

Guidance for recording concerns about Children and Young People (CYP)

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INTRODUCTION

The reason for this guidance and example record of concern are as a result of a direct request by some schools to have clarification as to what is considered good practice and meets statutory requirements when recording concerns. In addition, the Child Protection School Liaison team are aware that there can sometimes be confusion regarding expectations of information sharing about children and their families e.g. what is required and what is not.

In Hertfordshire, schools use either **paper** records of concerns (ROC) or an **electronic** version to record concerns, this guidance is applicable to both. E.g. if desired you can use the framework to support your thinking and use the actual headings on the ROC form to construct and record the information. If you adopt this method please ensure whole school staff and volunteers are familiar with the layout of a ROC, many schools already make these available in their staff rooms or other accessible areas.

Please note, this guidance should be read in conjunction with the updated Safeguarding **Records Practice Guidance** available at: http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml.

BACKGROUND

Safeguarding records have been highlighted within individual management/serious case reviews undertaken in Hertfordshire and nationally- particularly, the need for robust procedures for the recording, sharing and transfer of information within and between educational establishments.

For some children a one off serious incident or concern may occur and staff will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported. More often however, it is the accumulation of a number of small incidents, events or observations that can provide the evidence of harm being caused to a child. Records should be factually accurate, clear, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk assessment and planning for children and young people, enabling informed and timely referrals to be made when necessary. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of **all** staff working within a school.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK (Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2016)

- No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. (Para 3)

- All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead. (Para 29)
- It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect; poor record keeping; failing to listen to the views of the child; failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve; sharing information too slowly; and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action. (Para 30)

DSP/L ROLE

- Ensure all staff members know when and how to record concerns about a child's welfare, however small or apparently insignificant.
- Ensure all staff know where to locate key documents such as record of concern forms/have access to an electronic recording system, have access to Part 1 and Annex A of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2016), the school/setting's code of conduct, child protection policy, *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused* (2015). For Early Years settings, all staff should know where to locate the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (2017), specifically section 3 - *Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements*.
- When a record of concern form is passed to the DSP/L/completed electronically, it is important that the DSP/L checks that this is sufficiently detailed and has been signed and dated by the staff member reporting the concern.
- The DSP/L needs to consider the safety and wellbeing of the child and whether the concern raised indicates emerging/unmet needs for the child. The DSP/L needs to make a professional judgement about how the concern should be responded to. The DSP must record the action taken in response to every record of concern form, regardless of outcome. The level of detail of this record will clearly depend on the nature and seriousness of the concern but may include:
 - ❖ Requests to staff for monitoring specific aspects of the child/young person's presentation, behaviour, attendance, etc. **Be specific in your recording- give timescales /frequency.**
 - ❖ discussions and telephone calls, with colleagues, children/young people and parents, along with a record of full names and dates
 - ❖ Record of any professional consultations where advice/guidance has been sought. This should include a record of who was consulted (full name and job title) and date/s consulted
 - ❖ letters sent and received
 - ❖ record of the outcomes of any responses or action the DSP/L took, with dates
 - ❖ updating the chronology (examples available at: http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml)
 - ❖ updating the child/young person's file as new documents are produced or received
 - ❖ filing all copies of referrals or letters sent
 - ❖ updating the front sheet, if necessary (examples available at: http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml)
 - ❖ cross-referencing to files for other children/young people within the family

