

Protocol between Children's Social Services (CSS) and Police Public Protection Unit (PPU) in respect of child protection enquiries.

Receiving information

If the presenting information to CSS suggests that there is any possibility that a crime may have been committed, this information must be discussed with the PPU and a decision made regarding enquiries being made jointly.

Similarly, if the information is received by the PPU indicates a child protection concern, the matter must be discussed with CSS and a decision made regarding enquiries being made jointly.

Recording the decisions made

If the discussion takes the form of a meeting there will be a formal record of that meeting which will be shared with all parties.

If the discussion takes the form of a conversation (in person, by telephone or electronically) the information and decision will be recorded on the 'Protocol Strategy Discussion' document and forwarded electronically to the other party.

If the decision is NOT to undertake joint enquiries, the reasons for this will also be recorded on this document

In the event of single agency enquiries, the other party will not close the matter until they have been informed of the outcome of those enquiries.

Thresholds for joint enquiries

- INI checks will be undertaken in response to all referrals
- There will be an assumption of a joint visit rather than not in any case where there is the possibility that a crime has been committed
- Joint enquiries will be made in respect of any allegation of physical or sexual harm.
- Joint enquiries in respect of neglect will be subject to the context of the referral.
- Although PPU staff will not be used in cases where CSS are seeking personal protection (as uniformed colleagues provide this service) a joint visit may be appropriate where there is little likelihood of further criminal investigation but a need for additional support to encourage co-operation/ stress the seriousness of the matter. These decisions will be at the discretion of PPU

Undertaking joint enquiries

Once a decision has been made to undertake a joint visit the officers allocated the task will liaise regarding when and where to meet to ensure joint attendance.

Once a joint visit has commenced it will remain joint throughout, even if there is to be no further PPU involvement, UNLESS the social worker indicates that police attendance is no longer needed.

Completing enquiries

It is recognised that there are two different purposes behind these enquiries:

- Is the child(ren) safe, in the immediate, short and longer term?
- Has a crime been committed?

The nature and length of involvement may, therefore, be significantly different however each party will notify the other of the final outcome of their involvement. (Unless this notification is unnecessary as the information is held within another document such as the minutes of child protection conferences)