is vital that we consider what we can do to keep children safe, even if this is outside our normal working practice. As a partnership it is our aim to provide strong, visible leadership and to support you to fulfil your statutory responsibilities to keep children safe.

We have produced this guide to outline how our key multi-agency safeguarding processes will be delivered in the coming weeks. You should read the guide as a supplement to current [safeguarding multi-agency practice guidance](#) and [Bolton's Framework for Action](#); and in addition to any internal guidance your service/organisation has produced.

As a minimum we will review and update the guide on a weekly basis. However, it is likely to be subject to change as new risks emerge, government advice develops, and public health guidance is updated. Therefore, we would encourage all practitioners to check the partnership website regularly to ensure they are working to the current version. We are asking our partners to share the guide with you, as a minimum every week and we would encourage you, if you can, to give us your feedback, particularly if there are any gaps. You can contact us on 01204 337964 or email boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk.

Please take care of yourself during this difficult time and remember, for the latest advice and best practice on managing and responding to Covid-19, go to:- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

with best wishes

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Version Control

Version	Co-ordinator	Date	Changes
1	Shona Green	01.04.2020	N/a
2	Shona Green	06.04.2020	<p>New – Section 6 – Adult Mental Health Services</p> <p>New - Section 8 - Child Exploitation/CEAM</p> <p>Updated - Section 9 – includes new information about the locations for S47 child protection medical assessments operational from 6 April 2020</p> <p>Updated - Section 21 – now includes information on access to ‘Chat Health’, Muslim Women’s Network UK, Early Break and bereavement support</p>
3	Shona Green	27.04.2020	<p>Updated - Section 1 – now includes information on review Child Action Meetings and links to several online parenting resources</p> <p>Updated – Section 6 – includes information on Mental Health Crisis Care Arrangements for Children and Young People across Greater Manchester</p> <p>Updated - Section 20 – revised information on ME learning</p> <p>New – Section 21 – some helpful guidance from CAFCASS and Principal Social Workers Network to support effective virtual working with children and their families</p> <p>Updated – Section 22 – now includes information from Young Minds for parents, ‘Covibook’ – a workbook to help under7’s understand the virus and ‘My Hero is You’ a storybook about Covid-19 for younger children; ‘Covibook’ and ‘My Hero’ are available in different languages</p>

Safeguarding Arrangements in this Briefing

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Early Help

- If you are the lead professional, you should make an initial telephone contact with the child/family; check out how they are getting on, what's working well and what's not. If you are not the lead professional, you should make contact with the lead professional to confirm your service working arrangements, any up to date information you have about the child/family, particularly anything that may indicate a change of need and any support you can offer during this period; it will be important to ensure this liaison takes place regularly to avoid duplication at this key time
- Offer support over the phone where possible and remind child/family of any advice/strategies that have previously been given, as well as offering any new approaches during this period; it will be important to reassure the child/family despite the current difficulties we will do all we can to support them during these times of restriction
- At the end of the discussion you should agree whether any further support is needed, how this will take place (text, skype, telephone etc.), how often this will take place and who will be in touch; where you agree any regular on-going contact, you should also discuss what will happen if you become unwell or your role changes
- Consider sign-posting the child/family to online resources linked to their needs; some useful links are included in [Section 21](#)
- Where you consider a home visit necessary you should follow the latest Covid-19 guidance from your organisation to ensure this is conducted safely
- Where a Child Action Meeting Review is due, the lead professional should contact practitioners/services involved in the EHA plan, the parents/carers and the child where appropriate to seek their views on progress in achieving the plan's goals. The information gathered from this should then inform a proportionate response; where possible and proportionate the lead professional may wish to hold a virtual Child Action Meeting
- You should record any contacts/advice given in your case recording systems; you may wish to include a statement providing the context for this approach given the current pandemic
- It is important that we continue to provide a proportionate response in these difficult times and where you may be unsure about a child/family's level of need at this time, it will be important for you to seek supervision/advice and guidance from your designated person, manager or equivalent
- The Integrated Working Team are currently continuing to offer Early Help advice and guidance. You should ring on 01204 331392/1394 and your call will be responded to; if required leave a message with your full name, organisation and contact number. You can also email the team on boltonisa@bolton.gov.uk
- If at any point you are concerned that a child may be at risk of significant harm you should contact MASSS (see [Section 10](#))

Useful Resources

- **Triple P guide to parenting** - <https://www.triplep-parenting.uk.net/uk-en/get-started/parenting-during-covid-19/>

- **Triple P online course** - <https://www.triplep-parenting.uk.net/uk-en/find-help/triple-p-online/>
- **Triple P Quick Tips Video** - <https://www.triplep-parenting.uk.net/uk-en/blog-and-videos/watch-videos/parenting-during-covid-19/>
- **Dave the Dog is Worried about Coronavirus** (storybook for young children about Covid-19) - <https://nursedottybooks.com/dave-the-dog-is-worried-about-coronavirus-2/>