RECORD OF CONCERNS SUMMARY

- Use of a standard 'record of concern' form by all staff, irrespective of their role in school, and some guidance about completion is strongly recommended. A proforma for the record of concern form can be found on the child protection area of the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning: http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml
- Blank copies of the record of concern form must be easily accessible to all staff and depending on the size and type of school, should be available in a range of places.
- It is acknowledged that many schools employ a range of staff who hold specific pastoral care responsibilities and who may have their own systems for recording their ongoing work with children and their families e.g. diaries/notebooks. Where possible this should be avoided, but if necessary, the DSP/Ls should be aware of these systems and establish processes for sharing information. School staff must be advised that they must take care to ensure that no sensitive material is communicated by insecure means. This would include email, but also notes left for colleagues. In all cases where specific safeguarding concerns arise, staff must be aware of their responsibility to complete the school's formal record of concern form.
- A record of concern form or electronic entry should be completed as soon as is reasonably possible (at the latest within 24hours) following a safeguarding concern, to ensure that no details are forgotten.
- The expectation would be that staff would ensure the DSP/L was informed of the concern in a timely manner, even if this means recording the concern after passing the information on verbally
- Records relating to work with the child and his or her family should use clear, straightforward language, be concise and be accurate not only in fact, but also in differentiating between opinion, judgement and hypothesis. Staff should be mindful of the need to record information in an objective and professional manner, as it may be shared with the child, parents and other agencies, as part of an investigation or inquiry. Additionally safeguarding records may be required for disclosure in court proceedings.

MODEL- ILLUSTRATING INFORMATION TO INTELLIGENCE

T Morrison and J Wonnacott Model of Information to Intelligence 2009 sets out a cycle that illustrates how we may respond to information and the process in which we gather further evidence and what may get in the way.

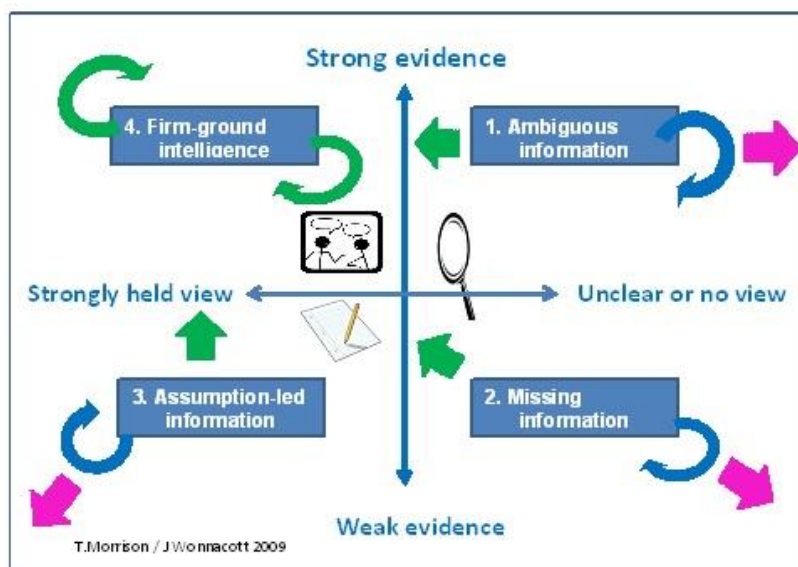
Types of information - The nature and presentation of information in any field is rarely straightforward. In the field of children's social care and safeguarding, it can be particularly complex and ambiguous due to professional and inter-agency anxiety, fear of getting it wrong and the difficulties of getting information from anxious and sometimes reluctant service users. In other words, information in this field rarely comes with clarity about what it is, how it has been obtained and what it means.

It's the task of staff and practitioners to share, sift, search for and determine how important their information is. It is through this process that raw data (facts, feelings and beliefs) can be transformed into useful intelligence that helps describe and evidence our concerns. Serious case reviews often provide key messages of how one piece of the jigsaw only makes sense when fitted together with the other pieces.

See diagram below shows how different types of evidence and belief can produce four different types of information:

1. ambiguous,
2. missing,
3. assumption-led or
4. Coherent information. (Firm-ground intelligence)

THE PROCESS FROM INFORMATION TO INTELLIGENCE



- The **curved arrows** indicate the need to inquire further and dig deeper to decide whether the information is useful and relevant. If so, it moves towards coherent information (Green arrow).
- Alternatively, testing the information may eliminate it either as irrelevant or as ungrounded (pink arrow).
- The **figures in the middle** symbolise scrutiny (magnifying glass), face-to-face discussion (match stick people) and the recording of information (note book and pen). These actions are fundamental in helping the worker sift and test the information. This can lead to highlighting and exploring discrepancies in information, and deciding whether further inquiries are needed to clarify whether the information is valuable.

