**Central Referral Unit**

**Consultation Process**

**January 2017**

The following recommendations were agreed by members of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board on the 2nd December 2016 following an audit on the appropriateness of consultations being sought from the Central Referral Unit (CRU).

**Purpose of a consultation:**

The purpose of a consultation is to provide advice regarding the most suitable action to take when working with a child, young person and their family. A consultation **should not be sought** when an Inter-Agency Referral Form (IAR) or an Early Help Notification (EHN) has already been made, nor when there are concerns that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

**Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of the professional contacting the CRU to ensure that all necessary actions set out below are followed prior to seeking a consultation.

* The consultee will be expected to seek advice from their internal Safeguarding Lead within their organisation prior to contacting the CRU.
* The consultee will be expected to have a discussion with the parent, carer or young person regarding their concerns prior to contacting the CRU. This discussion may lead to a greater understanding of the concerns and enable identification of appropriate support for the child, young person or family without the need for seeking a consultation.
* When seeking a consultation, it will be beneficial to share the identity of the child or young person with the CRU Social Worker. This will allow the Social Worker to check systems held by Specialist Children’s Services and Early Help to ensure that the most appropriate advice is provided. No information will be shared with the consultee regarding the history of the child, however, if the child or a sibling is receiving support from either Specialist Children’s Services or Early Help, the consultee will be provided with details of the allocated worker so direct contact can be made.
* The CRU **will no longer record** any details of the consultation. This will be the responsibility of the professional seeking the consultation. However, if the concerns being raised are of a safeguarding nature, this will be recorded on the Specialist Children’s Services system to ensure immediate appropriate action is taken. Under these circumstances, the professional will be required to subsequently submit their concerns via the Inter-Agency Referral Form.