Introduction

As the DCPC you will be the main point of contact for staff who have concerns about children’s wellbeing. In order to carry out these functions you will need to be equipped with the appropriate specialist knowledge about child welfare issues, policy and practice. The responsibilities of your employer towards you in your role is defined in paragraph 32 of the guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014.

Before attending DCPC training you are expected to have undertaken basic training in child protection and safeguarding based on the requirement that all staff who work with children understand how to Recognise and Refer possible child abuse (Section 175 Education Act 2002 and Section 11 Children Act 2004).

The accompanying document “Definitions and signs and symptoms” gives a basic outline for recognising possible abuse.

Recognition of potential Child Abuse - Categories and signs and symptoms

Referring – school/setting procedures for recording and referring in school and to Children’s Social Services.

“All organisations need to listen and be responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people and their families and to recognise that safeguarding children and young people from harm must be everyone’s business. (KSCB website)

The full day DCPC training aims to equip you with:

The additional knowledge to carry out the role of the DCPC

Resources to help you carry out the role in school

Contents

- Role and responsibilities of the DCPC
- Role of the Children’s Safeguards Team
- Child Protection and the Law
- Day to Day Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Creating a “safe school” culture
- Role of Children’s Social Services – referrals, consultation
On attending the training you will receive a Resource CD which brings together relevant information and contains training materials for use in your school/setting.

The Role of the DCPC

This is defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014.* Every school should have a copy of this document. All staff are required to have a copy of Part 1 of this Guidance.

As the DCPC you will be the school’s lead person and resident expert in safeguarding and child protection. You are responsible for raising the profile of safeguarding within school/setting and alongside other members of the Leadership team, responsible for creating a safe culture where children and staff feel safe and know how to raise concerns. Some colleagues will look to you for help and advice. Others will report concerns about a child. Some will be major concerns such as a child with a non-accidental injury or a child who discloses that they are being hurt by another person. Mostly, though, you will be picking up less urgent concerns, perhaps the child who is hungry, or has had a change in behaviour becoming withdrawn or aggressive or not taking care of themselves. Your role will be to gather and analyse these smaller pieces of information, to make sense of what may be happening in a child’s life and decide whether referral to other agencies may be needed. This can be a difficult task – the decision to involve Children’s Social Services or the Police, is never an easy one and can have life changing consequences for children.

Support and advice for the DCPC

To assist you in making these decisions each agency has designated lead persons for Safeguarding children/Child Protection. In Kent this is the responsibility of the Education Safeguarding Team.

Role of the Education Safeguarding Team

Kent is rather unique in having a team of experienced social workers available to give advice and support to staff in Educational settings. This includes schools, early years, FE colleges, the youth service, other specialist educational services and independent schools. Collectively this team is known as the Education Safeguarding Team. (N.B. the EST comes within the Education and Young People’s Services Directorate and is not part of Children’s Social Services.)

Each of the local areas has an Area Safeguarding Adviser (Education) for schools and early years. At the centre (Sessions House) there is the Principal Officer (Safeguarding in Education) and the e-Safety Officer. During the working day a Duty system is in operation so there will always be someone available to answer queries and give advice. Contact details are attached.

The main areas of work for the EST are training of education staff, consultation about child protection/welfare issues and supporting schools in...
suitability assessments or disciplinary investigations when commissioned to do so.

Training

**Basic Awareness** of Child Protection for schools/settings. This training is available to Early Years staff. There are usually 36 courses a year across the county.

In Schools this training should be provided by the DCPC. Training materials are provided on the DCPC course. In *some* cases bespoke sessions may be arranged for individual schools at the request of local school management.

**DCPC Training**

The **DCPC** course is for those new to the role – this full day training covers the roles and responsibilities of the DCPC within school and in making referrals to Children’s Social Services. It will outline the processes for interagency working and signpost other sources of training.

**DCPC 2** is no longer available to schools as the relevant content is now incorporated into the one day DCPC session.

The half day **Multi –agency course** is more practice based and covers multi agency referrals and planning including child protection conferences. It is open to all education staff who may represent the school or early years settings in multi agency meetings. It is not compulsory but is strongly advised for staff who have limited experience in such work.