This approach starts from the viewpoint that raw information is almost always complex and problematic. However we need to test and explore assumptions, ambiguities or gaps in information, ensuring that analysis and planning are on solid foundations and firm ground.

Note- this model illustrates the full circle of the process from identification of a concern to reporting and response, in schools staff will be involved at different levels of this e.g. a teacher or LSA will be key in stage 1 and may be involved in stage 2 and 3 but unlikely to be involved in stage 4 where it would be the role of the headteacher, DSP and other agencies to establish stage 4.

RECORD OF CONCERN (ROC) EXAMPLE

| | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Name of child, young person (CYP): Jack Titmus | | Date of birth and age: Age 5 | |
| Male/female : | Ethnic Origin : | Disability Y/N : | Religion : |
| Male | WBRI | N | Not known |
| Day & date Tuesday 22nd | Month October | Year 2016 | Time recorded / reported 11am |
| <p>Initial report of the concern / s: <i>In factual terms; use of open ended questions to clarify e.g. Who, what, when and how What did the, CYP say? How are they feeling? How is their behaviour? Are there any signs of injuries or pain? (if so illustrate on body map) Are any other CYP or adults involved?</i></p> <p>JT has been fighting in class and swearing at other pupils. When he was calmer he talked about why he was so angry, he said his 'Mummy and Daddy' fight and swear all the time at home. I asked him when they last did this/ he said last night and his older sister 'shouted back at Daddy' and daddy then lost his temper with her and smacked her, JT said he was scared and cried. On further prompting he said that his dad left the house and his mum took him and his baby sister to his granny's. JT said his daddy is sometimes a bad man, when asked what he meant he said the police take him away.</p> <p>I asked how his mummy was last night and today?, he said mummy sad and cries a lot, she fell over last night when she drank some smelly drink with auntie Sue – he added mummy is scared of daddy too.</p> | | | |
| <p>Additional information: <i>Your views on what you know about the CYP e.g. Any previous concerns? How are they doing in school? Any comments on their presentation, their personal circumstances (such as health, development and whether they have any additional needs), their identity, race, religion and/or if known, their social relationships with their family, friends and wider networks?</i></p> <p>JT has not long been in the school he only started in September so limited knowledge of him but he needs a lot of re assurance in class and I have had to ask mum on 2 occasions to bring in his winter coat as he has shown up without one. Mum looks distant and reluctant to talk with me, there is no eye contact and she looks very pale and underweight herself. His older brother is also on roll at the school and you think that there is an older sister at secondary school. JT generally gets on with other children but can be very aggressive and spiteful towards them, he also complains of being hungry a lot, I mentioned this to mum but she said they are a big family and is very greedy. Not much is known about the family yet, I have only seen dad once at the admission meeting, and he was very stand offish and showed little warmth towards JT. He also swore in front of JT e.g. he became impatient with JT and said 'for F*** sake sit still'. I found him intimidating.</p> <p>I am also aware from a neighbour of the family that there is a lot of shouting and arguing and people coming and going to the flat they live in but I have not said anything until now as this has nothing to do with school.</p> | | | |
| <p>Your response and actions to the concern: <i>What you have said to CYP / done, agreed to do?</i></p> <p>I reassured JT and told him if ever he was upset r was worried he can come to me or Mrs Baker. Currently JT is now out of class as he was not ready or able to settle down to learn so we have arranged for him to have some time out with the school family support worker.</p> | | | |
| <p>Name : Mrs Teresa Noble</p> <p>Role or position: Class Teacher</p> <p>Signature :</p> <p><i>If not an employee of the school, please ensure you provide your contact details, should the DSP need to contact you regarding your concern.</i></p> | | | |
| <p>Headteacher/ DSP's immediate response and actions taken: <i>Include sharing and gathering information, speaking to CYP, parents or carers and gauging their response. This may also include undertaking a professional consultation. Has any immediate risk assessment been carried out if so what?</i></p> <p>DSP aware that the family are new to the area, they have moved from another part of the county but the reason for this is not apparent at this stage, there is very little information on JT records. Later in the day child made a further disclosure to FSW of domestic abuse that he had witnessed. I did not speak to JT as class teacher and FSW information sufficient to seek advice form CS, JT only 5 and there is a baby in the family, both could be at risk of harm.</p> <p>Called the CPSLO consultation service to seek advice I was advise, was advised to make a safeguarding referral based on the information above and the fact that there was history on CS records indicating that there has been previous concerns raised about ongoing domestic abuse, there was also a previous referral from JT pre-school a year ago suggesting that mum mis-uses alcohol and JT at had presented at school with an unexplained bruise to his neck.</p> <p>CS carried out a child and family assessment and then the case was closed shortly after as it was established the injury to JT</p> | | | |

