PROMPTS FOR AGENCIES TO CONSIDER IN RELATION TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

This document was devised to act as a prompt sheet for considerations to be made by agencies in cases of suspected or known child sexual abuse. It provides both questions for practitioners to consider, and indicators of what this may look like in practice. The list is by no means exhaustive, nor is it based on research. Rather, it is taken from the practice experience of practitioners and managers within each agency. This document is **not** formally endorsed by the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse.

Section 1 provides a general overview of what ALL agencies may wish to consider in cases of child sexual abuse across prevention, identification, assessment, protection and support.

This is followed by Section 2, which takes a more detailed look at questions each agency may wish to consider within these cases: social care; police; probation; health; education; and, youth offending services. This is considered across the different stages at which agencies may be involved with children: Prevention; identification; assessment; protection; and support.

Section 3 is an overview of additional considerations for each agency in cases where children or young people have displayed sexually harmful behaviour.

SECTION 1: For all agencies, from prevention to support

PREVENTION	Staff across agencies understand signs and indicators of abusive behaviour Children and young people understand healthy and unhealthy sexual behaviour All children have the means to communicate worries or harm Good multi-agency relationships and frameworks for communication are in place Agencies have a system in place for logging concerns of sexual abuse
IDENTIFICATION	Staff across agencies have adequate training on signs and indicators of abuse Staff across all agencies know who to go to in their organisation to discuss concerns Referral processes across agencies are clear, understood by all and timely Adequate frameworks are in place within agencies to assess level of concern Information sharing protocols are understood within and between agencies
ASSESSMENT	Assessments consider information from all agencies on all members of the 'family' Information is shared according to the welfare of the child and their siblings Assessments are child-centred and include exploration of all family relationships Multiple hypotheses are considered and always include the possibility that sexual abuse has occurred Agencies understand each other's assessment frameworks and the meaning of risk levels
PROTECTION	Staff understand their own and other agencies' roles in the investigative process Strategy discussions include representatives from all agencies ABE's are timely in all cases, jointly undertaken and planned according to ABE guidance Medical examinations are timely Risks are clearly outlined and all family members understand what these are Safety plans are both meaningful and achievable and shared across agencies In cases of YPSHB, risk to siblings within the home is considered Responses to YPSHB are proportionate MAPPA assessments and processes involve input from all agencies

SUPPORT	Children receive timely access to emotional/therapeutic support CPS guidance on therapeutic intervention with children who have been abused is understood Support is given whether or not the case proceeds through the criminal justice route Support is offered to the non-abusing parent/carer Understanding of the risks presented by YPSHB is understood across agencies Risk management plans are translated consistently across agencies & regularly reviewed The system response is proportionate to the level of risk and need Support for siblings is considered
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SECTION 2: Considerations for each agency

SOCIAL CARE	Considerations	What would it look like?
PREVENTION	Do I understand the vulnerabilities within the family? Do I understand indicators of sexually abusive behaviour? Is there opportunity in supervision to reflect on concerns? Do I know who the child considers to be family? Do I know who spends time with this child? Are there appropriate boundaries within the home? Do the parents/carers understand the warning signs of sexual abuse? Does the child know who to talk to if they have concerns?	Adequate training available Details on file about members of the family/ visitors to the home Assessments are thorough and holistic
IDENTIFICATION	Have I considered the signs and indicators of abuse and abusive behaviour? Have I considered what may be causing the presenting issue? Do I understand the child's world? Do I spend enough time with this child? Have I discussed concerns with my supervisor? Have I given opportunity for this child to tell me what is going on for them? Have I spoken to others in the child's life? Have I shared concerns with parents, where appropriate? Have I considered multiple hypotheses including of sexual abuse? Have I considered what risks may be presented to this child?	Concerns recorded on files Recordings evidence professional curiosity in which presenting issues are explored Supervision details concerns discussed Regular visits to child on their own are evident Information on all family members is on file Explicit discussions about concerns are evident
ASSESSMENT	Do I know who has contact with this family? Have I adequately assessed everyone who has contact with this family? Have I sought information from other agencies to inform my assessment? Do I understand the family dynamics and relationships? Have I considered both protective and risk factors? Have I considered issues of diversity? Have I looked for other indicators of sexual abuse? Have I looked at the case history/done a chronology? When assessing foster carers/adopters – have I spoken about their history of sexual abuse? Are other children at risk in this family? How do the sexual abuse concerns impact on all family members?	File details family members/visitors Assessment is holistic and includes all family members, relationships between them, risks and needs Chronology on file Other agencies contacted Explicit consideration of sexual abuse is evident