Encompass

- Greater Manchester Police (GMP) are continuing to make Encompass notifications during this time; however, it is recognised that responses from education settings will be limited or may not be able to be made at all given the current working arrangements
- If you are able to access Encompass notifications and the child is **not in education** you should assess the information in accordance with the current protocol and identify the type of help you would have offered if the child had been in school:-
 - If the child already has an allocated social worker, you should contact them, or in their absence, the duty social worker or team manager and discuss any support you can offer
 - If there is no allocated social worker and: -
 - The offer would be silent support, record this with a note to say this is not possible to provide support during the current pandemic; you can then reflect on the information when the child returns to your setting
 - The offer would be early help, follow the advice in [Section 1](#)
 - The information indicates the child is at risk of significant harm follow the advice in [Section 10](#)
- Whatever action you take it should be proportionate to the level of need and risk to the child and reflecting on what you would have done had this been a school holiday period; you can also access more online advice and information about other help and support in Bolton's DAV Handbook <https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/downloads/file/114/bolton-domestic-abuse-handbook-2017>
- If you can access Encompass notifications and the child **is in education** you should follow the current protocol, but include in your response the action is being taken during the pandemic
- If you need advice and guidance regarding a notification you should contact the Safeguarding in Education Team on 01204 331314/7472 and leave your name, organisation and contact number or email SET@bolton.gov.uk
- **Remember** if GMP identify a child at immediate risk they will use their powers to keep the child safe

Missing from Home/Care

- Parents/Carers should continue to report children missing if they don't know their whereabouts to the police, after making reasonable attempts to find them; where you are working with a child where missing may be a risk, it is important to ask about this in any contact and remind parents/carers to continue to report missing

episodes; they may be reluctant to do this given expectations to keep their children at home and the consequences/penalties if they are found in the community

- Return home interviews will be carried by RUNA at Urban Outreach either via the telephone or on the doorstep dependent on the level of risk for the child and the health of the family and staff member
- Missing strategy meetings should still take place as per the current process, however they will be held virtually, either via video/telephone conference
- For advice about missing from the local authority contact 01204 331392 or by email to mfh@bolton.gov.uk, or from the RUNA service 01204 385848 or GMP Missing SPOC – Hayley.O'Malley@gmp.police.uk
- If you are leaving a message please ensure you include your name, organisation, contact number and state your enquiry relates to missing

Child Exploitation and CEAM

- CEAM meetings are not operating during Covid-19
- Any child receiving support from Exit/Complex Safeguarding Hub has been risk assessed and support offered from the service in accordance to need and level of risk
- Practitioners should speak with the allocated Exit/Complex Safeguarding Hub worker to co-ordinate and plan their offer of help and support to children who may be vulnerable to exploitation
- If you are worried that a child may be being exploited, you should contact MASSS see [Section 10](#)

Domestic Abuse Support and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

DAV Support

- Whilst face to face contact might be limited/suspended, practitioners remain contactable via the phone, email and social media to offer support and advice and full details of DAV services in Bolton and nationally can be found in our local handbook:-
<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/downloads/file/114/bolton-domestic-abuse-handbook-2017>
- Offices will remain open to coordinate referrals, answer queries and advise on safety planning and you should continue to contact Endeavour on 01204 394842 and Fortalice's 24-hour number remains operational on 01204 701846. If you are required to leave a message please ensure you leave your full name, organisation and contact number
- The Bolton at Home DAV team are currently all providing support over the telephone and liaising with partners. Use <https://www.boltonathome.org.uk/> for further information on the services that Bolton at Home provide or for advice
- Anyone presenting with DAV and Homelessness, should be risk managed at an alternative place of safety and avoid the One Stop Shop at the Town Hall. If there are any immediate threats and a need to move immediately, please phone the public line for Housing Options 01204 335900

- Referrals to the Inner Strength Behaviour Change Programme can still be made in the usual way, but there may be delays in response owing to the current pandemic
- Safety advice for DAV survivors is available at <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-safety-advice-for-survivors/>

MARAC

- Practitioners should continue to make referrals onto SharePoint but limit wording to 200 words – keep things concise and focus on risk to the individual and children in the household
- There will be **no** face to face MARAC Meetings for the time being. They will be managed as follows: -
 - Referring agency identifies the risks and what they have done to mitigate it
 - MARAC Chair and coordinator will have telephone discussion with IDVA to review and assess risk and required actions
 - MARAC Chair will then let each agency know their required actions
- Each MARAC agency has an identified gatekeeper, who has access to the full revised process being used at this time and you should consult with them in the first instance if you have a query about MARAC

Children's Emotional Health and Well-being

- Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and parents; it is important that practitioners remain alert to this for all children
- For children already receiving additional help with their emotional health and well-being prior to this crisis, and who do not have a social worker, you should follow the guidance outlined in Early Help, [Section 1](#)
- For children with a social worker you should contact the social worker and identify and plan together how best to support the child and their parents/carers during this time
- A range of emotional health and well-being services are delivered in Bolton via our I-Thrive partnership, you should contact the services directly to find out the support they are offering to children during this time – all details can be found at <https://www.bekindtomymind.co.uk/> - national guidance is also available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>
- For children receiving CAMHS services, this service is continuing to provide assessment, support and intervention for children and young people in Bolton, however most of this is being undertaken remotely. You should continue to make referrals using the existing process; the service continue to accept referrals, follow up will continue to be based on urgency and clinical need. Further information is available at <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/bolton-camhs>
- For children and young people already receiving support from CAMHS, they should contact their case worker directly if any advice and guidance be required