All Designated staff are required to update their training on a two yearly basis and the half day. The **DCPC Refresher** course provides up to date information including changes in law and practice and learning from serious case reviews.

The EST also is involved in other training in partnership with other departments including:

- Safer Recruitment with Schools Personnel Services
  - Providing courses for the Kent Safeguarding Children Board.

A wide range of safeguarding courses and on line learning courses are available from the Kent Safeguarding Children Board via kscb.org.uk. Courses are free to partner agencies.

Consultations

If you are concerned about a child you may contact your Area Education Safeguarding Adviser for advice. The EST receives over 2000 consultations/year about 70% of which do not reach the threshold for referral to Children’s Social Services.
Where appropriate the EST will advise on how to make effective referrals and sometimes liaise directly with Children’s Social Services to resolve issues between agencies.

**Allegations**

Advice and support on all allegations against staff is now managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) function that sits within the KCC Safeguarding Unit. Kent County Council’s procedures and operational guidelines for managing allegations will be referenced as part of the DCPC training.

**Legal issues and Statutory Guidance**

The relevant legislation includes:

**1989 Children Act.**
This is still the law relating to Child Protection investigation, policy and procedures.

The main national guidance attached to this is “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013” which outlines the responsibilities of the 5 key agencies for child protection. (Social Services, Health, Education, Police, Probation)

“What to Do if you are worried a child is being Abused 2006” is guidance on how to respond to concerns and contains advice and flowcharts to illustrate the process.

The Kent Safeguarding Children Board provides information and advice about local policy and procedures to all agencies. All Kent policies and guidance and up-to-date information are available on-line at [www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk)

**2002 Education Act.** This updated the responsibilities of schools/educational settings in respect of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. Section 175 states the duty of educational establishments to “safeguard and promote the welfare of children.” Although their responsibilities are defined slightly differently under section 157 of the Act, independent schools are advised to adopt this guidance as best practice.

The main guidance in support of the Act is “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014”. This covers what staff need to know, management of CP in schools, safer recruitment and managing allegations.

Further guidance covering use of force, searching pupils and behaviour management was published in 2010 and updated in 2013.
The 2004 Children Act deals mainly with reorganisation of the children’s services in line with the then Every Child Matters Agenda. Section 11 defines all agencies responsibilities in respect of safeguarding children.
Day to Day Safeguarding Practice – Law and Guidance

The essential issues are contained in the 1989 Children Act.

The Act balances children’s right to be protected with parent’s rights to bring up a child in the way they see fit. Intervention by statutory agencies in family life must be justified.

**Section 1 Welfare Principle** “the welfare of the child is paramount”. This means that if there is conflict between the parents’ beliefs and practices towards their children and the child needs to be protected from possible harm, the child’s right to be protected overrides the parent’s wishes/beliefs on how the child should be brought up.

**Section 8 Private Law** - this covers orders made in private law proceedings in the family courts. In simple terms these are court orders made when parents separate and cannot agree on plans for the children.

**Residence Orders** - who the child should live with  
**Contact Orders** - when and where the non-resident parent can see their child.  
**Prohibited Steps Orders** – may prohibit an action, especially if it makes another order unworkable e.g. moving a long distance away or abroad may make a contact order unworkable.  
**Specific Issues** – may be used to resolve conflict possibly even which secondary school a child should attend.

**Parental Responsibility** – the idea is that parents have responsibilities towards their children rather than rights over them. Who has PR can be confusing. Mothers always have it, married fathers have it, unmarried fathers did not have it, but for children born after 1 December 2003 unmarried fathers who register the birth with the mother will have it. This can be a difficult area for schools and settings particularly when parents are going through divorce proceedings or are separated. We would advise consultation with EST in dealing with some of these issues.

**CAF and Early intervention**  
Early help services have been reconfigured in Kent. These services are now managed via the EYPS directorate. Each area will have local hubs where a range of services may be accessed KIFFS for younger Children based around Children’s centres and KIASS for older children based around youth centres.