PROTECTION	Have I invited all agencies, including health, to the strategy meeting? Have I explained to the child what is happening and what will happen next? Has a social worker who is trained in ABE been part of the interview? Has appropriate planning taken place with the Police for the ABE interview? Have arrangements been made with Social Care for sharing the ABE account? Do I understand the medical examination process? Have I explained the medical examination process to the child and family? Have I spoken with Health about the child's account? How can I support the child with the medical exam, e.g. transport? Do I understand why the Police are taking NFA? Do I understand the criminal justice process and what happens next? Do the non-abusing parents/carers understand the risk? Have I made a safety plan with the family? Is this realistic and achievable? Are other agencies aware of the safety plan? Are other children at risk of harm? If risk identified was online or outside of the family, have risks inside the family been discussed and addressed?	Strat minutes show health attendance Multi-agency information sharing has taken place Recordings show conversations/actions have happened Joint planning of ABE with Police is evidenced ABE is timely Medical examination is within timescales Safety plan is on file All family members have been met with Information sharing demonstrated Risk to siblings is considered
SUPPORT	What emotional support does this child need? Which services can provide this support? What are the support needs of the non-abusing parent/carers? How can I support the non-abusing parent/carer? Does the school know how to manage the situation? Is there someone at the school who this child can go to if they are upset at school? Have I considered the impact of events on the child's schooling? Am I keeping the school informed of important appointments? Do foster carers know enough about what has happened to be able to support the child and keep others safe emotionally and physically? Does the fostering support worker know how to support the carers? If the police are taking no further action, am I still supporting the child? If the case is going through the criminal justice route, is there an ISVA? Do I understand the CPS guidance around therapeutic intervention? Am I keeping the Police informed of progress of care proceedings?	Child's therapeutic needs are considered as soon as possible Information is shared between agencies to minimise child needing to repeat their story Records show support to non-abusing parents/carers The needs of siblings have been considered Recordings reflect open 'family work' Meetings with school have been held and support to child considered Recordings show discussion and support with foster carers Family support meetings are held and sexual risk/abuse discussed

POLICE	Considerations	What would it look like?
PREVENTION	Are there indications on this visit that there may be sexual abuse going on in this family? Have the details of everyone present been checked? Do I understand indicators of sexually abusive behaviour? Do I understand the signs and indicators of sexual abuse?	Adequate training available Visit is recorded, family members detailed and information passed to social care where appropriate
IDENTIFICATION	Have I considered the signs and indicators of abuse and abusive behaviour? Have I discussed concerns with my supervisor? Have I considered what risks may be presented to this child?	Concerns recorded on files Supervision/recordings detail concerns Information on all family members is on file
ASSESSMENT	Do I know who has contact with this family? Have I looked for other indicators of sexual abuse? Are other children at risk in this family?	File details family members/visitors Appropriate checks undertaken Other agencies contacted
PROTECTION	Have I prepared all relevant information for the strategy meeting? Does the child, family and social worker understand what will happen next? Am I working within forensic timescales? Has an intermediary been considered? Have I shared the ABE information with Health? Has the ABE been arranged in appropriate timescales? Has the ABE been jointly and adequately planned with the social worker? Have arrangements been made with Social Care for sharing the ABE account? Does the social worker understand the Bail Act? Does the social worker understand why you are taking further action/not taking further action? Have I explained to the child and the family why action/no further action is being taken? Does the alleged abuser understand why I have made the decision to take further action/no further action? Have I explained to the child why the CPS are taking/not taking further action?	Strat minutes show police attendance Multi-agency information sharing has taken place Recordings show conversations/actions have happened Joint planning of ABE with Social Care is evidenced ABE is timely Medical examination is within timescales Safety plan is on file Bail restrictions are recorded and shared appropriately Case is progressing in a timely manner
SUPPORT	Has an ISVA been identified? Do I understand CPS guidance on children who have alleged sexual abuse? Have I kept the social worker informed of the progress of the investigation? Have I/ISVA kept the child and family aware of the progress of the investigation?	Communication with child and family is evidenced Person identified to communicate with family on progress