- Online support with emotional health and well-being is available directly to children via Kooth - <https://www.kooth.com/>

Crisis Care Arrangements for Children and Young People

Greater Manchester Assessment and In-reach Centre (GMAIC)

- GMAIC are continuing to support inpatient providers by reviewing referrals for general adolescent and eating disorders admissions; conducting access assessments; and supporting units to discharge young people as safely and quickly as possible. Assessments will be undertaken by telephone or video call wherever possible, with face to face appointments only where necessary.
- GMAIC have been designated as a core and essential service so will be allocated staff from other areas if required to continue with business as usual. Hours of operation remain Monday-Friday 9am-8pm including bank holidays. Referrals should continue to be sent to the local provider inpatient unit.

Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)

- RRTs have also been classified as essential services in line with national guidance around crisis care during COVID-19. Assessments and follow up appointments will be undertaken by telephone or video call wherever possible, with face to face appointments only where absolutely necessary. In order to support the acute sector as effectively as possible, some planned service developments have been accelerated.
- Referrals will continue to be taken from duty teams within community CAMHS.
- **Self-Re-referral** - For young people who have been discharged from RRTs since 1 February 2020, a text message has been sent to inform them they can directly refer themselves back into the service should their mental health deteriorate significantly again. This will also now form part of discharge planning for all young people who have accessed RRTs.

Offer to All Age Mental Health Liaison Teams (AAMHL)

- On Monday 6 April, RRTs enabled acceptance of referrals directly from AAMHL teams across Greater Manchester in order to avoid non-medical admissions to hospital. This offer is for all young people up to their 18th birthday. Full details have been shared with each AAMHL team individually.
- **Hours of operation** - From Tuesday 14 April RRTs will extend their hours of operation to 10pm in order to be available for telephone consultation and referrals 7 days a week 8am to 9.30pm

Safe Zones

- The Safe Zone offer, led by The Children's Society, is now being conducted via telephone appointment only as all community locations have been closed. Referrals to the Safe Zone remain via the RRTs. The Children's Society has proposed a wider telephone crisis line which is being explored as an additional option to support the system across Greater Manchester

For any queries or additional information, please contact the project team via email: pcn-tr.gm.crisiscare@nhs.net

Remember little things can make a difference to help mental health and wellbeing

- **Consider how to connect with others:** Maintaining relationships with trusted is important for mental wellbeing. Talk to children about how they are keeping in touch with friends and family
- **Talk about worries:** It is quite common to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember that this is a difficult time for everyone and encouraging a child to share how they are feeling and the things they doing to cope can help them. There are lots of online services available that you can signpost a child to
- **Look after physical wellbeing:** physical health has a big impact on how people feel emotionally and mentally. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour which in turn can make things worse. Talk about healthy eating, well-balanced meals, exercise inside where possible and outside once a day, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs. If at home, you can find free easy [10 minute work outs](#) from Public Health England or other exercise videos to try at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#). Sport England also has good tips for keeping active at home
- **Look after your sleep:** Feeling anxious or worried can make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to feel mentally and physically well, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. The [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep
- **Try to manage difficult feelings:** Many people find the news about coronavirus (COVID-19) concerning. However, some children may experience such intense anxiety that it becomes a problem. Try to focus on the things they can control, including reliable information sources, positive activities, keeping in touch with friends and family etc.
- **Manage your media and information intake:** 24-hour news and constant social media updates can make it more worrying; try to limit the time spent watching, reading, or listening to media coverage of the outbreak. It may help to only check the news at set times or limiting to a couple of checks a day.
- **Think about your new daily routine:** Life is changing for us all for a while. Whether you are staying at home or social distancing, you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Talk to the child about how they can adapt and create positive new routines – it might be helpful to write a plan for with a child about their day or week ahead

Remember that [social distancing guidelines](#) enable you to go outside to exercise once a day as long as you keep 2 metres apart from others who are not members of your household group

Adult Mental Health Services

- The main access route to lower level adult mental health services remains via SPOA (Single Point of Access). Referrals should be made either online <https://www.iaptportal.co.uk/bolt.html> or by phone 01204 483101. No paper referrals will be accepted
- Adults can self-refer for counselling for bereavement and loss, relationship counselling etc. to the Silverwellbeing Service <https://www.1pointbolton.org.uk/pages/category/silverwellbeing-services>

- Samaritans are encouraging people to ring them to talk free phone 116123

Managing Allegations Against Those Who Work with Children

- Where there is an allegation that may relate to a person who works with children who has: -
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

You should use the “first five minutes” guidance to ensure children are safeguarded, discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead/nominated officer and refer to MASSS if there is a risk of significant harm to a child [Section 10](#)