Full details can be found on KELSI [http://www.kelsi.org.uk/section_1.aspx](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/section_1.aspx)  
Some services are commissioned from other providers e.g. young healthy minds or Porchlight.

**Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families**

This is the national framework for assessing children in need, including those who might be in need of protection. It consists of three domains: the Child, the Parenting Capacity, the Environmental factors. Referrals to social services will
ask for the reason for referral and then for background information under the three headings. (see accompanying document)

**Section 17 of the 1989 Children Act** relates to Children in Need, often abbreviated to CHIN by Children’s Social Services. This is essentially preventative services for children who may become at risk of harm without provision of services. In some cases CSS provides services directly while in others they fund other bodies to provide these services. Involvement in section 17 services is voluntary, parents and families cannot be compelled to accept services they do not want. However refusal to accept assistance may increase concerns about their “Parental Capacity” to understand and respond appropriately to their children’s needs.

**Section 47 of the 1989 Children Act** covers children suffering or at risk of suffering **significant harm**. Significant Harm is defined in terms of “ill treatment or impairment of health or development”. Section 47 allows CSS to assess and intervene in a child’s family without parental consent. Information sharing under section 47 is explicitly Data Protection Act exempt. If a social worker contacts the school requesting information under section 47 you must give the information. You are advised however that if you do not know the social worker you take steps to confirm their identity for example by asking to ring them back through their main office. (Telephone numbers are contained on the attached leaflet “Child Protection – Guidelines for School staff”).

**Referral and Consultation with Children’s Social Services**

Children’s Social Services are organised into locally based teams of social workers.

There are twelve local offices. Each office has an intake team which deals with new referrals and assessments. There will also be a long term team who deal with ongoing work e.g. children subject to child protection plans or court proceedings.

There is **centrally based** Social Services team known as the **County Duty team or CDT**. The CDT is the central point for collating referrals to all of Social Services including Children’s Social Services, Adult Services etc. This service is also available for out of hours emergencies. The CDT sits within the Central Referral Unit – CRU which is centrally based and processes all consultations and new referrals. The CRU has representatives from Social services, police, CAF Co-ordinators, health and the LADO. This team makes the initial decision on whether referrals meet the threshold criteria and at what level.

Child in Need Referral forms go via the CDT to the local area teams. However, when you consult with the CDT Duty social worker you may be told that the case is urgent and needs to be dealt with immediately under Section 47. In these cases emergency action may begin centrally with a conference call strategy discussion but will then be managed locally.
From May 2011 Child in Need Referrals i.e. children not at immediate risk of harm, are assessed by social workers at CDT and if accepted as meeting the Child in need threshold, forwarded to the local teams. It is also possible if referrals do not meet the CHIN thresholds they will be referred to the local Preventative Services Manager and Early Intervention co-ordinator for consideration of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) A document “Kent and Medway Inter-agency threshold criteria for children in Need 2014” explains levels of intervention in more detail.

What this means for you

Sometimes it is obvious that a referral needs to be made e.g. the child with a black eye tells you their parent hit them and they are frightened to go home. Although upsetting, these situations are straightforward in the sense that you have heard enough to have good reason to believe that a child has been hurt, possibly deliberately, by an adult. There is evidence that the child has been victim of physical abuse and criminal assault. The evidence of “ill treatment” is immediately there in front of you to see. In these cases you would be advised by your Area Safeguarding Adviser to contact Children’s Social Services to make a referral.

In reality most issues in school are less straightforward. Schools may notice changes in behaviour or presentation. You may see patterns over time e.g. the child is always upset every second Monday after contact with a separated parent. You may be worried about the long effect on the child’s “health and development” if nothing changes. In order to decide if a referral needs to be made you may initially consult with the Education Safeguarding team. On discussion you may be advised on action to take in school e.g. closer monitoring, consulting with other staff, preparing a chronology etc. On some occasions where it appears possible that a child may be suffering harm you may be advised to seek a professional consultation with the Duty Social Worker.