PROBATION	Considerations	What would it look like?
PREVENTION/ IDENTIFICATION/ ASSESSMENT	Am I clear what risks this offender presents and to whom? Have I communicated these concerns to relevant agencies? Do I know who this offender is spending time with? Is the offender spending any time with any children? Have I let social care know that an offender is having/may have contact with a child? Has any soft information (e.g. from other offenders, family members etc.) been considered? Does the social worker understand how I assess risk? The meaning of the RM2000/MAPPA/OAYsys/ARMS risk assessments? Is the prison aware of contact restrictions and if so, is this reflected in monitoring arrangements? Has information from social care to inform assessments been sought? Does the MAPPA risk management plan reflect multi-agency involvement? Do other family members understand the risk (within disclosure policy/procedure)?	Assessments ask about contact with children Information is referred to relevant agencies Communication with prison is evidenced and information shared is thorough Information has been sought from social care/police where relevant MAPPA plan reflects multi-agency input Appropriate level of information is shared with family members
PROTECTION	Have I shared all relevant information with other agencies? Am I aware of any safety plans social care have made with the family? Am I aware of any child protection meetings (i.e. conferences or core groups) and provided information to them? (in person or via report) Have I spoken with the prison about risks to children? Have I communicated release dates with relevant parties? Does the social worker understand how I assess risk? The meaning of the RM2000/MAPPA/OAYsys/ARMS risk assessments? Have I invited relevant agencies to the MAPPA meetings? Does the MAPPA risk management plan reflect multi-agency involvement?	Strat minutes show probation input Multi-agency information sharing has taken place Recordings show conversations/actions have happened Safety plans is on file Information sharing demonstrated
SUPPORT	Do I understand what social care is aiming to do with the family? How can I support the social worker in working with the family? Is the social worker clear what I am doing with the offender? Is the social worker aware of my role and remit? Am I regularly communicating with the prison and sharing this information, where relevant, with social care?	Discussions with social care are evident Joint working takes place where appropriate File evidences information sharing

HEALTH	Considerations	What would it look like?
PREVENTION/ IDENTIFICATION/ ASSESSMENT	Do I understand signs and indicators of sexual abuse? Do I understand the signs and indicators of abusive behaviour? Do I understand the vulnerabilities within the family? Have I asked the mother about her own history of sexual abuse? (i.e. midwife/HV) Does anything concern me about the parents' presentation which may relate to sexual abuse? Have I considered what may be causing the presenting issue? (e.g. CAMHS/sexual health nurse) Have I considered what risks may be presented to this child? Have I assessed this child for trauma symptoms? (e.g. CAMHS) Have I shared concerns with my supervisor? Have I shared concerns with other agencies?	Adequate training available Details on file about members of the family/ visitors to the home Assessments/recordings show consideration of sexual abuse histories Recordings evidence professional curiosity in which presenting issues are explored Trauma assessment on file
PROTECTION/ SUPPORT – Physical Health	Am I the right health professional to attend the strategy meeting? Do I understand forensic timescales? Has the need for medical examination been considered for all children in the family? Are processes flexible in relation to timing of ABE and medical examination? Have I explained the medical examination process to the child and their family? Does the social worker understand the medical examination process? Have I asked the social worker for all available information about the child's disclosure? Is the social worker bringing the family to the medical examination? Is the environment child-friendly and age appropriate? Have I been supportive towards the non-abusing parents/carers throughout the process? Has the medical examination sufficiently covered other aspects of abuse and neglect? Have I shared the findings of the examination with the child/family/social worker as soon as possible? Have I explained to the child what is happening and what will happen next? Have I written my report within 72 hours? Have I referred the child to the ISVA/therapeutic support where appropriate? Have I referred the child for any other health services where applicable? Does the child and family know where future appointments will be offered?	Strat minutes show health attendance Multi-agency information sharing has taken place Recordings show conversations/actions have happened Medical examination is within timescales Report is completed promptly Information sharing demonstrated Risk to siblings is considered Records show support to non-abusing parents/carers
PROTECTION/ SUPPORT – Mental health	Have I assessed this child for trauma? What mental health support can our service offer this child? Can I support the social worker, school and parents/carers to understand the impact of abuse and how to support the child? Do I understand CPS guidance for children who have alleged sexual abuse?	Trauma assessment considered Child assessed and services offered Evidence of support to child and family Evidence of support to social worker/school/carers

		Cases are worked pre-criminal trial where this is in the best interests of the child