The LADO can be contacted on 01204 337474; if unavailable you should leave a message with your full name, organisation and telephone number and the follow up with a secure email to colin.jones@bolton.gov.uk

- The designated safeguarding lead/nominated officer will continue the “first five minutes” guidance and will contact the LADO, via telephone if the threshold is met. The LADO and safeguarding lead/nominated officer will then agree a course of action. The LADO may send the safeguarding lead/nominated officer the referral form to complete to ensure all details are correct
- If the agreed action is to have a professional strategy meeting then the LADO will decide if there is value in convening a virtual meeting and which people are crucial to attend, the LADO senior administrator will make the meeting arrangements
- If a virtual meeting is unable to take place with key personnel, the LADO will speak to all key personnel individually and compose a summary. This summary will be sent to the group for agreement and a decision
- The LADO will confirm strategy meeting decisions and recommendations in all cases either virtually or via email.
- The decisions and recommendations will be sent out within one working day as usual and the minutes will follow. The process following the meeting will not change, if a review meeting is needed this will be virtual until a decision is made to recommence face to face meetings
- The LADO will continue to follow up decisions and recommendations until the case is closed
- LADO guidance can be accessed at <https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/managing-allegations>

Key Practice Points: -

- The LADO will ask for clear accounts
- If it is a clear HR issue that can be dealt with by the safeguarding lead/nominated officer this will be agreed – the key points to be discussed will be: -
 - Is there an intent to cause any harm?
 - Has the person been criminally negligent?
 - Is there a wilful element to the act?

- Once all accounts are available, if there appears to be a criminal element the LADO will send an information pack to the police and decide jointly about next steps
- If the case clearly does not meet the threshold this will be an immediate decision and the safeguarding lead/nominated officer will record this on their systems; they should make a note to reflect that this action is being taken during the Covid-19 pandemic
- The LADO will continue to advise on referral to regulatory bodies and the DBS and this should be actioned by the safeguarding lead/nominated officer using the established process
- If advice cannot be given due to LADO availability, then the decision on safeguarding children and the possibility of suspending an employee needs to be taken swiftly by a senior manager of the employing organisation

Safer Recruitment and Movement of Staff

- It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. If settings are recruiting new staff or volunteers, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting/organisation
- Regarding members of the workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have an appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to a different setting to support the care of children
- Organisations must continue to follow their legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult
- Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any setting is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity
- The workforce may move between settings on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving setting should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required for the new practitioners working in their setting
- It is particularly important for schools and colleges to continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined KCSIE. The SCR can, if a school or college chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school or college on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Referrals to MASSS, Child Protection Investigations and Medical Assessments

- MASSS continue to run the 'Front door' for all new referrals where there are concerns that children are at risk of significant harm. However, it must be recognised that this will be a reduced service given the current situation and that priority will be given to children at risk of immediate harm
- You should make referrals in accordance with the current process, i.e. telephone contact to MASSS with written follow-up; now more than ever this is essential as this will support social workers and their managers to allocate resources to the

most at-risk children further details at
<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/worried-child>

- If you require **advice and guidance** about safeguarding concerns or level of need for a child you should in the first instance, speak to your designated or named safeguarding lead in your setting, if they are not available you should speak to:-
 - An **education setting** you can also contact the Safeguarding In Education Team on 01204 331314/7472 and leave your name, organisation and contact number or email SET@bolton.gov.uk
 - A **health practitioner** can contact Specialist Nurse Safeguarding Children Bolton NHS Foundation on 01204 331824 Email Laura.Holt3@nhs.net
 - You can also access advice and guidance from the Integrated Working Team on 01204 331392/1394 or email boltonisa@bolton.gov.uk

NB Please ensure that for any message you leave you include your full name, organisation and contact number

- Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and the Health Lead within the MASSS are continuing in their role so that multi-agency strategy discussions will be taking place for the children at most risk. These meetings are likely to take place virtually – using Skype and at the very minimum agencies are expected to share information to enable decisions to be made
- Every effort will be made to inform agencies about the outcome of the meeting where they are not able to contribute directly but this is likely to be electronically, rather than by telephone and as soon as practical after the meeting
- If a strategy discussion identifies that a joint child protection enquiry is needed, then this will take place
- Requests for Child Protection medicals will continue as per the current process i.e. contacting the hot week Paediatrician via the Royal Bolton Hospital switchboard however the examination will be conducted at Bolton One, 2nd Floor Children's Outpatients Department. The social worker requesting the medical assessment will be asked a series of questions regarding the child including whether they have current symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 or whether any other family members do. A decision will be made as to the requirement for an urgent S47 medical
- Children will be seen either the same day afternoon or alternatively the next day if referrals are received after 2 pm. We will have a maximum capacity for three medical examinations per afternoon. Children under 2 years, those with Covid-19 symptoms who need a medical assessment, or where there is an urgent need to review, will still be seen at the hospital on ward
- Children who are at the highest risk will be visited by Social Workers, or seen within School settings that remain open, and social distancing arrangements will be followed. This is likely to mean that the child's home will not be entered unless this is a child protection enquiry.
- If you believe a child is at immediate danger, then the police should be contacted on 999 to use their powers
- If you are worried about a child and the child already has an allocated social worker, you should contact the social worker directly or in their absence, the duty

social worker or team manager within that service. These calls **should not** come to the MASSS

Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

- EDT continues to operate for out of hours emergency referrals regarding children & adults at risk of harm, older people, adults with mental health problems and homelessness
- They are lone workers and capacity is very likely to be stretched; only social care emergencies out of hours should be referred to the EDT Social Worker. Your call will be taken by a Careline Operator and the EDT social worker will contact you back as soon as possible
- If your concern indicates an immediate danger, then you should contact the police on 999

Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) and Review Child Protection Conferences

- ICPC's will in principal become virtual; for each conference a decision will be made whether the meeting will be entirely virtual, utilising skype or conference calling; where that is not possible a series of calls will be made by the conference chair to examine the multi professionals' networks actions, views and intentions
- Where the parents/carers are not known to be ill or self-isolating and wish to attend then the conference will be held with parents, the Conference Chair and administrator present; social distancing will be implemented, all other attendees will be asked to be in attendance using telephone or video conferencing
- Child Protection Case Conferences will go ahead as per existing procedures, however there will be some alterations in practice to facilitate the effective delivery of the conference
- All invitations will go out with a covering letter outlining changes to the Child Protection Process and a revised conference report template; **it is essential** that all attendees provide information in the standard report template within the current timescales and confirm that the report has been shared and discussed with the parents/carers
- Attendees at conference should confirm their attendance and inform the chair how they will be contributing
- Quoracy has been suspended until further notice; the criteria for the running a conference is on the basis that enough information is held in order to determine risk and produce a meaningful Protection Plan
- ICPC's will be held without parents/carers being in attendance, either in person or virtually until further notice. The conference will run if enough information is held rather than on the principal of participation. The chair will need to ensure that every effort is made for reports include parental and child's wishes and feelings
- The social worker will need to advise the chair in advance if they know the family will be attending
- The use of telephone or video conferencing will mean that Chairs will need to rigidly adhere to the agenda; practitioners should ensure that they identify themselves at the start of the conversation and are included in the process throughout. It will be important where possible meetings are concise and focused on information delivery and then analysis

- **Review Child Protection Case Conferences (RCPC)** will be held virtually utilising video and/or conference calls. Views will be sought from parents, but they will not be expected to attend
- The revised process for RCPC will mirror those for ICPC's as described above; attendees should note that they will be expected to complete and return within timescales an RCPC report using the standard template sent to them; **it is essential** this is completed and confirmation given that the report has been shared and discussed with the parents/carers

Multi- Agency Meetings (including Core Groups)

- It is vitally important during these times that children and young people, including care leavers and carers, continue to receive coordinated support from the practitioners who are working with the family. This will help understand the nature of need and risk as well as identifying how a child and family can be best supported
- It is essential that everyone adheres to the Government advice on social distancing therefore our normal processes and that our meetings should not be face to face at this time.
- Virtual meetings should be held using conference calls or video conferencing and supporting children and parents to access the meeting.
- Attendees should complete the Children's social care meeting form or the report that they would previously have written 48 hours before the meeting so it can be shared with the family
- If professionals/support networks are unable to attend they should complete the Contribution to Children's Social Care meeting form 48 hours prior to the meeting so parents can read before the meeting (see Appendix D)
- Virtual Child Protection Core Groups should be held at least every 4 weeks
- Virtual Child in Need (Child Action) meetings should be held at least every 6 weeks.
- Virtual Care Planning Meetings should be held where this necessary to formulate a child's care plan prior their LAC Review.
- Where a professional is unable to complete a report, it is important that the Chair speak to them to understand any concern, information that they have and the support they can offer at this time
- If a face-to-face meeting is required this should be risk assessed by all attendees and a decision made as to how they will contribute; where the meeting progresses it should be held in a room of sufficient size to ensure that people can remain 2 meters apart with a maximum of 4 people in attendance

LAC Reviews

- All LAC reviews will be carried out virtually and the IRO will communicate with attendees prior to the meeting to seek their progress updates and contributions to the continuing care plan

Pre-Meeting

- The IRO will Consult with the allocated social worker, or in their absence the team manager, to confirm the review date, who will be invited and arrangements for the Review; there should also be a brief discussion on progress of Care Plan
- At least two weeks prior to the Review the LAC administrator will send invites and Consultation Forms to those invited to the LAC Review; the Consultation forms should be returned as soon as possible and at least within 7 working days
- The Social Worker should ensure the Care Plan is reviewed and updated at least 3 working days prior to meeting
- The IRO will review all the available information at least 3 working days before the LAC review takes place and request any additional/further information as required