neck was caused by his older sibling when they had a play fight. At the same time mum left dad and went to live with her mother and took 3 children and the baby, as the risk was reduced and mum willing to engage CS recommendation was for the case to be stepped down to a Families First assessment to continue support and actions identified in the assessment. The lead professional was to be health.

CPSLO advised that record indicate that this FFA never got off the ground as mum back tracked and did not engage, her view was the children and herself were in a safe place as she was living with her mother and had a lot of family support from her sister also. The relationship with the children's father had broken down and she had a non-molestation order on him. Mother also signposted to The Sunflower Centre for support and advice. CPSLO advised that It stated on the last assessment by CS that if mum resumes her relationship with the children's father and there are further concerns a referral is to be made to CS for safeguarding.

School have identified that there is a need for a risk assessment management plan to address any potential danger that father may present to JT and the other children in school community. The risk assessment is that father not permitted on school grounds as he is an unassessed risk, if he refuses to comply with this and shows up at the school for the two sibling's police will be called.

Information shared with Parents / carers? Are they aware of schools concerns / actions carried out to support / safeguard CYP? Do you have consent for this? If not rationale for not sharing information?

Today 22 10 2016 not yet been able to speak to mum we do not have her mobile number and she is not answering the home phone as she is at her mother's?

Given the information at present, no call to dad as the situation is an unassessed risk.

22. 10 .2016, met with mother at school and discussed the concerns and advised that school have made a safeguarding referral.

Request sought from mother to share information with key staff and advised that CS would be speaking to her older child's secondary school as part of welfare checks.

Information shared with other staff /other agencies? Who, what, how and your rationale for this?

CPSLO consultation carried out as above as had limited information on the back ground of the family and was not sure if this would meet an immediate threshold for child protection. See record of this on the child's files dated 22/10/2016.

Class teacher updated e.g. to alert me when mum arrives to pick up JT and inform her that I need to meet with her ASAP.

Later managed to meet with mum and she confirmed that she is a victim of domestic abuse and she fears for herself and the children.

Also informed key staff, reception, class teacher to of potential risk father presents and to inform HT if he shows up at the school.

Outcome for the child / ren: What level of intervention is required to safeguard and promote the CYP's welfare? i.e. where does this level of need sit on the **Continuum of Need document** www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/referral/index.shtml#need - Universal, Targeted, Intensive Support or Specialist/Safeguarding?

Safeguarding referral made to CS for safeguarding as children are at risk of significant harm.

23 10 2016, called CS to seek update was informed that the case has gone to the assessment team they will be in touch with parent and school, person gave me the name of the team manager [Wendy Bloomfield](#).

In the meantime both children to be monitored and supported in school, as below.

Feedback given to member of staff reporting concern: This is to be an overview omitting any confidential information, consider 'need to know'

- Informed class teacher referral made to CS for assessment of child and family's needs
- Key staff in the school to be informed if dad shows up at the school to inform HT immediately as he is at present an un assessed risk.
- Class teacher asked to continue to monitor and work with FSW to support JT and his sibling.
- Any further concerns to report these immediately to HT or DSP's in the school.