EDUCATION	Considerations	What would it look like?
PREVENTION	Do I understand the signs and indicators of sexual abuse? Is there a 'whole school approach' to safeguarding? - Are areas of the school safe? - Does PHSE cover healthy/unhealthy sexual behaviours and consent? - Are rules around boundaries, touch and privacy in place? Do I know who to talk to if I am concerned about a child? Does the child know who to talk to if they have concerns?	Adequate training available Clear policies in place Key staff identified and children aware of who to speak with
IDENTIFICATION	Do I have concerns about a child's presentation which may indicate sexual abuse? Have I considered what may be causing any presenting issues? Have I shared my concerns with the safeguarding lead? Have the school shared concerns with social care? Am I keeping a record of any concerns about this child/sexual abuse? Is there anything we can do to give additional support to this child in light of our concerns? Have I enquired about the child's welfare with the child? Have I shared concerns with parents, where appropriate?	System in place to log concerns Safeguarding concerns are recorded Recordings evidence professional Information on all family members is on file Explicit discussions about concerns are evident
ASSESSMENT	Have I shared all relevant information with the social worker/early help worker? Do I know who is in this child's family?	File details family members Other agencies contacted
PROTECTION	Have I shared all relevant information at the strategy meeting? Am I clear about what is happening next? Am I aware of the safety plan? Do I know who should/should not be collecting this child? Is information shared with key members of staff? Do I understand why the Police are taking/not taking further action? Do I understand the criminal justice process and what happens next? Are other children at risk of harm?	Strat minutes show education attendance/input Multi-agency information sharing has taken place Safety plan is on file Key staff are aware of plan Risk to siblings/other children is considered
SUPPORT	What additional emotional support does this child need? How might sexual abuse affect this child in school and what can we do to support them? Is there someone at the school identified who this child can go to if they are upset at school? Do I understand indicators of trauma?	Child's emotional needs are considered and plans put in place Key person identified for the child Support available for staff to manage situation

Do any special arrangements need to be made for this child? Is the school aware of key events in the child's week – e.g. supervised contact, counselling sessions, ABE interviews, medical examinations, court hearings? Are staff supported to manage the needs of the child/children?

Upcoming appointments kept on file and shared appropriately with staff

YOT	Considerations	What would it look like?
PREVENTION	Do I understand signs and indicators of sexual abuse? Do I understand indicators of sexually abusive behaviour? How confident do I feel talking about sexual abuse with young people? Where can I get support for this if needed? Is there opportunity in supervision to reflect on concerns? Do I know who the young person considers to be family? Do I know who this young person spends time with? Do I know whether there are concerns about the families of other young people who this young person spends time with? Are there appropriate boundaries within the home? Do the parents/carers understand the warning signs of sexual abuse? Does the young person know who to talk to if they have concerns? Is the safety/MAPPA plan consistent with and incorporated into the YOT intervention plan?	Adequate training available Details on file about members of the family/ visitors to the home Assessments are thorough and holistic Safety plans/MAPPA plans are incorporated into YOT intervention plan
IDENTIFICATION	Have I considered the signs and indicators of abuse and abusive behaviour? Do I understand the young person's world? When I meet with the young person is adequate time spent getting to know them? Have I discussed concerns with my supervisor? Have I given opportunity for this young person to tell me what is going on for them? Have I spoken to others in the young person's life? Have I shared concerns with parents, where appropriate? Have I considered what risks may be presented to this young person in addition to focussing on the risks they may present?	Concerns recorded on files Recordings evidence professional curiosity in which presenting issues are explored Supervision details concerns discussed Regular meetings with the young person are evident Information on all family members is on file Explicit discussions about concerns are evident
ASSESSMENT	Is my assessment holistic? Does my assessment consider strengths as well as risk factors? If offending is sexual, has an appropriate sexual risk assessment been undertaken (e.g. AIM2) Has the assessment considered any developmental or medical contributors to the sexual behaviour? Has a health perspective been sought and considered within the assessment? Have any learning needs been identified? Have I considered issues of diversity within my assessment? Have I considered what may be causing the presenting issue/behaviour/offending? Have I considered whether the offending behaviour may be linked to experiences of	File details family members/visitors Assessment is holistic, addresses risks and strengths Assessment includes all family members, relationships between them, risks and needs Sexual risk assessment (e.g. AIM2 has been undertaken) Chronology on file Other agencies contacted Explicit consideration of sexual abuse is