Review Meeting

- **The IRO will:** -
 - Contact the placement for consultation and arrange, where possible, a video or telephone call with the child
 - Liaise with all professionals invited to the Review and progress the Care Plan, if appropriate contact with significant carers/those with parental responsibility will be made
 - Discuss with relevant social worker and team manager any issues and recommendations
 - Advise the placement and where appropriate the child of the outcomes and recommendations from the Review
 - Complete and request the administrator distribute the SMART Decisions and Recommendations within 3 working days
- If insufficient information is available on day of the Review, then the IRO will complete the Review as a series of discussions until enough information has been collated to review and progress the Care Plan; this must be completed within 5 working days and classed as one meeting
- Any queries or concerns relating to the care plan after the review should be discussed with the social worker in the first instance, and in their absence the team manager; if the query remains there should be a discussion with the IRO

Home Visits for Vulnerable Children

- All vulnerable children open to children's services in Bolton will receive a Covid-19 Risk Assessment. This will identify them as either of the following: -
 - **Red** significant risk of harm, serious injury/Death - the child needs to be seen every 2 weeks or more often by a Social Care Professional
 - **Amber** Moderate risk to emotional wellbeing - the child needs to be seen every 4 weeks by a Social Care Professional
 - **Green** Low risk of any harm coming to the child - the child should be seen in relation to the current statutory guidance for their status and in discussion with the Team Manager the visit may be made by phone/video call

- It is **essential** that all practitioners working with children who have an allocated social worker are aware of the child's RAG rating and work with the social worker to deliver co-ordinated help and support as part of a child's revised plan during Covid-19
- For any practitioner planning a home visit it will be important that wherever possible you have a discussion with the parent/carer about the current health of the family, including any vulnerable adults and whether anyone in the household is self-isolating or displaying any possible symptoms of Covid-19; where there are indicators that there is a possible risk of Covid-19 this should be discussed with your line manager or designated safeguarding lead and a decision made about how to carry out the visit
- Where the decision is made that a child needs to be seen face-to-face it is recommended that this takes place on the doorstep observing the 2-metre social distancing required. Practitioners will be mindful about not sharing any confidential information that could be overheard; if sensitive discussion need to take place these should take place via phone/video call after the visit
- Visits inside the child's home should only take place when there are urgent concerns for a child's immediate safety or health: -
 - i. A referral has been received that indicates there is an immediate concern that a child is at risk of significant harm
 - ii. Subject to a child protection plan and there is a concern that a child may be at risk of significant harm
 - iii. It has been agreed by a manager/designated safeguarding lead as essential in order to monitor the child's safety as part of their child protection plan
 - iv. There are high level concerns about a care leaver
- The following offers a framework for safe practice for home visits where this is deemed to be essential: -
 - Available information indicates that transmission of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) of an infected person so you should remain socially distanced from the person

ACTION: Always keep a 2-metre distance – remain assertive, but sensitive and appropriate, this is a professional and social responsibility to do this – remind families of this
- It is likely that the risk of transmission increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person. It's also possible that someone might become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching a door knob or shaking hands then touching own face)
 - **ACTION:** Wherever possible, the visit should be restricted to no more than 15 minutes. Continue to record as normal in an informative and concise manner after the visit.
 - **ACTION:** Avoid touching surfaces such as door handles, light switches; please also avoid touching your face until you have washed your hands; wash your hands at the end of your visit (if the condition and location of the hand washing facilities are appropriate). Where hand washing is not

available, clean your hands using alcohol-based hand gel. Where that is not available, use antibacterial wipes. Where that is not available carry bottled water and soap and a kitchen towel

- The person you are visiting may be able to help you to protect yourself by following the 2-metre social distancing rule and coughing and sneezing into a tissue or wearing a face mask to protect you from their respiratory secretions.
 - **ACTION:** Where you do have to enter a property, remind all adults present of the social distancing requirements and request they also open a window for the duration of your visit

Rapid Reviews/CSPR

- Referrals should be made to the BSCP mailbox as per usual process; it will then be shared via secure email with the statutory partners for a decision re: initiation of a Rapid Review
- Where it is agreed by the statutory partners that a Rapid Review should be undertaken, relevant agencies will be contacted and requested to complete and return a Rapid Review report and chronology as necessary; this will be facilitated via secure email
- The BSCP business unit will collate the reports/chronologies and send them to the current statutory partner representatives on the CSPR group – namely Designated Nurse CCG, Head of Service Child Protection and Exploitation and GMP SCR Team Representative
- The three statutory partner representatives will act as the Rapid Review Group for the period when ‘lockdown’ is in operation and will hold a telephone/video conference to facilitate discussion and decision-making in accordance with Working Together 2018, para 20, p86. This meeting will be facilitated by the BSCP Officer
- A Rapid Review report will be completed and submitted to the National CSPR Panel, following consultation with statutory representatives and statutory partners
- Where a CSPR is recommended this will not be initiated until the ‘lockdown’ has been lifted and service provision returns to normal operation

Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy

- All settings working with children and their parents/carers will have an effective child protection policy in place. It is likely that the policy will not accurately reflect new arrangements in response to COVID-19. It is important settings, (led by a DSL or deputy, wherever possible) review and revise their child protection policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve
- In most cases, a COVID-19 addendum that summarises any key COVID-19 related changes might be more effective at the beginning of the documents, than re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy. Amongst other things the revised child protection policy should reflect:
 - Any updated advice received from the three statutory safeguarding partners
 - Any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children’s social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

