

TAKING CONTACTS AND REFERRALS – AIDE MEMOIRE

Have Pen and Workbook or Computer Ready Poor notes mean poor practice.

Respond Professionally at All Times Whoever calls, however they speak to you.

Know Your Duties and Your Mandate Learn what is in S17, S44 and S47 of Children Act 89

Consult Procedures First, Manager Second unless an Emergency Deeper learning, more efficient.

The Content of the Referral Counts, Not the Status of the Referrer Don't dismiss referrals from non-professionals: anonymous and even 'malicious' referrals can still be true. Don't accept unclear referrals from professionals owing to high-status (see Explore/Clarify section below). If professional referrers lack info they (reasonably) should have, ask *them* to get it urgently and call back, *if this doesn't compromise child's safety*.

Ensure the Referrer Uses the Right Referral Form Multi-agency referral form (except for Police)

Don't Leave Unexplained Gaps in Information If referrers can't give full info ask why *and record reason*. Do *not* leave blanks

Get Full Family Details to Aid Robust Checks and Decisions Always seek: diversity info, alternative surnames, DOB for everyone, *including adults, whether related or not* Always seek full details of all children in household, *siblings or not*. Always seek details of *both* natural parents, separated or not, whether PR or not. **Always ask about men involved with the family.**

Never assume lone-parents have no partner. Ask if there is one, get details *whether living together or not* Always ask for post-codes of various addresses. Always ask if family has lived outside Slough, *including parents as children*. Get ex-address/town. Check if family ever lived abroad. Get details if so. Always ask if child or adult has special needs, *get specific info* about communication needs

Get Full Details of Professionals Involved The emphasis is on *full* - get (and record!) referrers' job title and contact numbers Always get details of other professionals' involved with family *including type/level of contact with family* Don't forget: *ask about adult services involved* with parents. Get details. Always ask what services or approaches have been tried *especially CAF/TAC* and why these did not help?

Explore and Clarify Concerns About the Child Get specific. Ask for *actual examples or descriptions* of the child's presentation, need, risk or alleged harm, not catch-all terms e.g. 'abuse' 'risk', or 'neglect' Ask if there's any other possible reason for problem referred. Ask how, where, when referrer became aware of concerns. Ask who the alleged perpetrator is: get details. Ask what the *child* and family's explanation is for difficulties or alleged harm. Ask for details of any previous concerns. Get date child was last seen by referrer. Get alleged abuser's current whereabouts. Get child's current whereabouts.

Check for Protective Factors Always ask for signs of strength, resilience, or coping in the child or family. Ask if there's any (trustworthy) kinship support. Check the referred level of need or harm against the Slough Threshold.

Always Ask if There is any Immediate Danger to Children or a Vulnerable Adult The referrer should give evidence.

Address Consent to Referral Issue Always ask if referrer has alerted family to referral but... be clear when this should be sought *and when it should not* (ie might put child at risk or might compromise enquiries). Be clear when consent can be reasonably with-held *and when it cannot*. Always ask what the parents' *and child's* response to proposed referral was.

Ask if any person/animal in house poses a known risk to professionals Referrer should give evidence.

Promote Joint-Working from the Start Unless it's inappropriate/impractical, seek professional referrers' agreement to joint visits and joint work. If they decline unreasonably, challenge appropriately and/or record reasons given.

Analyse the Info. Make Clear Recommendations for Dealing with the Referral This is your job, not the managers'. Record all clearly.

Endings and Next Steps Just NFA-ing can mean repeat referrals. Wasting resources is bad too e.g. doing IAs when S17 not met so...

Use thresholds to provide the right service, not to provide no service

Always ask the referrer what help or LA action the referrer is seeking. Use the Slough Threshold to sign-post referrers to non-statutory agencies as appropriate – *and explain this*. Don't commit other agencies without their permission Always explain to referrer action to be taken. Always double-check they understand, *suggest they record outcome of discussion too*. If referrer is a professional, ask for written confirmation within 48 hours if appropriate. Once Manager decides, close down contact or send acknowledgement of referral as appropriate.