	Have I looked for (additional) indicators of sexual abuse? Have I sought information from other agencies to inform my assessment, e.g. social care and education? Have I met with/talked with family members as part of my assessment of this young person? Do I know who is in the young person's family and who lives with them? Has consideration of family circumstances been made? Do I understand the family dynamics and relationships? Have I considered the issues that may be impacting on parental capacity to support this young person and keep them and others safe, e.g. drug and alcohol use, mental health, disability? Do I know who has contact with the young person's family? Do I know who this young person spends time with? Do I know whether there are concerns about the families of other young people who this young person spends time with? Am I aware of the case history and considered this within my assessment?	evident
PROTECTION	Have I considered whether this young person is at risk of sexual abuse within the family? Am I clear what risks this young person presents and to whom? If risk identified was online or outside of the family, have risks inside the family been discussed and addressed? Have I communicated these concerns to relevant agencies? Has any soft information (e.g. from other offenders, family members etc.) been considered? Am I aware of any strategy meetings, child protection meetings or conferences? Have I attended or provided a report for all child protection meetings? Does the MAPPA risk management plan reflect multi-agency involvement? Is there a forum for multi-agency risk management for non-MAPPA cases? Do the non-abusing parents/carers understand the risks to, or those presented by, this young person? Have I made/is there a safety plan with the young person and their carer/s for use within their home (i.e. family home, foster placement, residential school)? Have I made/is there a safety plan with the young person and school staff? Are any restrictions within and outside of the home realistic, achievable and developmentally appropriate? Does the young person understand their safety plan/MAPPA risk management plan? Are all relevant agencies aware of safety plans/MAPPA risk management plans?	Strat minutes show YOT attendance Multi-agency information sharing has taken place MAPPA minutes show good communication, multi-agency involvement and appropriate information sharing Recordings show conversations/actions have happened Safety plan/MAPPA risk management plan is on file and other agencies are aware of it Key family members have been met with Risk to siblings and other children is considered

SUPPORT

What emotional support does this young person need?

Which services can provide this support?

Have any learning needs been considered in the design of interventions?

How can parents/carers be supported to meet the needs of the young person?

How can parents/carers be supported to manage any risks presented by the young person?

Do parents/carers know enough about what has happened to be able to support the child and keep others safe emotionally and physically?

Does the school know how to manage the situation?

Is there someone at the school who this young person can go to if they are distressed? Have I considered the impact of events on the young person's schooling?

Have I considered the impact of events on the young person's friendships and social engagement?

Have I considered the impact of events on the young person's self-esteem and mental health?

Is intervention holistic and addressing the developmental needs of the young person? Am I keeping the school informed of important appointments?

Young person's therapeutic needs are considered within YOT interventions Information is shared between agencies to minimise young person needing to repeat their story

Records show support to parents/carers Meetings/discussions with school have been held and support to young person considered

Recordings show discussion and support with school staff

Recordings show discussion and support with foster carers

Evidence of holistic intervention is seen on file

SECTION 3: Additional considerations for children and young people who have sexually harmed

AGENCY	Additional considerations for young people who have sexually harmed
SOCIAL CARE	Has the possibility that this child has experienced sexual abuse been considered? Have the child's needs as a victim of abuse been considered? Is the assessment holistic? Have risks to other children in the house been considered? What are the power dynamics in this family? Are other children aware of the risks presented by this young person? Are there realistic and achievable safety plans in place? Do the parents/carers understand the risks? Can they keep all the children safe? Are there appropriate boundaries in place within the home? Are the abused child's needs being considered as a priority? Have the needs of both children been considered? Does the alleged abuser need to live elsewhere for a period of time? Does the alleged abuser understand why you are concerned? Is there an understanding of the impact of sibling abuse on parents/carers? Has a social worker been allocated to each of the children? What is the lowest level of input necessary to address this situation? Is the response proportionate? Is specialist assessment necessary? What work will be offered in relation to the sibling relationship?
POLICE	Are police offering joint visits appropriately? Has consideration of how to proceed been given according to the need of the child? E.g. criminal justice vs. support/treatment? Has the officer discussed the case with social care and YOT? How can the police support further work with this young person? Are the allegations being taken as seriously as abuse by an adult? Do parents know enough information about the allegation to be able to protect both children? If no further action is taken at any point during the criminal justice process, are social care informed?
YOT	Has consideration of family circumstances been made? Have you involved the family in your assessment/intervention? Are all agencies aware of bail restrictions? Is the school aware of the risks? Is the school/parents/carers aware of the intervention plan? Have risks to other children been considered? Are appropriate safety plans in place at home and school?

	Are these being regularly reviewed? Do MAPPA plans reflect multi-agency input? Have non-MAPPA cases got multi-agency input? What is the future plan for risk management and ongoing support?
EDUCATION	Are the emotional needs of this child being considered? Have risks to other children been considered? Is there a risk assessment on file? Are there robust safety plans in place? Are safety plans proportionate and being regularly reviewed? Does the child understand any restrictions?
HEALTH	How can health contribute to assessments/interventions? - Cognitive assessment - Trauma assessment/interventions - Forensic mental health assessments/interventions - Other health assessments/interventions Would integrated working benefit this case?