- The continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns and what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
 - DSL (and deputy) arrangements
 - The continued importance for practitioners to work with and support children's social workers, the local authority and the virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
 - Peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances settings are operating in a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims
 - What staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children
 - Any arrangements to support children the school or college are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition
- It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly

Designated Safeguarding Leads in Settings (DSL)

- The current demands and impact from Covid-19 may lead to reduced capacity for the designated safeguarding lead or their deputies due to sickness, re-deployment to front-line roles, self-isolation etc. Therefore, it is essential that all settings with requirements to have DSL arrangements in place review their current contingency arrangements for circumstances where DSL/deputies are all unavailable and ensure these arrangements remain fit for purpose and operational during Covid-19
- Where the DSL and all deputies are off-site but contactable and fit and well enough to fulfil their role virtually, they should be available during operating hours to give advice/instruction on safeguarding matters via telephone, skype etc.
- Where the DSL and all deputies are unwell and not fit to give advice and direction on safeguarding matters, an interim DSL should be identified and this individual should have access to a brief DSL induction; some settings may already have an induction pack in place and this should be accessed, for those who don't the following support can be accessed:-
 - Early Years Setting – contact Start Well on 01204 338149 or email startwellbookings@bolton.gov.uk
 - Education Settings – contact the Safeguarding In Education Team on 01204 331314/7472 and leave your name, organisation and contact number or email SET@bolton.gov.uk
 - Voluntary and Community Setting – contact via email, stating it is a safeguarding enquiry to info@boltoncvs.org.uk and your enquiry will be responded to
- This interim arrangement would end when the substantive DSL/deputies were fit and well enough to resume their roles
- Some settings might want to consider clustering/partnering up with other settings and provide virtual DSL cover across the cluster/partnership

- Whatever arrangements settings put in place it is important to record the change, along with the rationale for the decision/action in the relevant risk register/business continuity plan or equivalent; a covering note should be added to the settings safeguarding children policy to advise of the changes and inform practitioners of the interim arrangements/contact details in the setting
- Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school and college staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them
- It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training
- Every setting will face unique challenges at this time. Where reasonably possible, the DSL (or deputy) should consider these in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection policy as appropriate

Information Sharing/ Children Moving Setting

- You should continue to follow best practice in information sharing and follow any supplementary guidance provided by your organisation
- For further advice go to <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-coronavirus/>
- It will be important for any setting whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving setting with any relevant welfare and child protection information
- The receiving setting should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- As a minimum the receiving setting should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their care plan and where relevant their personal education plan; the setting should also be provided with contact details for the child's social worker and team manager (and, for looked-after children attending a different education setting, who the responsible Virtual School Head is)
- This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable
- Whilst settings must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe in these circumstances

Safeguarding Training and Development

- Most practitioners will already have completed safeguarding training; the key area for these practitioners will be awareness of any revised local safeguarding arrangements during this period so they know what to do if they are worried about a child
- Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter a setting, they should continue to: -
 - Be provided with a safeguarding induction

- Complete the [Level 1 online training](#) offered by Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Given an up to date child protection policy
- All face-to-face multi-agency safeguarding training is currently cancelled to the end of May.
- There is a significant amount of E-learning available and a ready solution to maintain continued professional development, awareness and knowledge of this important area. Go to the 'quick links' section on the BSCP multi-agency training page <https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/multi-agency-safeguarding-training> to access a number of free e-learning courses
- If you have a Bolton council email, there is access to the ME learning platform; this platform has over 170 E-learning courses a great many of them safeguarding. For those already with an account go to <https://boltonc.melearning.university/user/login> For those Bolton Council workers who don't have an account please contact wpd-elearning@bolton.gov.uk regarding free access
- For anyone wanting to purchase a ME-learning licence that enables you to access courses, please contact wpd-elearning@bolton.gov.uk to request further information
- The Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership's on-line course "Keeping Children Safe (Level 1)" is free to everyone and covers basic awareness of Physical, Emotional, Neglect, Sexual abuse and associated issues. The facility auto generates a certificate on completion and is available at <https://boltoncouncilwebteam.co.uk/onlinecourses/>
- Other topics which are currently of interest can be found at the following links.
 - **Child Sexual Exploitation** - <https://learning.seenandheard.org.uk/>
 - **County Lines** - <https://youtu.be/Sfr4f8FmwrM> and <https://youtu.be/UFQtA0Xi7NQ>
 - **Modern Slavery** - <https://youtu.be/RVcTORaHvig>

Hints and Tips for Virtual Contact/Direct Work

- **CAFCASS** Using Skype for Direct Work - <https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CAFCASS-Knowledge-Bites-Using-Skype-with-Children.pdf>
- **The Principal Children and Families Social Worker (PCFSW) Network** Best Practice Guide for Video Call/Contact and Virtual/Online Home Visit - <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/social-work/psw/PSW-best-practice-guide-for-video-call-and-virtual-home-visit.pdf>

