

PROMPTS TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING A CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL

When making a Child Protection Referral the following information would be helpful:-

- Full names and dates of birth of the:-
 - Child
 - Parent/carers
 - Siblings
 - Other family members
 - Other significant adults
- Full addresses and telephone numbers – including mobile phone numbers
- Daytime address and contact telephone numbers for parents/carers – including mobile numbers
- Ethnic origin, religion, cultural background, preferred language of child and parents
- Reason for the referral, including description of any injuries observed, details of allegations made, discussions with the child, parents, carers or others, details of any witnesses; Including any relevant dates/times/places of alleged incidents
- Any action taken and people contacted since the concern arose
- Any immediate or impending danger to the child
- Any previous concerns and any relevant background information, including CAF, Child Action Meeting, previous interventions and outcome
- Any known risks posed by adults in the household
- Have you had previous concerns and have you made previous referrals? It is important to revisit previous concerns to get a wider picture. Child protection services are reliant on other agencies to help them build up a clearer picture of what has been happening. The relationship between each event may be more significant than each individual event
- If you have referred in the past, what was the outcome? Never let the fact that no action was taken last time affect the way you manage and respond to new concerns. If you have a concern always share it with either your designated person or Referral and Assessment Duty Social Worker
- Based on your knowledge of the child and family, you may well have an opinion about how the family are likely to react to the referral and any subsequent child protection enquiries, including any factors which

may place the child or others at further risk (e.g. where there is domestic abuse)

- **Physical injury**
 - Where your concern is about physical injury make sure you note where on the body the injury is and describe shape and size if you have seen it. It may be useful to use a body map for recording the site of any injuries. If the injury looks like it has been caused in a particular way, say so; if the child or parent has provided any explanation or account of how the injury occurred you should share and record this.
- **Sexual abuse**
 - Are your concerns about the child's behaviour? If so give as much detail as possible. State exactly what the child has been doing. Don't just report 'sexualised behaviour', give clear descriptions of what you have seen or heard, dates and times, anyone else who has shared or observed the concerning behaviour, language or knowledge
 - Has the child described a situation causing concern? If the child talks to you or to a member of your staff, record in as much detail as possible what was said, who was there and the child's emotional state throughout the discussion.
- **Emotional abuse**
 - Referrals about emotional abuse usually involve a number of concerns arising from both contacts with the child and contact with the parents. Emotional abuse can cause impairment in the child's development, and such children may have very low self-esteem and self-image. Detail the way the child functions at school, with peers and with parents. Emotional abuse is hard to evidence so detail a number of events that have led to your concerns.
- **Neglect**
 - If you are to refer a child because of possible neglect always check back to see if there have been any previous concerns. The Children Act talks about how the persistent neglect of very basic needs is likely to cause impairment in the child's development.
 - Always think through whether the case in question fits more appropriately within a 'child in need' framework than within a child protection framework. (For example, mucky children may simply come from mucky families; clearly the family need to do something about the child's cleanliness and appearance, and may need some support in this, but it might not be the case that the child is being abused and in need of protection.)
- **Consent/ Informing the parent**

- Think through whether or not in this particular case you should ask the consent of the parent before making a referral. If you feel that asking consent would place the child at risk of significant harm do not ask parents for their consent. Where you decide not to ask consent record your reasons for not doing so. You should also confirm at the point of making your referral who will make contact with the parents.
- Remember a social worker will disclose the source of referral; being open and honest with a parent about what action you are taking will go a long way to maintaining your working relationship with that parent
- **Professional judgement**
 - Remember: value your professional judgement; **YOU** may be the only agency involved with the family at the time of referral. Do not come off the phone before you have shared your concerns.

At the end of the referral you should record:-

- The full name and designation of the person you have spoken to and if possible the time
- Whether the referral has been accepted by the Social Work team; if it has not been accepted, what action you will take
- What action will be taken by the Social Work team and when it will be taken
- What information you should share with the child, parents or carers

REMEMBER - Follow up you telephone referral in writing using the CAF template to share all relevant information within two working days.

If you are not clear about what action is being taken it is your responsibility to re-contact the duty social worker.