Your name : Mrs Berkshaw
Your role or position: Headteacher

Date, day and time of this recording : Tuesday 23rd @16.30
Your signature :

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING A ROC

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| Headings on the ROC | <p>What is required or / and what to consider about child</p> <p>Note: All the white boxes on ROC to be filled out by the person who has a concern to report, suspects a CYP is at risk of abuse /neglect or the concern has come to you by other means.</p> <p>The grey boxes on ROC to be completed by headteacher, principal, designated senior person (DSP) e.g. record their response and actions taken.</p> |
| Child young person's (CYP) Name : | Always use the child's full name and any aliases with correct spelling. |
| CYP DOB /age: | Need full DOB; this is often needed by other agencies to trace records. |
| Male/Female : | If child has unusual spelling of name is clear of their identity / sex. |
| Ethnic Origin : | Helpful particular if concern is in relation to faith abuse, e.g. beliefs held about certain punishment (chastising child with belt) or FGM forced marriage. Help us understand that parent may consider their actions legitimate because of their beliefs and religion. |
| Disability Y/N : | Helpful to gauge child young persons (CYP) understanding of the situation / incident and their capacity to protect themselves and consent. |
| Religion : | Understanding how child perceives and integrates with within a western society e.g. different values and beliefs. Is CYP able to identify with their culture and belief systems without being made to feel oppressed by other family members, friends and institutions? |
| Day, date (including year) and time of concern : | It is imperative to provide a timeline for recognition, reporting and response to CYP needs. All services responsible for safeguarding children are required to act in a timely way as delay exposes children to further abuse and neglect. Regulators such as Ofsted scrutinise children's records and expect data controllers to audit children files and evidence that there is no time delay and the safety of children is prioritised. |
| Initial report of the concern / s | <p>This is to be recorded by the person / s who the disclosure is made or the person who has witnessed or suspects abuse and neglect.</p> <p>This includes any member of staff, volunteer and also external contactors, clubs suing the school and visitors to the school and parents.</p> <p>In factual terms – what did the child say? How are they feeling? Any comments about their behaviour? Are there any obvious signs of injuries or pain? (if so, use body map and attach) Are any other children or adults involved? Clarify using open ended questions to clarify, who, what, when and how etc</p> <p>Do not be afraid ever to talk and listen to a CYP, you can clarify with a child what may of happened, is happening etc the more information the better as the process to support and protect child rely on firm grounded information.</p> <p>Children can disclose in stages and so this may be their first attempt and if ignored an opportunity could be lost.</p> <p>Be 'professionally curious' at all times.</p> |
| Additional information : | Your opinion, context of concern/disclosure you may know of the CYP well and their family, friends peers, because as professional you have spent a lot of time in the school environment. You may live in the area and have local |

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| | <p>community information, gossip what people have said, if so record this as it is e.g. 'hearsay'.</p> <p>Your views on what you know about the CYP e.g. Any previous concerns? How are they doing in school? How do they get on with others, staff their peers, Any comments on their presentation, their personal circumstances (such as health, development and whether they have any additional needs), their identity, race, religion and/or if known, their social relationships with their family, friend and wider networks?</p> |
| Your response and actions to the concern: | <p>A factual account of what you have said to CYP and agreed to do? This is taking concerns seriously listening and talking to the CYP and being honest and open with them about what your role is e.g. to pass on if child presents as needing support or protection. Apply all the rules of talking and listening to children as set out in schools handbook that accompanies your stage one statutory training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise • Respond • Record • Report <p>If you hear something and you are concerned say something. This may be a little part of a puzzle that you are unaware as there could be other information on records both at the school and on other held by other agencies.</p> <p>You must following child protection procedures in your school there is a process which requires you to pass on to your headteacher / DSL or deputies.</p> |
| Name , Role and Signature | <p>Name needs to be in full and always be signed</p> <p>Contact details (if not a member of school staff, e.g. contractor):</p> <p>Never abbreviate as when a CYP records are passed on or information needed by specialist and safeguarding services, following the CYP story / journey can be made difficult if it is not clear who is who and what their role is.</p> |
| Headteacher/ DSP's immediate response and actions taken: Your position in school/ role: | <p>SLT have very specific safeguarding roles for safeguarding including in this making sure that there is always some available to respond to concerns raised about CYP in the school.</p> <p>Include in this section sharing and gathering information, verification, speaking to CYP, parents or carers and gauging their response. This may also include undertaking a professional consultation. Has any immediate risk assessment been identified / carried out?</p> |
| Information shared with Parents / carers? | <p>Are they aware of schools concerns / actions carried out to support / safeguard CYP? Do you have consent for this? If not rationale for not sharing information?</p> <p>If not to both why? The only time you would not be speaking to a parent is if you believe that this would place the CYP at risk. Therefore you should always work openly and honestly with parents and cares and although at times this is difficult in the longer term the outcomes for children is much improved for all parties.</p> <p>Consider that we are responsible for safeguarding and within this required to 'promote the welfare' of CYP. This means that working at this level with CYP and their families is primarily early help and support.</p> |
| Information shared with other staff/ agencies? | <p>Who, what, how and your rationale for this? Consent needed for this?</p> <p>Reminder of confidentiality.</p> |