Additional Resources to Help Parents/Carers and Children Manage During Covid-19

- **Coping with Stress During Covid-19** - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_2
- **Helping Children cope During Covid-19** - https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2
- **ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope!** – provides key messages and resources to let parents/carers know that infant crying is normal and there are methods which

can be taken in order to cope. Resources include leaflets, posters and video clips which can be shared with parents and carers at any contact had with midwives, health visitors, GPs, social workers, and other professionals working with families and can be accessed at <http://iconcope.org/>

- **Children's guides to coronavirus -**

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/cco-childrens-guide-to-coronavirus.pdf>

Covibook – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing (different languages)

<https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>

My Hero is You – Storybook for children on Covid-19, published by UNHCR and available in a number of languages

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you>

- **Children's Emotional Health and Well-being -**

<https://www.bekindtomymind.co.uk/>

[Guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Young Minds - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>

- **Parenting through Covid-19 Institute of Health Visiting -**

<https://ihv.org.uk/families/parenting-through-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Carers UK - Guidance for carers: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19>

- **Chat Health –**

- **Parents/carers** can now text a Public Health Nurse (Health Visitor/School Nurse) for advice and support about their child (this is anyone up to the age of 19). Parents/carers should text 07507 331751 with any questions they may have, particularly during these difficult times; questions can range from breastfeeding support, child development, to managing behaviour and other advice regarding a child or young person's emotional or physical health
- **Children aged between 11 and 19** years old can also make direct contact with a Public Health Nurse (School Nurse) via text on 07507 331751 for support on a variety of topics, including bullying, mental health and emotional wellbeing, relationships, sexual health, alcohol and drugs and much more
- ChatHealth is free (standard message rates apply), confidential and available between 8am-8pm Monday-Friday. The young people's service is also available 12pm-4pm Saturday-Sunday. Outside of these times an automatic reply will be sent. For medical advice outside of these hours, contact should be made with a GP or call 111

- **Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK)** - The MWNUK operates a helpline Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm and offer support and advice on a range of issues including domestic abuse, sexual abuse, forced marriage, honour-based abuse,

relationships, mental health, housing and homelessness etc. Helpline staff are able to offer help in English, Urdu, Punjabi, Mirpuri, Putwari, Hindko, Bengali and Zulu.

- Free Phone Number: 0800 999 5786
- Text: 07415 206 936
- Email: info@mwnhelpline.co.uk
- Website:
<https://clicktime.symantec.com/39TwgSb9g47hxDgdgU8uyYn6H2?u=www.mwnhelpline.co.uk> click on 'contact us' page
- Webchat:
<https://clicktime.symantec.com/39TwgSb9g47hxDgdgU8uyYn6H2?u=www.mwnhelpline.co.uk> and follow the icon on the bottom right of your screen
- **Early Break** - in response to COVID-19, the service are offering support to young people affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse and/or parental imprisonment; contact Bolton's team on 07732685456 or 07841151835. For more information about the service go to <https://earlybreak.co.uk/>
- **Bereavement** - more children and families may be experiencing unexpected bereavement due to Covid 19 and below are some national organisations can also offer support and advice in specific areas:
 - Child Bereavement UK on their website www.childbereavementuk.org
 - Childhood Bereavement Network on their website www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk
 - Cruse Bereavement Care on their website www.cruse.org.uk/
 - Hope Again (for young people living after loss) on their website www.hopeagain.org.uk
 - Lullaby Trust website at www.lullabytrust.org.uk/bereavement-support/

National Guidance and Arrangements

Department for Education

Guidance on safeguarding vulnerable children during Covid-19 -

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people?utm_source=Website&utm_campaign=Vulnerable-Learners-Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

Guidance on Children's Mental Health -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Ofsted Update

The information contained in this section has been accessed from Ofsted's website. This site is updated regularly and as such the information below may be subject to swift change. Please consult the website directly as needed -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update#history>.

- Ofsted have suspended all routine inspections, including those related to Local Authority Children's Services; urgent inspection will be carried out where specific concerns have been raised in relation to the immediate safety and welfare of children
- Inspection reports relating to Children's Social Care completed prior to the current pandemic will be published; however, no inspection reports from schools, further education settings and early years providers will be published until setting re-open as normal
- Childminders do not need to notify Ofsted if they are closed due to Covid-19, they should however continue to let Ofsted know if they are resigning their registration
- Paediatric First Aid Certificate due to expire on or after 16 March 2020 have been given a three month extension, further information available here <https://www.sja.org.uk/course-information/covid-19/#hse>
- Ofsted do not have the power to lift Regulation 44 Inspections rather they are aiming to take a balanced and proportionate approach to regulation, taking account of how people have tried to satisfy regulatory requirements in these difficult circumstances
- All education provision is closed to the majority of children, additional specific guidance from the DfE and Public Health England is available for the following: -

[temporary school closures](#)

[recording attendance in educational settings](#)

[implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings](#)

[schools on free school meals](#)

[maintaining further education and skills training provision](#)

[apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations](#)

[educational settings on COVID-19](#)

[residential educational settings on isolation](#)