Professional Consultation with Children’s Social Services has a defined specific purpose in the Kent procedures which is “to assist the potential referrer to decide whether to make a formal referral. It is not necessary to identify the child or family, but withholding such information may restrict consideration of all relevant facts. CSS should keep a record of all consultations and send a copy to the professional who initiated the consultation.

What this means is that if you are not sure whether or not to make a referral, you can contact the CDT and request a “consultation with the Duty Social Worker about a possible Child Protection issue”. At this point you do not need to name the child. This allows you to get advice without initially betraying any confidences - this can be particularly important with adolescents. You may then be given advice about how best to proceed. You may be advised that a referral is not necessary but you will be given a reference number and notes of the discussion and any advice given.

You may be asked to give a name in order to check against records held by CSS and possible also police and health. This may be particularly important for
suspected domestic abuse as an address can be checked with the police or health can check Accident and Emergency records.

You may be advised that the situation is urgent and needs immediate investigation in which case you pass on the full details of the child. The local CRU assess the initial risk and may initiate investigations and assessments immediately. However you will still need to fill in an Inter Agency Referral Form which is sent to the CDT, within 48 hours. Receipt of your referral should be acknowledged.

If there are three or more consultations/year about a named child, the CDT Team Manager should consider the need for further action.

**Referrals to Children’s social services**

Referrals are made on the interagency referral form IAR which can be obtained from the KSCB website [www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk) or the Central Referral Unit 03000 41 1111.

The completed form can be emailed to county duty or faxed. Numbers are on the IAR. Currently social workers based at CRU will assess referrals and decide on action, unless the case is open to the SCS District Office. The Eligibility Criteria helps to determine thresholds for intervention.

**Possible Outcomes of a Referral** (see appendix 2 of the interagency eligibility and thresholds document 2014)

A referral may be assessed as

1) Not meeting the child in need threshold. At that point it may be closed or it may be referred to the local Preventative Services Manager and Early Intervention Co-ordinator to consider if it appropriate to carry out a CAF (Common Assessment framework).

2) Meeting the Child in Need Threshold. This will trigger an assessment and CDT will then send the referral to the local area team to undertake this assessment. This may involve checking CSS records, gathering more information and checking with other agencies. This can take up to 45 days to complete. However the child should be seen within 10 days and you should be informed of what is happening within 15 days. Following Assessment this may lead to a reduction in concern leading to NFA - No Further Action or to a CAF or to a CHIN plan. Sometimes an assessment indicates a higher level of concern, which means the case may need further consideration under section 47.

3) If there is evidence of the child being at risk of harm it may lead to a Child Protection Investigation under section 47 of the 1989 Children Act. This would involve a strategy discussion or meeting involving CSS
the police, the referrer (i.e. you!) and health or other agencies as appropriate. This must take place within 24 hours. In emergencies where the child may be at immediate risk of harm this is often done on the phone via a conference call to avoid delay. The purpose of the Strategy meeting (often referred to as simply the “strat”) is to assess information, evaluate risk, decide on immediate measures to safeguard the child, decide if a CP investigation needs to take place and if so by whom and in what timescale. There may be several strats before an investigation is completed.

Final outcomes may include NFA, decision to carry out an Assessment, or a decision to hold a Child Protection Conference to consider if there needs to be a formal Child Protection Plan. Finally some referrals may go all the way to criminal action against a perpetrator or action in the family court to protect the child e.g. Application for an Emergency Protection Order or an Interim Care Order.
Child Protection Resources CD for DCPCs

The CD is in three sections covering the main aspects of the DCPC Role

Referrals

The referral section of the CD contains:
Inter agency referral form 2014 version (IAR)
Guidance notes for the IAR form
Inter-agency threshold criteria 2014

Awareness

There is an information folder on the disc containing information on:
Information sharing
Safeguarding self review
Safer working practice
Safer recruitment

In Addition there is specialist information on:

Domestic Abuse/Violence
E-Safety
Mental health
Home Alone
Underage sexual activity
Behaviour management
Allegation management

Training

Introduction
PowerPoint presentations for schools including trainers’ notes
Case studies including those for different ages, and additional needs.
“What is Child Abuse” Exercise and trainers’ notes
Child protection questions and answers for school staff