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| <p>Outcome for the CYP?</p> | <p>What level of intervention is required to safeguard and promote the CYP welfare? i.e. where does this level of need sit on the Continuum of Need document www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/referral/index.shtml#need - Universal, Targeted, Intensive Support or Specialist/Safeguarding?</p> <p>If parents are not informed prior to a referral then a clear rationale for not informing needs to be on the referral form but could also be in this section.</p> |
| <p>Feedback given to member of staff reporting concern:</p> | <p>Basic outline of the plan for the CYP, Consider 'need to know' and schools policy on confidentiality. However this should never get in the way of sharing important information to staff that you have identified as a key part to monitoring and supporting a CYP.</p> |
| <p>Information shared with other member of staff /other agencies?</p> | <p>If so, what information was shared and what was the rationale for this? Who, what, how and your rationale for this?</p> |
| <p>Your name : Your role or position: Date, day and time of this recording : Your signature :</p> | <p>Name needs to be in full and always be signed Contact details (if not a member of school staff, e.g. contractor) Do not abbreviate your name as when a CYP records are passed on or information needed by specialist and safeguarding services, the courts; following the CYP story / journey can be made difficult if it is not clear who is who and what their role was etc</p> <p>It is imperative to provide a timeline for recognition, reporting and response to CYP needs. All services responsible for safeguarding children are required to act in a timely way as delay exposes children to further abuse and neglect. Regulators such as Ofsted scrutinise children's records and expect data controllers to audit children files and evidence that there is no time delay and the safety of children is prioritised.</p> |

- ✓ Child clearly identified?
- ✓ Name, designation and signature of the person completing the record populated?
- ✓ Date, day and time of any incidents or when a concern was observed?
- ✓ Date, day and time of written record?
- ✓ If a third party has raised concerns, are details of this person included (name, relationship to the child and their contact details if relevant)?
- ✓ Distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay
- ✓ Concern described in sufficient detail, i.e. no further clarification necessary?
- ✓ Child's own words used? (Swear words, insults, or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim.)
- ✓ Are the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event included?
Is it clear what their relationship is to the child?
- ✓ Record free of jargon?
- ✓ Written in a professional manner without stereotyping or discrimination?
- ✓ What did the member of staff say or do in response to the concern?
- ✓ Record of concern completed in a timely manner?
- ✓ Record of concern passed to DSP in a timely manner?
- ✓ The record includes an attached completed body map (if relevant) to show any visible injuries (body map available at www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml)
- ✓ Is any additional paperwork, e.g. handwritten notes of conversation with parents attached securely to this record?
- ✓ Has DSP completed their sections in full- including action taken and outcome, feedback to staff and information sharing?
- ✓ If the concerns have not been referred to Children's Services/Police, are the reasons clearly recorded by the DSP?

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| Audit date: | | Audited completed by: | |
| Overall RAG rating (see key below) | | | |
| Action needed | Timescale | Name and position of person responsible | Date action completed |
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| RED | Indicates that information from the checklist is lacking and deficiencies need to be addressed as a matter of urgency |
| AMBER | Indicates that key information is included but recording could be further improved |
| GREEN | Indicates that the recording meets the above required standards |

If you intend to give a copy of the above action plan to the member of staff, please ensure they are not given page 1, i.e. the actual record of concern form which contains confidential details.